CONNECT Constitution

(Child Oral health NortherN rEsearch CollaboraTive)

Version 3.0

1. Mission Statement

To conduct high quality, trainee-led, multi-centre research in the field of child oral health across the North of England for the benefit of patients and families

2. Aims

1. To establish a network of trainees working within the field of child oral health who conduct multi-centre research with a high potential for impact.

2. To allow trainees to continue their involvement in research projects as they move through training posts in the North of England.

3. To provide training in research for the educational benefit of CONNECT members.

4. To attract national funding for child oral health research.

3. Structure

1. The organisation is led by an executive committee comprising the roles listed below.

   i.   President

   ii. Chair

   iii. Secretary

   iv. Treasurer

     v.   Information Technology lead

     vi.   Consultant Director

2. The appointment of a member to the position of President will be only be carried out following the second CONNECT AGM, to enable the executive committee and membership to become established.

3. When a position on the executive committee becomes available, the membership will be notified via the CONNECT website and forum no less than 3 months prior to an AGM. Nominations should be submitted no less than 6 weeks prior to the AGM, with a supporting paragraph to highlight the nominee's suitability for the named role. The nominations will be considered by the executive committee prior to the AGM. At the AGM, eligible candidates will receive votes from the membership and executive committee, and the position will be appointed to the candidate receiving a majority vote . The president (or chair, if a president has not yet been appointed) will hold the deciding vote if necessary.

4. Notification of an AGM must be given to the membership no less than 6 weeks in advance. Two thirds of the membership must be present for the AGM to be quorate.

5. The executive committee is supported by:

     i.   Consultant Trust leads from each of the northern hospital/community trusts which host trainee CONNECT members

     ii.   Trainee Trust leads from each of the northern hospital/community trusts which host trainee CONNECT members

6. All trainee members of the executive committee and its supporting representatives must hold membership of CONNECT.

4. Membership

1. Any specialty trainee (holding either an NTN or academic NTN) with an interest in child oral health research may become a full member of CONNECT by completing the application form and receiving approval from any member of the executive committee. Data collected as part of this application will remain confidential to the executive committee and will not be distributed.

2. Consultant committee members are elected by the executive committee and receive 'honorary' CONNECT member status.

3. Trainee committee members are elected by a vote of all full CONNECT members.

4. Trainees may remain full members of CONNECT for the duration of their training post, including Post-CCST training. Trainees who are 'Out Of Programme' for research or fellowships may continue to hold both membership and committee roles within CONNECT during this period.

5. Other healthcare professionals, dental students and dental core trainees may apply to become associate members of CONNECT. Lecturers who are not undertaking specialty training may also hold associate membership. The role of an associate member will usually be limited to Local Trust Project Contributors as detailed in Section 7. The application process for associate membership is the same as for full membership. Associate members have the same voting rights as a full member but cannot hold a position on the executive committee.

6. Membership of CONNECT may be terminated following:

    i. Breach of authorship rules detailed in Section 8

    ii. Breach of research governance principles as outlined by GCP guidelines including failure to undertake regular GCP training

    iii. Breach of data protection

    iv. Breach of ethical principles

    v. Fraudulent use or omission of data

vi. Resignation of the member from a recognised specialty training post

vii. A permanent move of the member to another region. In this instance, the member may retain an informal link to the organisation as a 'Friend of CONNECT'.

7. Termination of membership is at the discretion of the executive committee and requires a majority vote of committee members.

5. Committee Roles

1. All committee members will be jointly responsible for:

i. Establishing and coordinating research projects

ii. Presenting CONNECT data at conferences

iii. Organising a regular Annual General Meeting

iv. Organising and attending quarterly Committee Meetings

v. Arranging educational sessions for CONNECT members

vi. Mediating in disputes amongst CONNECT members

2. The specific roles for each member are detailed below:

i. President

- Figurehead of the organisation

- Promotes the organisation at a national level

- Resolves any conflicts arising between the CONNECT committee and its members

ii. Chair

- Chairs committee meetings

- Steers development of the organisation

- Promotes the organisation at a national level

iii.   Secretary

- Drafts and distributes agenda for committee meetings

- Records and distributes minutes for committee meetings

- Manages membership database

- Distributes newsletter

iv.   Treasurer

- Manages the organisation accounts

- Collates receipts and provides data for audit if required

- Takes responsibility for paying invoices

- Monitors the availability of organisation funds

v.   Information Technology lead

- Manages CONNECT forum

- Maintains CONNECT website

- Develops IT solutions to keep pace with the evolution of the organisation

- Liaises with Trust leads to solve IT technical issues

vi.   Consultant Director

- Provide continuity for the organisation when trainee committee members change

- Provides guidance for strategic development of the organisation

- Use existing research links to facilitate initiation of projects

vii. Consultant Trust Lead

- Promotes CONNECT at a local level

- Provides a point of contact for CONNECT members at local level

- Escalates any issues to the executive committee

viii. Trainee Trust Lead

- Promotes CONNECT at a local level

- Provides a point of contact for CONNECT members at local level

- Escalates any issues to the executive committee

6. Project Management Regulations

1. All CONNECT members may put forward research project proposals, irrespective of grade. Proposals may include extensions of pilot projects undertaken as part of a qualification e.g. Masters degree.

