

COMMITTEE ON THE MEDICAL ASPECTS OF RADIATION IN THE ENVIRONMENT

114th meeting, Wednesday 20th July 2016
Richmond House, London

Present *Chairman:* Dr Chris Gibson

Members: Dr Paul Darragh
 Dr Frank de Vocht
 Professor John Harrison
 Professor Brenda Howard
 Dr Colin Martin
 Professor Stephanie McKeown
 Professor Mark Pearce
 Professor Paul Pharoah
 Dr David Sutton
 Professor Roger Taylor
 Dr Mireille Toledano
 Professor Richard Wakeford
 Professor Peter Warwick

Assessors: EA
 HSE
 PHE
 DH
 SEPA
 NDA
 BEIS
 FSA
 WG

Secretariat: Dr Simon Mann (PHE)
 Dr Emma Petty (PHE)
 Dr Kerry Broom (PHE)

Observer: Ms Nasreen Parkar (PHE)

114TH COMARE MEETING

OPENING ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman opened the 114th meeting and welcomed members. He advised members of the private nature of the meeting and that papers should remain confidential. Members were asked to declare any interests during the meeting.

The Chairman welcomed Dr Kerry Boom, who was substituting for Ms Kim Stonell in the secretariat and Ms Nasreen Parkar (PHE) who was observing the meeting.

The Chairman also welcomed the substitute assessors for FSA, HSE and NDA.

The Chairman advised members that both Professor Catharine West and Mr Ian Robinson reached the end of their terms of office with COMARE at the end of May. A formal letter of thanks would be sent from DH, but the Chair wished to minute thanks for all of their work with the committee.

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Dr Jane Barrett, Professor Kevin Prise, Dr Tom Nunan, Professor Peter Marsden and Dr Peter Riley. Apologies had been received from the assessors for FSA, EA, FSS, ONS, HSE, NDA, NI DoH, MoD, SG and DCLG. Apologies were also received from Ms Kim Stonell (PHE).

The Chairman reminded assessors that substitutes may attend the meeting and requested that departments ensure representatives are present at the meetings to comment on items relevant to them.

ITEM 1 Minutes of the 113th meeting

- 1.1 The minutes were agreed without amendment.
- 1.2 The Chairman noted that the 2016 work programme had been agreed with DH and was accessible from the COMARE webpage. It was clarified that UV was not excluded, but did not form part of the 2016 work programme.
- 1.3 The HSE assessor noted that the UK has transposed a brief on EMF into regulation and this would come into force on 1st July (4th July for Northern Ireland).
'The Control of Electromagnetic Fields at Work Regulations 2016' - http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2016/588/pdfs/ukxi_20160588_en.pdf.
See also - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/radiation/nonionising/emf.htm>
- 1.4 The inclusion of non-ionising radiation topics in the work programme was discussed. Members were advised that currently there is no obvious gap for consideration as a project. The committee also receives annual reports from PHE on radon and EMF. The issue of the association of cardiovascular disease with low level radiation exposure was raised. It was suggested the committee keeps this under review.

ITEM 2 Matters arising

i) COMARE membership

a. Lay members

- 2.1 The Chairman informed the committee that two posts had been advertised for lay members for the committee. The closing date for applications was 5th August 2016. He advised members on the remuneration policy for new members and reappointed members.

ii) COMARE matters

a) Database access and cancer registry transfer

- 2.2 The PHE assessor informed members that Professor John Newton is the Chief Knowledge Officer for PHE and is actively working with Wales and Scotland to achieve harmony with cancer registration, which is still very much work in progress.

- 2.3 Members discussed the issue with patients being able to opt out of data storage, which could affect the cancer registry data and raised concerns on the impact the opt-out system could have for future studies. Professor Taylor would provide details of a consultation on the opt-out process
[ACTION: Professor Taylor]

b) Authorship requests for work associated with reports

- 2.4 The Chairman has raised the issue of authorship requests with the lead DH assessor and the new CSA for DH, but has not yet received a response. He agreed to continue to pursue this and noted that it may have wider issues for the research community.
[ACTION: The Chairman]

ITEM 3 Working Group Reports

i) Contaminations Working Group

- 3.1 The Chairman drew members' attention to the beach particles updates considered by CWG since the last meeting. He noted that the last (7th) meeting of the CWG took place in March. The next meeting would be associated with the November COMARE meeting.

Sellafield

- 3.2 The EA assessor confirmed that EA had provided the CWG with an update prior to this meeting. The 2015/2016 beach monitoring program had been completed to plan. Sellafield Ltd's annual report would be on their website shortly and EA would provide the CWG with the weblink.
[ACTION: EA]

- 3.3 An update was given on the current beach monitoring programme. Two Cs-137-rich finds warranted further characterisation. The Sellafield Particles Working Group (SPWG) provided their workplan of key tasks to CWG for comment. An update was given on the analysis of the unusual Sr-90-rich. Sellafield Ltd has initiated a review on geomorphology, which will use aerial photography. The SWPG is working on a revised intervention protocol. This work would be shared with CWG in due course.

- 3.4 Members discussed the Sr-90-rich particle and the geomorphology review. It was noted that following the review monitoring of the dunes would require the use of hand-held devices. The SEPA assessor noted that the Dounreay site had previously monitored the dunes and the golf course at Sandside.

Dounreay

- 3.5 The SEPA assessor confirmed that the Dounreay foreshore and Sandside beach are still being monitored by DSRL. An update was given on the 2016 finds to date. There will be a PRAG(D) meeting in November to discuss the available data after the lag time from the offshore monitoring and to determine how this is taken forward.

