

Research and Ethics Committee

Freedom from Torture

Terms of Reference

- 1.1 To be responsible for the oversight of research activities at Freedom from Torture. To inform, guide and develop a strategy for research activities.
- 1.2 To encourage research within Freedom from Torture that is in line with current organisational priorities.
- 1.3 To be responsible for ensuring that all research activities at Freedom from Torture (external or internal) are in line with the Mission Statement, the Strategic Plan and core research priorities of Freedom from Torture.
- 1.4 To be responsible for ensuring that all research activities undertaken at Freedom from Torture, with Freedom from Torture staff and clients, meet ethical standards and protects the rights of clients at all times.
- 1.5 To be responsible for monitoring the outcome of all research activities at Freedom from Torture.
- 1.6 To promote and further the knowledge base of work at Freedom from Torture, both internally and externally. To encourage dissemination of research that promotes the interests of survivors of torture.

Scope and means of Operation

- 2.1 The Committee will meet four times per year and will announce dates of these meetings six months in advance. A quorum of three people is required for Committee meetings to proceed and for any decisions of the Committee to stand. All final decisions will be made on the majority vote (or a minimum of three committee members' votes). Between meetings, the Committee will carry out its work via email (rec@freedomfromtorture.org), including reviewing research proposals.
- 2.2 The Committee will signpost those who wish to submit a research proposal to guidelines for the procedures to follow, available on Freedom from Torture's website. These procedures will be periodically monitored and revised as necessary.
- 2.3 The Committee will only consider research proposals when it has the capacity to do so, and will only consider one proposal at any one time, with no more than one waiting consideration. Any additional proposals will not be reviewed, unless they

are exceptional in quality and meet key strategic objectives or are from members of staff. If necessary, the Committee will prioritise proposals according to Freedom from Torture's research priorities and will inform the researcher promptly when it is unable to consider their proposal.

- 2.4 Research proposals accepted for review will be logged in the Committee's proposal tracker and circulated by email to all Committee members. Proposals will be evaluated individually according to the criteria set out in the 'Guidelines for evaluating research proposals', available on Freedom from Torture's website. Committee members will be given a specified time within which to respond with their comments and recommendation. If revisions to the proposal are recommended, the researcher will be informed and given the opportunity to submit a revised proposal for further consideration. Members of staff from relevant departments may be offered the opportunity to comment on research proposals, where this is considered necessary, in order to inform and advise the Committee.
- 2.5 A final decision on a research proposal will be based on the majority view of the Committee members who have reviewed it, or the consensus view of a minimum of three Committee members. If a Committee member wishes to block a proposal from going ahead, this will be taken to the next Committee meeting where a final decision will be made based on a consensus view (provided that a minimum of three members are in attendance). If serious concerns remain, Senior Management may be consulted for guidance. Where a member of the Committee is proposing the research, they will not vote on their own research proposal.
- 2.6 All decision outcomes will be logged in the Committee's proposal tracker, with reasons for acceptance or rejection.
- 2.7 Research carried out in the Policy and Advocacy Directorate will be logged in the Committee's proposal tracker but will be subject to review by the Committee in respect of methods and ethics only where this is considered necessary. This is because policy research at Freedom from Torture is by default aligned with the organisation's strategic priorities, and will have been identified as a priority within specific programmes of policy work and designed through a fully consultative process.

Membership

- 3.1 The Committee membership includes staff from three of Freedom from Torture's National Centres with expertise and experience in research; asylum law, policy and practice; data protection; and clinical practice from various disciplines, including psychotherapy, psychiatry, clinical psychology and general medicine. Committee members also include a representative of the Survivor's Speak Out network and one external member.
- 3.2 If a member of the Committee leaves, is unable to continue serving on the Committee or is otherwise unavailable for a period of time, a replacement or a

deputy from a similar professional background will be chosen on the basis of their expertise and experience.

- 3.3 The chair of the meetings will rotate between the members of the Committee.
- 3.4 A named administrator approved by the Senior Management Team will provide administrative support.

Responsibilities of Committee members

- 4.1 Committee members will inform their line manager and the relevant Senior Manager of their involvement with the Committee.
- 4.2 Members are expected to share in the work of the Committee, as agreed by the Committee.
- 4.3 Members are expected to attend meetings of the Committee where they can, bearing in mind geographical distance. The agenda will be circulated in advance of Committee meetings as well as relevant papers. Members who are unable to attend will contribute to discussions and decisions via email, in advance of or following the meeting. All members will be expected to attend one of the four meetings per calendar year, which will review the Committee's work and agree strategy for the following year.

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April 2017