2. Project proposals will be invited periodically via the CONNECT online forum. There will be an opportunity to present the proposal to CONNECT members at a suitable venue, such as the Annual General Meeting.

3. Projects will be selected for support by the CONNECT collaborative using a standardised scoring matrix which allocates a point score in a number of different categories. Each CONNECT member has one vote. Examples of the scoring matrix can be downloaded from the CONNECT website.

4. The executive committee withholds the right to veto a project which provokes any concerns. It also has the right to recommend some projects over others.

5. Once a research proposal has been selected for support by CONNECT, the proposer will be designated the Area Project Lead for that project unless he/ she wishes to delegate this to someone else.

6. The Area Project Lead will be advised by suitably experienced members of the executive committee if needed.

7. The Area Project Lead may request the assistance of other CONNECT members to achieve some of the tasks detailed in Section 7.1.

8. The above steps should be accomplished within a pre-defined timeframe. If there is a significant departure from this, the executive committee has the right to withdraw support for the project.

7. Project Roles

Each project will have a study team associated with it and the specific roles of each member are detailed in this section.

1. *Area Project Lead(s)*
   This is defined as the individual(s) who is/are responsible for the design and inception of the study. The role will usually involve:

   i. Devising the Research and Development proposal and trial protocol

   ii. Liaising with the Research and Development department

   iii. Applying for research grants if required

   iv. Seeking ethics committee approval for the project where necessary

   v. Managing and co-ordinating the conduct of the study across the area

   vi. Collating and analysing the study data

   vii. Presenting the data at a regional or national level

   viii. Submitting any resulting articles for publication

2. *Local Trust Project Lead(s)*
   This is defined as the individual(s) who is/are responsible for the management

of the area project at a local trust level. The role will usually (but not exclusively) involve:

i.   Liaising with the local Research and Development department

ii. Liaising with the local Clinical Governance department

iii. Co-ordinating with the Area Project Lead(s) to refine research protocols and data collection forms

iv. Advertising projects at the local trust level

v.   Co-ordinating and managing the team of CONNECT trainees for patient recruitment and data collection

vi. Presenting the data and results at a local level

3. *Local Trust Project Investigator*

This is defined as a CONNECT individual who is not involved in long-term local project management (as outlined above), but is significantly involved in the study, above and beyond data collection. This role will usually involve:

i.   Leading a team of Local Trust Project Contributors for individual days of a project

ii. Making an extensive contribution to patient consent, recruitment and/or data collection

4. *Local Trust Project Contributor*
This is defined as any individual who is involved with patient recruitment and/or data collection, whether a member of CONNECT or not.

Authorship Rules

All members of CONNECT must adhere to the following authorship rules:

1. Each research project will have a designated Area Project Lead(s) and their role is detailed in Section 7.1. Any CONNECT member completing a task in Section 7.1 should be acknowledged as making a significant contribution to the project.

2. It is the responsibility of the Area Project Lead to present and/or publish the results from the project. If they are unable to or do not wish to, then they should delegate this task to a CONNECT member who has made a significant contribution to that project (for example, the Local Trust Project Lead).

3. Only those CONNECT members who specifically contributed to the research project will be acknowledged in any publications resulting from that project.

4. The CONNECT organisation should be recognised as the author of any publications resulting from a project. Individuals contributing to the project will be acknowledged on the CONNECT website.

5. Project data may be presented at local meetings by CONNECT members. Project data for a single site may also be published by CONNECT members on provision of written consent from the Area Project Lead(s). The CONNECT organisation and Area Project Lead(s) should both be acknowledged in this case.

6. Any dispute regarding authorship should be escalated to the executive committee who will arbitrate and, if necessary, terminate membership.

7. The Area Project Lead(s) & Local Trust Project Leads, Investigators and Contributors for a project may all reference any resulting publications on their curriculum vitae.

Committee Meeting Regulations

1. CONNECT will conduct quarterly committee meetings. A minimum notice of 6 weeks will be given prior to each meeting. Meetings may be conducted via conference call/Skype as required.

2. All executive committee members should attend unless there are extenuating circumstances. In this situation, apologies should be sent to the Secretary prior to the meeting.

3. The meeting agenda will be distributed prior to each meeting via the CONNECT forum and website.

4. Copies of the minutes of the previous meeting will be available at the subsequent committee meeting and via the CONNECT forum and website. Any necessary amendments can be discussed by the committee members present. Once it is agreed that the minutes are a true representation, they will be signed by the Chair of the meeting.

5. The meeting minutes will be uploaded onto the CONNECT website once they have been finalised.

6. Decisions are made based on the consensus view of the executive committee which is settled by discussion in the first instance. A minimum of 5 members of the executive committee must be present in order for the decision to be valid. Voting 'in abstentia' by email is also permitted.

7. If differing views are not resolved, then a decision is passed by a majority vote of all attending committee members. In the event of a tied vote, the President casts deciding vote. If the President is absent from the meeting, then the Chair casts the deciding vote.