PATIENT REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE OF RESTORING TRUST AFTER THE CERVICALCHECK AUDIT DISCLOSURES

AUTHORS: CEARA MARTYN, LYN FENTON, LILY FOX

Contact: cearamartyn@221plus.ie. More information: https://221plus.ie/

INTRODUCTION

After the CervicalCheck audit disclosures in 2018, there was a loss of trust between patients and the healthcare system in Ireland. The subsequent review by Dr Gabriel Scally recommended the development of a process to restore trust, which was formalized in the CervicalCheck Tribunal Act 2019 to involve meetings, the appointment of moderators and a Facilitator. This process was co-designed by 221+ Patient Representatives, the 221+ Manager and individuals from the NSS, CervicalCheck, the HSE and the Department of Health.

METHODS

This was an entirely new process, developed from a foundation of the needs of those affected.

The initial format was unsuitable as there were no protections in place for 221+ members. Although no predetermined outcome was possible as each member's story and trust process is unique, 221+ felt that a shared foundation must be agreed on as a basis for opening the process to members. The moderator role was to ensure this foundation was adhered to by each stakeholder.

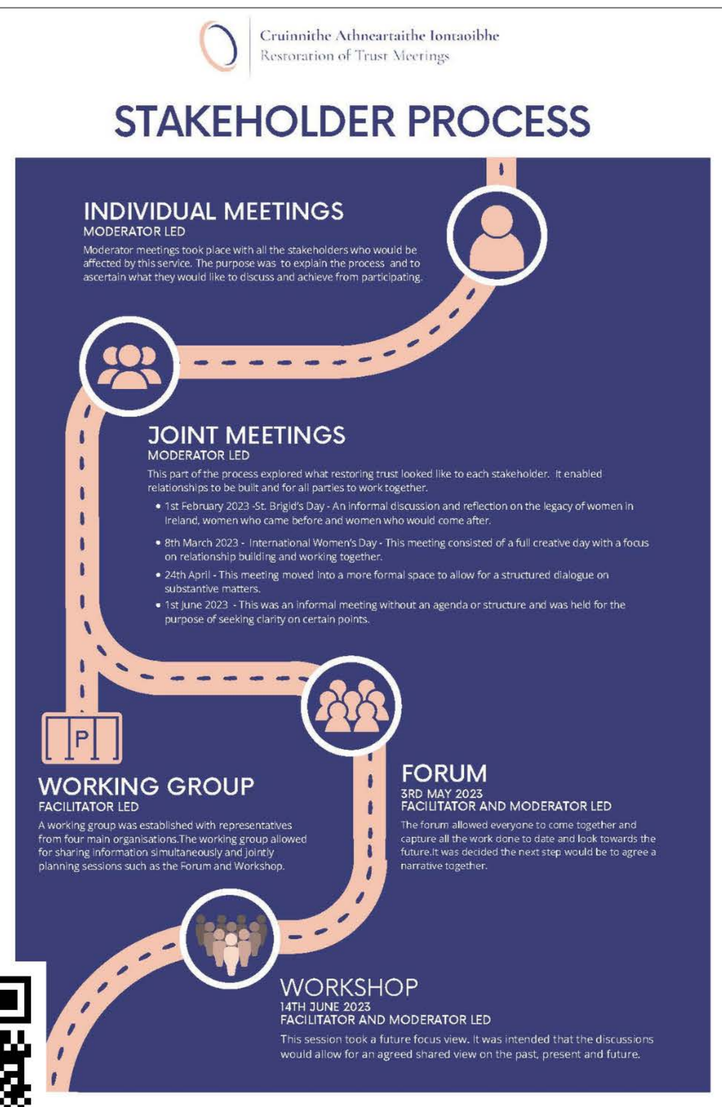
THE AGREED FOUNDATION:

Purpose: to restore the trust of 221+ members – the women and families affected by the CervicalCheck failures, in the cervical screening system and wider health system in Ireland.

Lens: future-focused, sensitive and empathetic.

Objective: A shared view on the past, present and future

To the right is a flow chart of the process of achieving this baseline.



RESULTS

SCAN QR CODE FOR JOINT STATEMENT

221+ Patient Representative Lyn Fenton described the process as **"difficult and challenging, but you have the potential to be a part of something that could be huge that could change not only healthcare, but how patients experience their healthcare journey".**

Ceara Martyn felt that **"There's always so much healing in the process and fighting for something."**

The outcome is a joint statement apologizing for and recognizing the harm of the past and agreement to work together towards eliminating cervical cancer. This acknowledgement of accountability is highly significant. Informative meetings with 221+ members have been held and the process is now open to 221+ members.

CONCLUSION

This process was time-consuming and at times emotionally taxing. Yet it is also an achievement for all involved, who have created a baseline for members who lost trust and want to have a conversation with the individuals involved in their care. It is also a basis to work from to encourage public confidence in screening and the uses for elements of this process may extend far beyond this.

Lyn Fenton: despite the emotional toll, "I still believe in its potential to do good from a restorative point of view. And from a conflict point of view. And I do believe that it could help medical professionals in talking to patients about their care".

KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR RESTORING TRUST

- Really listen to patients
- Engage with patients from the beginning
- Have a process looking at all aspects of the situation and open outcomes
- Create a shared lens to approach restoring trust on an individual basis
- Timeliness
- Education for system change
- When told harm has been caused, "sit back and make a human choice" (Lyn Fenton)