Dalgety Bay

- 3.6 The SEPA assessor advised members that the MoD is still carrying out monitoring and recovery of particles. The remediation plans by the MoD continue to be developed. Intrusive work is required on the rock armour, which will be undertaken this year. The final remediation plan will be consulted on.

- 3.7 The Chairman asked for an update on the recommendation in the 15th COMARE report on the registration of radioactively contaminated land. The BEIS assessor advised that Scottish Government would write to COMARE to provide an update. Recommendations relating to guidance will be taken forward with the BSS work. It has been recognised that the SEPA workshops have proved successful and it is hoped that this approach may also be used for English local authorities.
[ACTION: Scottish Government]

- 3.8 The SEPA assessor added that SEPA will be consulting on the guidance on walkover surveys for existing contaminated sites in Scotland, giving baseline criteria for contractors and contractees. A second workshop is also planned in August for local authority planners.

3.9 The Chairman asked if there were plans for consultation on the BSS work regarding radioactively contaminated land. The BEIS assessor replied that it is hoped that a pre-consultation workshop will be held in the autumn and COMARE would be welcome to attend.

[ACTION: BEIS]

3.10 Responding to the action from the last meeting, the BEIS assessor stated that the radioactive waste storage program was in place and that the process for identifying sites had been set out in 2014. The process is under scrutiny from CORWM. The BEIS assessor also clarified that DECC was now part of the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

ii) **Authorisations Working Group**

3.11 Professor Warwick informed members that there were two items to report. The AWG has submitted one response since the last committee meeting on an application to change the existing environmental permit held by Devonport Royal Dockyards. Dr Petty added that the secretariat had received notification that the application had been granted, which would be forwarded to the AWG.

[ACTION: Secretariat]

3.12 Last year the AWG responded to the SEPA consultation on two applications concerning Rosyth. A letter has been received announcing the selected storage site for the Intermediate Level radioactive Waste (ILW) and the AWG have been thanked for participating in the consultation process. Members discussed what triggers the AWG's involvement in consultations.

ITEM 4 COMARE publications in progress

i) **COMARE – 17th Report – Sellafield and Dounreay Review**

4.1 The Chairman reminded members that the report had been submitted in March to DH and Scottish Government requesting permission to publish. Professor Pearce added that the two associated papers had been submitted for publication. Professor Wakeford noted there were still concerns over some dose assessments and the PHE assessor reported that this issue is being reviewed by PHE and the amended doses will be incorporated into the report. The Chairman proposed that any further changes would be handled by the report authors and the committee agreed.

[ACTION: SDRS]

4.2 The Chairman apologised for the delay in publishing the report, adding that it was important to ensure that all the details were correct. He thanked PHE for the additional work on the doses. The PHE assessor suggested that PHE would produce a paper on this work, which could be provided for the next meeting.

[ACTION: PHE]

4.3 The Chairman asked about the two associated papers that had been submitted for publication. Professor Wakeford replied that the British Journal of Cancer had wanted to publish the thyroid cancer paper as a short communication. The paper has been updated and submitted to Journal of Radiological Protection in its full length and is currently under review. The Chairman asked Professor Wakeford and Professor Pearce to keep him updated on progress.

[ACTION: Professor Wakeford & Professor Pearce]

4.4 The DH assessor advised members that the request to the Minister for permission to publish may be delayed until September due to the new Government. He added that DH's R&D department have agreed to give a presentation at the November meeting to explain the current research funding process.

4.5 Members discussed the launch plans for the report and the site stakeholder meetings. Professor Wakeford suggested that the thyroid cancer paper could be shared with the PHE/NDA governance group.

[ACTION: Professor Wakeford]

ii) **COMARE – 18th Report – Interventional Radiology Review**

4.6 The Chairman advised members that this work is still on hold and no further meetings have been held. The membership will be confirmed. When restarted, a project plan will be produced for the report.

[ACTION: MPS(IR) Chair / Secretariat]

iii) **COMARE – 19th Report – DXA Scanning Issues**

- 4.7 Dr Martin advised members that a subcommittee was being established to investigate whether the practice of using DXA (Dual-energy X-ray Absorptiometry) scans for sports performance assessments comes under the JOPIIR Regulations 2014. He gave the background to the request for advice and confirmed the objectives of the subcommittee. A sports medicine physician is still needed on the membership. It was noted that the guidance needed to be available for the implementation of the BSS directive. Members discussed the remit of the subcommittee and the issues affecting the BSS directive. The Chairman summarised that the committee supported the continued approach with the BSS and continued collaborations with the EU for research.

[ACTION: MPS(DXA) Chair / Secretariat]

ITEM 5 Updates on previously published reports

i) **COMARE – 16th Report – CT dose issues**

- 5.1 The DH assessor advised members that the DH Working Group report on the recommendations from the 16th COMARE report had been published on the COMARE reports webpage. The aim of the report was to try to use the guidance to inform healthcare providers on what practices to adopt. The Chairman thanked DH for the report and said that it was encouraging that the recommendations were being taken forward.

ITEM 6 Any other business

- 6.1 Professor Wakeford referred to the Darby et al paper on cardiovascular disease and agreed that more research is needed on this issue. Dr de Vocht mentioned a proposed study on cardiovascular risk in Sellafield workers.
- 6.2 The Chairman reminded members that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 22nd November 2016 at Skipton House. He closed the meeting at 12.30pm.