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| Classification: Official |
| Publication approval reference: PAR1465 |

Terms of reference (ToR) for investigation

Version 1, August 2022

# Key stakeholders

Those integral to the investigation should be consulted to develop the ToRs. This includes all people with a significant interest in the outcome and questions to be addressed by the investigation.

This should include the family or patient and staff affected and key members of the healthcare area where the investigation will be focused upon.

A co-design approach to the development of ToRs is helpful. This approach can help to manage expectations, ensure a comprehensive investigation with the correct focus and boundaries that enable an achievable outcome within a practical timeframe.

# Drafting ToRs

The crafting of precise and clear ToRs is a critical stage and will determine the effectiveness and satisfaction with the output from the investigation. There are no hard and fast rules to the development of ToRs, but we should be influenced by the time available to complete the investigation, the scale or impact of the problem and any more than three or four may reduce the focus of an investigation. There are some key factors which will help in the development of ToRs:

* Consider the breadth of the healthcare system to be included within the investigation, too wide may be impractical, too narrow may not establish key factors contributing to the outcome.
* What and how many questions is the investigation expected to address and do these achieve a balance across the questions raised by all stakeholders.
* The ToRs should enable consideration to the work context and why the actions or decisions made sense at the time.
* The questions to be addressed should include the gap between the way work is imagined to be completed and how staff report or observed to complete the work and why adjustments are necessary or the norm.
* The ToRs should enable a clear understanding of the risks and sufficiency of controls at the time of the incident and if these are sufficient in the future.

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| **Incident/incident reference** |  | |
| **Date agreed/version no.** |  | |
| **Date investigation is to be completed by** |  | |
| **Learning response lead** |  | |
| **Staff engaged in the development of ToRs (names/roles)** |  | |
| **Patient/family/carers engaged in the development of ToRs**  **(names/relationship)** | **If declined please state briefly why?** | |
| **Name** | **Relationship** |
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This investigation will…

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| **ToR 1** | *General description of aim/purpose* |
| **Key questions** | *List of questions to be asked to support the aim of the ToR* |
| **Healthcare settings** | *Key areas considered relevant to observe/interact with during the investigation* |
| **Healthcare processes** | *Known processes that appear significant to consider within the investigation* |

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| **ToR 2** | *General description of aim/purpose* |
| **Key questions** | *List of questions to be asked to support the aim of the ToR* |
| **Healthcare settings** | *Key areas considered relevant to observe/interact with during the investigation* |
| **Healthcare processes** | *Known processes that appear significant to consider within the investigation* |