



Minutes of the Board meeting

30 January 2017

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 Paul Finnemore
Dr Paul Brooker (PB)
Professor Lucy Walker (LW)
Professor Chris Denning (CD)
Professor Blanca Rodriguez (BR)

Office:

Dr Mark Prescott (MP) *item 9*
Dr Anthony Holmes (AH) *item 6*
Dr Suzanne McArdle (SM)
Mr Martin Carmack (MC) *item 3*
Dr Katie Bates (KB) *item 5*
Dr Samantha Gan (SG) *item 5*
Dr Kathryn Owen (KO) *item 6*
Dr Fiona Sewell (FS) *item 7*
Dr Nathalie Percie du Sert *item 8*
Kayleigh Purdon (KP) *Secretariat*

Apologies:

Mr Terry Priest (TP)

1. Welcome

1.1. SH welcomed members to the meeting.

IK's term on the Board has now ended. SH thanked IK for his participation, support and invaluable contribution to the NC3Rs. IK will chair the new impact working group.

2. Minutes and actions from the meeting on 2 June

2.1 The minutes from the June meeting were agreed to be an accurate account of the discussions.

2.2 Following the last Board meeting, SH had written to Wendy Jarret, Chief Executive of Understanding Animal Research to express concerns regarding some of its published materials that were not in the spirit of the Openness Concordat. VR met with Wendy Jarret to discuss further.

3. Finance update

3.1 MC provided the Board with an update on the NC3Rs medium-term outlook for the next four years and discussed the management accounts for 2016/2017.

MC indicated that there may be an opportunity to commit further funds to the 2017/18 research funding schemes.

4. NC3Rs summary on activities and updates

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

Staff

- Five members of staff are on or due to go on maternity leave.
 - AH is currently overseeing CRACK IT Challenges until Cathy Vickers returns.
 - Kathryn Owen has been appointed as Animal Welfare Programme Manager to cover Katie Lidster's post.
 - VR is reviewing the sustainability of the toxicology programmes with Natalie Burden and Fiona Sewell both about to go on maternity leave.
 - No appointment has been made to cover Joanna Edwards' position.
- The NC3Rs now has two Regional Programme Managers in post, Emma Stringer and Kamar Ameen-Ali.
- Three Science Managers have been appointed, Nikki Gellatly, Samuel Brod and Alice Carstairs. Samuel will support the Animal Welfare and Policy programme and Nikki the toxicology activities. Alice is due to start in March and will support the Research Funding team.

5. Research funding and early career awards update

5.1 KB and SG provided the Board with the following updates:

Highlight notice

For the first time the NC3Rs has a highlight notice that is applicable to all response-mode funding schemes. For 2017, the notice aims to raise awareness and build confidence in the use of human tissue to replace animal models.

Panel member recruitment and induction

13 new panel members have been appointed to the following funding panels:

- Eight will join the Grants Assessment Panel
- Three will join the Studentship Assessment Panel
- Two will join the Training Fellowship Panel.

All new panel members attended an induction day at the NC3Rs on the 24 January. As part of their induction members were provided with examples of useful Designated Panel Member (DPM) comments and were placed in breakout groups for a practice assessment session.

Researchfish

The NC3Rs has revised its question set for Researchfish in order to improve the quality of 3Rs impact data. The changes will be incorporated in time for the next data collection in March.

Project grants

89 outline applications have been received for the 2017 call. 17 of the applications fall within the remit of the highlight notice. An outline assessment meeting and applicant workshop will be held in March. Final awards will be made in July.

Studentships

The NC3Rs awarded 11 studentships in 2016, including one sponsored by the British Heart Foundation (BHF).

As part of the feedback from the Quinquennial Review (QQR), the NC3Rs has conducted a review to assess the impact of its PhD Studentship scheme. The review is currently in its final revision stage and will be published in the Spring.

Training Fellowships

22 applications were received and four were awarded.

David Sainsbury Fellowship

Four candidates were invited to attend an interview following the 2016 call. Three awards were made. Amendments have been made to the eligibility criteria.

Skills and Knowledge Transfer

19 outline applications were received of which 12 have been invited to submit a full application. Three of the applications fall within the remit of the human tissue highlight notice. Awards will be made in April.

Grant Holder interactions

The NC3Rs had been reassessing how it engages with its grant holders. The annual grant holder event will be reinstated.

Impact working group

A new working group has been established to discuss and advise on practical 3Rs challenges and accelerating impacts. IK will chair the working group. Membership of the group will include a range of stakeholders.

The group will meet twice a year.

6. CRACK IT update and Business Growth scheme

- 6.1 AH gave an update on CRACK IT Challenges and Solutions. AH provided a number of case studies to illustrate what CRACK IT has achieved and the impact it has had on the 3Rs.

AH outlined plans to increase the CRACK IT Solutions funding per award from £30k to £50k. The period for identifying possible partners applying for funding will be extended to 12 months. It has been agreed that the CRACK IT Advisory Panel will review all Solutions before they are showcased.

- 6.2 KO provided the Board with an overview of the new Business Growth scheme which will give contractors within their final year an opportunity to meet with the Advisory Panel to discuss next steps in terms of commercialisation plans, support and promoting the outputs and 3Rs impacts. Contractors will also have the opportunity to apply for additional funding, up to £50k for 12 months, to allow them to maximise their business strategy for near-market ready products and services.

7. Fixed concentration procedure (FCP) update

- 7.1 FS gave an update on the fixed concentration procedure for acute inhalation studies and the additional data analyses that were being requested by some national representatives to support OECD acceptance. The Board discussed the complexity of working internationally and the time and resource commitment that were required.

8. Experimental design and reporting update

- 8.1 NPdS outlined the current landscape, challenges and priorities for the ARRIVE guidelines and Experimental Design Assistant (EDA).

9. Institutional and regional activities update

- 9.1 MP updated the Board on the NC3Rs institutional and regional activities.

The NC3Rs now has two co-funded Regional Programme Managers in post. The Regional Programme Managers provide 3Rs support to universities in the Midlands and the North West of England and Yorkshire.

The NC3Rs is currently working on an online 3Rs self-assessment tool, a framework which will allow universities and other research organisations to benchmark their 3Rs activities. The tool will be shared with a small number of stakeholders in March.

- 9.2 It was agreed that the NC3Rs would respond to the REF consultation to highlight the importance of including 3Rs impacts. MP would take the lead on this.

10. AOB

- 10.1 VR reminded members that the annual 3Rs Prize reception will take place on the 8 March.

- 10.2 The next Board meeting will be held on the 8 June.