

## Lay partner 'buddies'

### What and why

The lay partner buddy system is a simple way to support new lay partners, help them become more familiar with the role, Trust and NHS and strengthen our lay partner community.

An established lay partner who has been involved in projects will be paired with a new lay partner so they can communicate regularly, share ideas and reflect on experiences.

It will also enable stronger relationships within the lay partner network and progress the overall lay partner programme.

### What would you talk about?

- It's open to the pair but it might be worth sharing individual experiences, how the meetings and interactions are between the Trust and lay partners as part of the project and any tangible examples where being involved has made a difference.
- You can explore ideas and ways on how to effectively engage and get the most out of the meetings.
- Share knowledge about the Trust or the NHS specifically and make connections and links across different teams, services and organisations.
- Share feedback and raise any concerns. We hope this will enable the rapid development of suggestions or ways the Trust can better support and embed lay partners.

### Who and how

To start with experienced lay partners from the strategic lay forum will be paired with new lay partners when they are added to projects. For more information on the forum members read their biographies on the Trust [website](#). We will introduce lay partner buddy pairs via email and then suggest they use the communication method that suits them best.

### Communicating with each other

- Use the communication method that best suits the pair – email, video or mobile calls. Tell us if any costs are incurred so we can reimburse you.
- The Trust can arrange MS Teams meetings if the lay partner buddies don't want to use Zoom.
- It's up to you how regularly, but we recommend speaking once a month for as long as you need as a good starter. It might be worth connecting regularly in the beginning or before meetings if that is useful.
- The information discussed between lay partners is confidential but as above, any feedback and suggestions from this process will be really welcomed by the Trust.
- We'll also check in with you to see how the buddying is going. We're keen to learn and improve as we go.