

## Journey to the Eye-YPAG Shared Agreements – Jacq Miller

### Research Advisory Group with Co-Production Principles

We aspired for our Moorfields YPAG (Young Person’s Advisory Group) to have a ‘Co-production’ ethos. The ‘Challenge Fund for Vision Research’ grant (NIHR Moorfields BRC), awarded to Jacq Miller’s PhD Project, Ci2i, enabled a partnership with the UCL Centre for Co-production (now named the Co-Production Collective). In fact, the Co-Production Collective were supporting five different ‘pilot’ or ‘test’ projects, to learn more about co-production.



### Moorfields Pilot

For our pilot, we proposed that within the four months of the funding grant, we would recruit an advisory group, agree the way we would work together and start contributing to the design of the Ci2i Project and other eye and vision research projects. In reality, it became clear that it would take a lot longer than 4 months to establish a group and develop trusting working relationships.

Click on the link to hear an extract of Jacq talking about her **learning, that co-production takes time**, in an interview with People’s Voice Media:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TNs8RtMfiTo&list=PL1vtHOjD7gN0zv69hASCuk6wfgHC4yrSq&index=4>

### Four steps over twelve months, to six Shared Agreements Video

#### 1. Peer-interview workshop

The journey to reaching our Shared Agreements started in February 2020, at the end of our first year, when we ran a peer-interview workshop. Niamh and Elisha worked together with Jacq to agree the format of their interviews; they wanted to present the workshop like a film studio and brought in a cuddly toy (bunny), to act as a potential new Eye-YPAG member. Niamh and Elisha developed the questions, supported by Jacq, and together with Orla they posed the questions to the Eye-YPAG group. The scene was set as if the interviewees were telling their answers to the potential new ‘cuddly’ Eye-YPAG member, who was considering joining.



Interviewer director chairs

Here are the questions (and a few answers) they asked:

- Niamh/Orla/Elisha: **Please tell our new member *how we work together?***

Jacq Probe – do you feel like your **voice is heard?** **How do you know** researchers hear your voice? **Do you like the way you are spoken to and involved** in projects? **Do you feel you have power** in the group?

“People are relaxed and calm and chilled out, never really patronising or talking down to you”

“Yes we feel heard. For example, with our logo, we had different ideas, and then somehow they are all brought together, all of our ideas”

“Yes – it’s not an imbalance of power. When everyone is working together you have a lot *more* power – to make a difference”

“Yeah – you have more power as a group than one person – you can build on each other’s ideas”

- Niamh/Orla/Elisha: **Tell our new member how we *treat* each other?**

“We treat each other like friends”

“We hear everyone’s ideas and adapt them to make an even better idea, together”

“We don’t argue. If we disagree we conjoin our ideas – it joins the group together – a compromise”

- Niamh/Orla/Elisha: **Give an example of what one of our ‘ground rules’ could be?**

Jacq Probe - For example, **how should we act** in meetings or **not act**, or **how should we look after each other?**

“Don’t judge people’s eye condition, age, or differences”

“Work as a team”

- Niamh/Orla/Elisha: **How does being in eyeYPAG make you feel?**

“I feel special. I’m in a group where our voices are heard, and our ideas help others”

“I feel like if you have ideas to improve things in research, being part of this group, gives you more chance of actually making a difference!”



Interviewers with pretend filming equipment

## 2. Prioritisation debate

Our next meeting (May 2020), was on Zoom owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Despite this new format, we were still able to make some big group decisions. From our peer-interview workshop, we had generated **16** statements about the **ways in which we work together** as a group, and **12** statements about **the ways that we treat each other** within the group. We reviewed all 28 statements as a whole and then divided into breakout groups to discuss further. In the smaller breakout groups (facilitated by Louca-Mai, Annegret, Kornelia and Jacq) we tried to **reduce the number of statements**, sometimes by **merging**, or **linking** statements. For example, ‘working as a team’ linked to ‘sharing ideas’ and ‘listening to each other’. We also **prioritised** (through discussion), **which statements members felt were the most important**. By the end of the session, we had also agreed, that instead of having two lists we would just have **one list of ‘ways of working’ for our group**.

## 3. Naming and final iteration

At our second virtual meeting (June 2020) we voted on what we would name our ‘ground rules’. We considered:

Ground rules; EyeYPAG charter; Rules of engagement; Good things we all agree about; Shared values; Principles; Our ways of working; Group agreement; Agreements; Shared agreements; Expectations and Good conversation guide.

After everyone had their chance to vote (through conversation and using a zoom poll); **‘Shared Agreements’ was agreed!** Members were shown the collapsed list of **six** shared agreements they had worked through at the previous meeting and we discussed changes to be made. We also explored how to communicate our six final Shared Agreements, and **members were keen to record a video**.

## 4. Video

Members of the group individually recorded the audio for each 'Shared Agreement' and Charlotte Pattern at the NIHR Moorfields BRC kindly helped us with the video media. We were very lucky that Charlotte was happy to work with us over time, and after **multiple iterations** (revised during our July, September, November 2020 and January 2021 meetings), plus with **final artistic input from Niamh and Orla**, we had our finished product – our **Eye-YPAG Shared Agreements**:

### eyeYPAG Shared Agreements

developed together by eyeYPAG members



1. In eyeYPAG we are safe, we trust each other, we are friendly and welcoming



2. We share ideas, listen to each other without judgement, treat each other equally and work as a team



3. We celebrate different opinions - everyone's opinions are important



4. We are all eager to learn - we help and encourage each other, but no-one has to speak if they don't want to, we give each other space when needed



5. We think before we speak - we are sensitive to each other



6. Everything we discuss stays between us, unless we agree otherwise



<https://generationr.org.uk/eye-ypag/>

