Member Virtual Reference Groups
Terms of Reference

Purpose of the Virtual Reference Group
The Virtual Reference Groups have been established to help ensure NHS Confederation work programmes, policy and influencing activities are based firmly on members’ priorities, views and experiences.

The Virtual Reference Groups will act as an effective mechanism for members to:
- Engage in and help steer the work of the NHS Confederation.
- Increase the member voice and influence in national policy and debate.
- Increase direct representation of members at both the national and regional level.
- Showcase members’ work and good practice examples to Government and national bodies as well as to the rest of the NHS.

How will the Groups work?
- The Group will operate as a virtual reference group, with communications conducted primarily via email.
- Each Group will be appointed an NHS Confederation policy lead.
- The Group policy lead will email Group members for input on relevant areas – this may include reactive input on new developments, immediate or pressing issues; as well as proactive input on planned policy and influencing activities.
- Any call for input will clearly outline the issues the NHS Confederation is seeking views on, the type of input required (whether this is a good practice example, evidence submission etc.), how this input will be used, and timescales for responses.
- All Group members will be emailed in the first instance, but individual Group members do not need to respond to each call for input - only where they have relevant views and examples they wish to share.
- Input received from the Virtual Reference Group members will be used in a variety of different ways as appropriate – in formal evidence submissions, in written parliamentary briefings, in conversations with national stakeholders and bodies, and for media purposes.
- When Group members submit their views, it will be assumed they are consenting for their submissions to be used in the way(s) as described in the initial call for input.
- The Group policy lead will follow-up with all Group members who have responded to the call for input, to confirm how their submission is being used and provide copies of relevant the materials where applicable.
- Group policy leads may wish to follow-up with a phone call to Group members who have submitted views, to discuss these in more detail and where appropriate, offer the opportunity to attend Government Select Committees and other national policy-making
committees, meetings and round tables with national policy-makers and stakeholders, or to speak with the national or local media.

- Group members will be kept up to date on how their views and submissions have helped to shape NHS Confederation policy and influencing work, and the impact and successes achieved.
- Members of the Virtual Reference Group can choose to leave the Group at any time by informing membership@nhsconfed.org.