

Position Papers of the European Forum for Primary Care

Version 2016

One of the working tools of the European Forum for Primary is the development of Position Papers. This document briefly describes the procedures surrounding position papers.

Content:

The Position Papers support practitioners, researchers and policymakers in primary care by:

1. An explicit statement on the perspective from which this Paper is written: primary care as a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary, patient centred and community oriented approach.
2. Clarifying concepts and making (a) problem statement(s). The problem might address the organization or delivery of care and/or the situation of specific groups of patients.
3. Clarifying why this subject is a concern in/of primary care, and why it is (or should be) a concern at international (EU) level. This might be related to the incidence, prevalence or burden of disease, problems in disease management but also to organizational problems, including stewardship, financial, human resources and informational management.
4. Describing experiences (both positive and negative) and developments, including country or system characteristics that influence these experiences.
5. Formulating lessons learned and the conditions (policies) that favour positive experiences in terms of access, equity, efficiency, and quality.
6. Recommending policy measures on national and European level and identifying areas for research.

These six points should be leading in drafting the contents of the Position Paper and in evaluating its quality.

Scope:

Position Papers focus on the needs of patients or patient groups in their social context and the answers that organised, multidisciplinary primary care can give to address these needs. More specifically the focus is on:

- Patients affected by problematic management of their problems (where a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach may help patients' ability to cope)
- Patients with multiple pathologies (where a vertical approach fails to solve the complexity of the management)
- Healthy people at risk or with problems of access to health care
- Organizational and management issues that might affect access to basic health services.

The papers deal with primary care in Europe, and therefore should be based and focused on experiences and policies in many countries or at least in a number of countries. Examples of experiences and policies in a range of countries are a key element of the Position Paper. Although emphasis is on EU countries, non-EU countries are included in the European Forum for Primary and hence in its Position Papers. There is no strict need to include information or evidence from all countries; it is variation and diversity that counts. Highlights and issues count rather than completeness of information; qualitative information as well as quantitative. 'Grey' information (that is: information that is not published in scientific journals but known to insiders in the subject in the participating countries) is considered as relevant information. Position papers present the positive and negative aspects of the issues discussed and where possible position papers present a consensus. However, it should be stressed that especially organizational and policy issues surrounding primary care are context dependent, implicating

that different solutions may be optimal for different contexts. On particular topics, a Position Paper might also be a *positions* paper, referring to the diversity of viewpoints within the membership of the Forum.

The aim of Position Papers is not to provide guidelines for the clinical management of diseases or health problems. Guidelines have their own, much more strict, methodologies. It might, however, fit into a Position Paper to highlight the lack of widely accepted (multidisciplinary) guidelines, but their development is a different responsibility. The paper has a maximum of 10 pages, excluding references and annexes.

Process:

The Executive Board of the EFPC commissions the development of the Position Paper to a particular institute or organisation, after having approved the subject of the intended Position Paper on its readiness to be presented as a Position Paper. The preparation of Position Papers will be commissioned on the basis of the network of the Forum or based on a call among its members. In line with the *de minimis* rule, no formal tender will be launched. A contract is signed, which includes the objective(s) and target group(s) of the Position Paper, a description of the consultation and writing process, a time frame and end date at which the Position Paper is to be submitted to the Executive Board for endorsement (see below). The contract describes the financial support that is provided to the coordinating institute and that normally will cover only part of the time and expenses committed to the Paper.

Under leadership of the coordinating institute, a first framework or draft version of the paper is developed and presented through the channels of the EFPC and the network of the coordinating institute. The institute identifies a number of experts, representing different experiences in various countries, with a minimum of 4 experts in 3 countries, maximum 8 experts in as many countries. The group of experts includes one representative of the European Forum for Primary Care Executive Board. The experts are invited to contribute by email or otherwise, during conferences and other occasions. Apart from the email communication, for each Position Paper at least 2 workshops or debates are held with physical attendance of at least 10 relevant persons in each workshop. One workshop is placed within an international conference (a conference organised by the EFPC itself or one that has a wide attendance from the main target groups of the Forum, such as the annual conferences of WONCA Europe, EUPHA, EHMA, Enothe, WENR, etc.).

The final version of the paper follows the guidelines for manuscripts of Quality in Primary Care.

Timeframe

Overall period: 12 months

From the date of signing the contract the following results will be achieved

- Within 3 months a 1st draft version will be ready
- Between 3 and 8 months, further drafts will be prepared, based on 2 workshops.
- Within 9 months a draft is presented to the EFPC Executive Board.
- Within 10 months the final version of the PP will be presented to all EFPC members for endorsement.
- Within 11 months the final version is offered for approval to the EFPC Executive Board
- Finalization of the PP after 12 months

Ownership, status and validity:

The Position Paper is developed under responsibility of the European Forum for Primary Care. To that effect, the selection of the coordinating party, the consultation process and the final version of the Paper need to be approved by the Executive Board and endorsed by the membership. Approval and endorsement of the final Paper is based on:

- the general quality of the paper,
- the rigueur with which the consultation process is conducted (see under process),
- the coverage of the six points mentioned on the first page and the scope of the paper (see under contents and scope)
- the consistency with other Position Papers and the mission of the EFPC.

The latter refers essentially to the use of key terms (primary care, health needs etc) and style and targets of the policy recommendations. Scientific rigueur is strived for but limited due the character of the papers and their production process.

Given the process of producing position papers, they are authored by the coordinating party (principal or first authors, maximum 2) and co-authored by the experts (between 4 and 8) who participated in the process of drafting by participating in the meetings, providing ideas, and commenting, writing and rewriting the paper.

Copy right of the Position Papers is with the European Forum for Primary Care (unless stated otherwise), as well as responsibility for dissemination. The coordinating party will be acknowledged at all times during dissemination.

Use and dissemination of the Position Papers

The European Forum for Primary Care intends to disseminate the Position Papers in electronic and/or hard copy form to all members of the Forum, requesting further dissemination at all occasions and opportunities possible. The widest dissemination possible will be sought.

A selection of Position Papers will be published in the Forum's official journal *Primary Health Care Research & Development*. Any editorial adaptations of the Position Paper will be discussed with the Advisory Committee representative mentioned above and the coordinating institute.

Evaluation

To learn from the experiences with the production of position papers, the coordinating party and other participants will be asked for a brief evaluation once the Paper has been finally endorsed.