



**Londonwide LMCs**

The professional voice of London general practice

# Guide to session invitations

Updated October 2022

## Why the focus on invitations?

Co-create aim to make our workshops feel safe, engaging and productive for all participants. To achieve this, participants need the opportunity to understand what they are taking part in, and how they can prepare themselves.

Our experience has been that many session invitations don't achieve these aims. We have seen in multiple contexts that, even if a session is really good, people don't experience it as good if they are expecting something different.

A welcoming, considerate and informative invitation sets the tone for the session.

## Who do the invitations come from?

Often in our projects, there are multiple organisations or people an invitation could come from. For example, we may have GP practices, Primary Care Networks and an Integrated Care System (ICS) involved in a project. Think about who would feel trustworthy to the people we're inviting. Should we use a generic NHS badge, or link it to a trusted GP practice or partner? Would it be better if the invitation came from a community group?

## What do participants need to know?

- **What's the project?** What will they be helping you with? What is the purpose?  
What other organisations are part of the project?
- **Who is the session for?** Who would we like to attend (and why)? Who else will be there?
- **When is the session?**
- **What will happen on the day?** What do you need from them? What will you do?  
Will people need to be able to read or write, speak or understand English?
- **What will they get out of it?**

- **What will happen afterwards?** How will you keep them informed?
- **Where is it?** How do you get there? Is there parking?
- **Is there any payment available for being involved?** Can people claim back expenses? Is there anything further to acknowledge their time and experience? How is this paid? Where payment is available, welfare benefits advice also needs to be available. Ask the client if they have this, at minimum a local Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) should be linked to.
- **Will you be filming, writing down what people say, taking pictures etc?** Will you be taking consent for this? Can people opt out?
- **Is there anything extra you can provide people in advance so that they understand more?** Not everyone will read/watch something, but some people feel far more comfortable with more knowns than unknowns.
- **What support will be available for people if the workshop brings up difficult things for them?**
- **Who do they contact to find out more, and to let you know they're planning on coming?**

## What do we need to know from participants?

- Ask about any access or dietary needs in the invitation (see next section).
- Do they have any needs around language to enable them to take part fully?
- Consider whether you need RSVPs.

# Accessibility and inclusivity

An accessible session can be understood as one where barriers to participation have been removed or otherwise addressed. Inclusivity goes further - we work *actively* to support everyone to have a positive experience. So we need to consider both things that might wholly prevent someone from attending (for example lack of step-free access), but also anything that some people might need to feel safe and comfortable and take part fully. There are a wide range of things that could support this aim. Some of them might even conflict (e.g. some people get migraines from bright fluorescent lighting, but some people can't see if the lighting isn't very bright). We can only know what our participants need by asking them.

Using open wording such as “is there anything we could do or provide which would support you to feel comfortable and take part fully in the session? Is there anything that could prevent you from attending or taking part fully in this session?” helps to reassure people that their needs are taken seriously.

You might also want to warn people in advance of any limits on the support that can be provided (for example, a workshop venue has been agreed that is not step-free, because it is the standard meeting place of the people you want to speak to).

If you're providing food, ask people about allergies and other dietary restrictions.

In your invitations, give people a way to contact the client (not Co-create as we don't hold personal information) to inform them about any needs around access and inclusivity.

## Tips on writing an invitation

Think carefully about the language you use. Keep things clear and simple. Avoid anything that could make people feel they don't understand so this is not for them.

Terms such as the following require explanation when used outside of the sector:

- Primary (and secondary) care
- Primary Care Network
- Local authority
- Integrated care system (ICS)
- NHS England and NHS Improvement
- Lived experience

Be as concise as possible, while ensuring you've provided all the information a participant could need. It's often useful to separate out the key information as a concise summary (for example this might go on the front of a paper invitation), and have another space for the details.



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## Contact:

Email: [info@wearecoco.create.com](mailto:info@wearecoco.create.com)