



Working in partnership to improve maternity services

## **Payment of Maternity Voices Partnership (MVP) Chairs DRAFT**

### **Summary**

Safety Action 7 of the [21/22 Maternity Incentive Scheme](#) requires 'Written confirmation from the service user chair that they are being remunerated as agreed and that this remuneration reflects the time commitment and requirements of the role given the agreed work programme.'

The guidance notes say 'The maternity commissioner is responsible for facilitating and organising any agreed funding, this may be provided by the commissioner alone or in conjunction with local providers.' In 2021 it was most common that CCGs remunerated chairs. In some places a budget was provided by the CCG or LMS and paid to a third sector host for the MVP or to a community bank account. This document aims to give NHS organisations making payments some information about practice likely to support inclusiveness. It may be superseded or amended following the report of the MVP Function and Funding review.

### **Equity & Inequalities**

MVP Chairs have been paid inconsistently causing some to receive payments late or not at all for several months. In some places claiming has been an onerous and uncertain process.

Engaging people who are from a variety of backgrounds including marginalized groups is vital to the progression and transformation of services. For the role of MVP chair to be accessible to people from all backgrounds it is necessary that:

- Payments are predictable, regular and timely
- Administration is simple and tax/ benefit implications are clear.

Payment via payroll may be easiest way to achieve this and is in line with moves by HMRC to reduce off payroll working. It is possible for an MVP Chair to be on payroll as an independent post holder as NHSE service user voice representatives are now.

### **Self Employed Process**

MVP Chairs are often paid as self employed contractors via monthly or quarterly invoices. The process can work smoothly if there is an agreement in place to pay a set amount per month and a simple way to add any extra expenses. Attention by staff can facilitate this.

However many problems have arisen:

- It can take many months to be set up as a supplier, resulting in 8 or more months pay in one. This can lead to benefits being reduced or stopped.
- Requirement for a detailed account of time spent prior to invoices being agreed.
- Payments are late and Chairs have to chase to be paid.
- Some Chairs do not realise when they start the role that they must declare earnings to HMRC if they are over £1000 in a year.

## **Payroll Process**

An MVP Chair can be paid via payroll as an *office holder* under a 'contract for services'. This is sometimes referred to as '*employed for tax purposes*' i.e. treated as employed by HMRC but without a contract of employment. The Chair does not receive any employee benefits such as sick pay, pension or annual leave. (The rate of pay is increased by 12.5% to compensate for holiday pay.) The [NHS England role 4/ 'expert advisor' public involvement pay rate](#) is suggested, currently £150/ day. (As it is remuneration for productive hours this equates roughly to employment at NHS band 5).

Tax will be deducted from the payments if total earnings in the financial year (including from other employment) is expected to be over the personal allowance. A check on the tax code after the first payment will help ensure any tax payable is deducted but no more.

It is feasible to make a first payment via payroll within 2 months of starting the role and thereafter to make payments at the same time of the month. The pay can be agreed with reference to the role specification and MVP workplan at the start and reviewed annually or when extra work is agreed. Expenses can be claimed via a standard employee claim form submitted by a set date prior to the pay date.

## **Impact on Benefits**

Where payments are being sent late or in lump sums MVP Chairs who are in receipt of Universal Credit or other benefits are impacted negatively and in some instances causing benefits to be stopped. There is a [standard letter](#) which can be used to inform a case worker/Universal Credit of the role and prevent problems. While every individual will need to consider their own circumstances, regular monthly payments in line with the hours required for the role would avoid problems for most. (See also p14 of [Effective co-production through local MVPs - a resource for commissioners](#))

When chairs are on maternity leave from another role they will need to check the conditions of any maternity pay as it can preclude other earnings. It may be possible to be paid as an MVP chair after the birth while receiving Statutory Maternity Pay from another job if they were appointed as chair prior to 15 weeks pregnant. When chairs are appointed during

maternity leave, payment in arrears after maternity leave ends may be preferable. Maternity Action can provide helpful information.

## **About Independence**

Independence is an important feature of the role of MVP Chair. MVPs are multidisciplinary groups in which NHS staff work with service user representatives to review and improve services. It is helpful if MVP members understand that the MVP Chair is not an employee of the organisation paying them and is answerable to the whole Maternity Voices Partnership.

## **Helpful Practice**

Maternity Voices Partnership funding bodies can take the following actions to support a wider range of people to get involved as MVP chairs:

- If possible be flexible about payment mechanisms - many people will need monthly payments and prefer to be on PAYE, though people who are currently self employed may prefer quarterly invoicing as a supplier.
- Make clear to people who are interested in the chair role what the payment arrangements are, advise them of the need to consider tax and benefit effects and support them to consider the implications in their personal circumstances. ( Citizens Advice can be helpful. Make the explanatory letter available if needed. )
- Fix monthly pay based on the MVP workplan and review whenever work required changes.
- Minimise administration for the chair e.g. by providing admin support to process claims.
- Set up payment within 2 months of a person starting in the role.
- Pay amounts due regularly and predictably ideally on the same date every month.
- Address any queries about payment promptly.

## **About the authors**

This draft was co-produced by the finance subgroup of the MVP toolkit review which included NHSEI staff and current MVP chairs. We believe the information is accurate and would be grateful for any corrections if that is not the case. It is expected that the document will be amended after the recommendations of the MVP Function and Funding review are known. Please email any comments and suggestions about its practical application to [louise@nationalmaternityvoices.org.uk](mailto:louise@nationalmaternityvoices.org.uk)