

TaskExchange: a new hub for Cochrane Consumers

Question and Answers

The following questions were asked in the two TaskExchange webinars on 3rd and 5th December 2018 and are summarised, along with answers below.

What's the basic level of knowledge and experience in Cochrane evidence should I have to participate in TaskExchange?

There's usually no knowledge of methodology or evidence or evidence synthesis required. Usually you are being asked to take part because of your experience of a particular condition or a carer of someone who has that condition. When someone posts a task they will be clear what sort of knowledge they're expecting. You will also be offered help and support as you get involved.

Occasionally some opportunities will require some experience or knowledge, and this will be made clear.

There is a lot of information and learning available online at the Cochrane Training website <https://training.cochrane.org/online-learning/consumer-involvement> and at <https://consumers.cochrane.org/learning> with new resources coming soon.

Are the tasks both home-based, and travelling to specific meetings?

Most of the tasks that come up on TaskExchange are home-based, for example reviewing materials in your own time at home and providing comments. Occasionally, a consumer task, may involve being asked to attend a meeting to represent the consumer view but that would be specified in the task-posting, so you'd know that before you decided whether to respond to the task or not.

I understand there's training with Cochrane Crowd, is there the same with TaskExchange?

There's no specific training required to use TaskExchange, we hope that it's very straightforward to use and hope that people can use the site and find it fairly self-explanatory on how to post a task or how to respond to a task. A short form of webinar presentations will be available.

Can you suspend receiving tasks on a temporary basis, for example on holiday?

Yes. Go into the "manage profile" drop-down menu and un-check the box, and then when you are ready to volunteer again, check it again and notifications will restart.

Will posts give any further information about what tasks mean, or how to get trained for each opportunity?

Posts will give some information about the nature of the task and the kind of knowledge, skills and experience needed. If you're not sure if you've got the right skills, for example, but are interested, you could write to the task poster and explain who you are and discuss with them whether you're a good match or not.

Are there filters that can help with interests in specific health areas? For example is there a mental health filter that allows you to search for questions on mental health topics such as depression, schizophrenia, anxiety, etc.

The filters that you can apply in TaskExchange have come from Cochrane Review Group topics with some additions. For example, there is a mental health filter that would enable you to search for the topics mentioned.

How are tasks put onto the system?

Anyone can join TaskExchange whether they're interested in posting tasks or responding to tasks. Opportunities are usually posted by Cochrane groups or Cochrane partner organisations. Posting a task is very simple. Click on the "post a task" button and enter in the task details, entering a title, a description of the task. The poster will click the button and the task gets published. Opportunities are screened by TaskExchange

How will my contribution be acknowledged, and recorded?

Task Exchange will record all of your completed tasks enabling you to view and download them.

Cochrane Membership now allows all contributions to be recorded on each member's account. In time you will be able to review your record. Contributions allow you to go from Supporter to a full Member.

Depending on the type of task, your contribution may also be acknowledged in other ways. For example, consumer peer reviewers must now be recorded in the Acknowledgements section of Cochrane Reviews.

With regard to expenses, these should be met by the organisation or group that has recruited you to the task. It is really important to clarify at the very beginning of your involvement whether expenses will be paid, what for, how much, and how they can be claimed.

Can I be paid for my contributions to Cochrane?

Payment for contributions is a complex matter. This will vary according to which country the task is being undertaken, which Review Group etc. In some parts of the world (UK for example) there are certain tasks that may be paid, for example if the work is commissioned by the UK National Institute for Health Research. However, there are parts of the world where payment is thought to undermine the voluntary principle. You should check carefully with the poster of the task. Accepting or even discussing payment can affect tax and benefits in some countries.

If I have any questions, or problems what can I do?

There is a lot of support available.

You can email taskexchange@cochrane.org with your question about TaskExchange.

General enquiries can be sent to the Cochrane Support team at support@cochrane.org

Questions about issues relating to consumer involvement can be sent directly to the Consumer Engagement Officer, rmorley@cochrane.org