



Minutes of the Board meeting

2 June 2016

Present:

Professor Stephen Holgate CBE (SH) *Chair*
Professor Ian Jackson (IJ)
Professor Ian Kimber OBE (IK)
Professor Stefan Przyborski (SP)
Dr Ian Ragan (IR)
Dr Jef Grainger (JG)
Dr Vicky Robinson (VR)
Dr Carl Westmoreland (CW)
Dr Tony Peatfield (AP)
Mr Terry Priest (TP)

Dr Paul Brooker (PB)
Professor Lucy Walker (LW)
Professor Chris Denning (CD)

Office:

Dr Mark Prescott (MP)
Dr Anthony Holmes (AH)
Dr Nathalie Percie du Sert (NPdS)
Dr Suzanne McArdle (SM)
Kayleigh Purdon (KP) *Secretariat*

Apologies:

Mr Paul Finnemore
Professor Blanca Rodriguez

1. Welcome

1.1. SH welcomed members to the meeting.

2. Minutes and actions from the meeting on 3 November

- 2.1 The minutes from the November meeting were agreed to be an accurate account of the discussions.
- 2.2 Following the last Board meeting, Kathryn Chapman had visited the MRC Toxicology Unit to meet with Professor Anne Willis and colleagues and to present the NC3Rs cross-sector initiatives.

3. Annual review of the NC3Rs Risk Register

- 3.1 Members reviewed the NC3Rs corporate risk register and discussed the following:
- UK SBS (R-3104) - VR informed the Board that amendments had been made to the service agreement between UKSBS and the Research Councils regarding the former's support of the external peer review process. The NC3Rs are aware of the implications of these changes on their business processes and are reviewing these internally to ensure minimal disruption.
 - Website security (R-3616) - The NC3Rs has commissioned the annual penetration testing for its websites. The results will be available in September.

The Board noted the remaining risks and existing control measures as appropriate.

4. Review of management accounts 2015/16 and future forecast 2016/17 to 2019/20

- 4.1 VR and SM provided the Board with a summary of the management accounts for 2015/16. Last year saw an underspend of £14k (0.01%). The majority of the budget had been spent on research funding schemes and CRACK IT.

- 4.2 AP and JG informed the Board that the funding allocation following the NC3Rs Quinquennial review (QQR) had been revised as a result of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). The revised budget was £9.5 million for 2016/17 and 2017/18 with an indicative budget of £9.1 million for the following two years.

Action: VR and SM to meet with Martin Carmack, Finance Manger to review forecast.

5. NC3Rs summary of activities and updates

- 5.1 The Board noted the update on current activities. VR provided further details on:

Staff

- Kathryn Chapman and Rubina Ahmed have now left the organisation. In April, Dr Katie Bates was appointed as Rubina's replacement as Research Funding Programme Manager. Dr Helen Prior has also joined the team as Drug Development Programme Manager. This post is funded by the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (APBI).
- The NC3Rs is currently in the process of recruiting three Science Managers and two Regional Programme Managers.
- SM has been promoted to Band 3 to reflect the extra responsibility she has taken on following Caroline Shriver and Ashley Scott's departure.

CRACK IT

- An Advisory Panel, chaired by IR, has been established to assess potential Challenges and make recommendations to the NC3Rs. Panel members will review and provide advice and guidance to contractors of recently ended Challenges and on-going Challenges that are within 12 months of their contract end date.

6. Strategy update

- 6.1 In May the NC3Rs held two internal strategy meetings. These focused on:

- How the NC3Rs works and engages with its stakeholders
- How the NC3Rs can strengthen links between in-house programmes, grants and CRACK IT
- Reviewing current projects.

The plan was to publish a strategy document based on the NC3Rs QQR and revised funding allocation.

7. Research funding update

- 7.1 MP provided an update on the following.

Project grants

The NC3Rs received 92 outlines and following triage, 30 full applications were submitted. All applicants were required to attend an experimental design workshop before submitting a full application.

IK will step down as Panel Chair after the July meeting and will be replaced by SP.

Strategic awards

One award was made for the 2016 strategic call on novel approaches to refine the use of chronic implants in neuroscience studies with macaques.

Demand management strategy

Over the last year the NC3Rs has updated its demand management strategy to also include the publication of call budgets and improve applicant awareness of application numbers and success rates.

Early career awards

The NC3Rs has reviewed its early career schemes. This has included the introduction of a Training Fellowship scheme.

The NC3Rs has received 34 outlines for this year's David Sainsbury Fellowship.

PhD Studentship scheme

Over a 100 outlines have been received for the 2016 call. The British Heart Foundation has agreed to provide funding for three awards.

A review of the PhD studentships is underway.

Skills and knowledge transfer scheme

The NC3Rs is currently developing a skills and knowledge transfer scheme. The scheme will focus on implementing existing 3Rs models, tools and technologies within routine research practice.

Researchfish

The NC3Rs is in the process of analysing data collected from Researchfish, following the recent round of data collection.

Experimental design

In March the NC3Rs held a joint workshop with the MRC for grant panel members focusing on the importance of high quality plans for experimental design and analysis in funding applications.

8. Non-Animal Technologies collaboration update

- 8.1 AH updated the Board on the Non-Animal Technologies (NATs) collaboration. There had not been a meeting of the partner organisations and it was unclear how the recommendations published in the NATs roadmap would be progressed based on changing priorities following the CSR. The NC3Rs continued to seek opportunities to collaborate with the Medicines Discovery Catapult.

It was agreed that there would be an update at the next Board meeting.

9. AOB

- 9.1 SH requested that the presentation from NPdS on the NC3Rs experimental design programme would be held until the next Board meeting.
- 9.2 The Board discussed the NC3Rs membership of the Openness Concordat which is managed by Understanding Animal Research (UAR). It agreed that SH would write to UAR to express concern about the publication of some materials which the Board did not consider in the spirit of the Concordat, and that the Board would continue to review the NC3Rs participation in the Concordat.

Action: SH to write to UAR