



Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency

Minutes

CET/17/001

Title of meeting	Corporate Executive Team formal monthly meeting
Date	08 November 2016
Time	09.00 – 13.00
Venue	G-3, BPR
Chair	Ian Hudson
Attendees	CET

CET Attendees

Ian Hudson	Chief Executive (Chair)
Jon Fundrey	Chief Operating Officer
Rachel Bosworth	Director of Communications
Vanessa Birchall-Scott	Director of Human Resources
Patience Wilson	deputising for Director of Policy
Christian Schneider	Director of the National Institute for Biological Standards & Control
John Wilkinson	Director of Devices
Gerald Heddell	Director of Inspection, Enforcement and Standards
June Raine	Director of Vigilance and Risk Management of Medicines
Siu Ping Lam	Director of Licensing
[Redacted]	deputising for Director of Information Management
Janet Valentine	Director of the Clinical Practice Research Datalink
Paul Wright	DH Legal Services

Additional attendees

[Names redacted under section 40 of the FOIA (personal data)]

Andy Gregory (Policy) and Ian Dalton (Policy) for item 4: Post-EU referendum - update and discussion and item 8: International Strategy

Richard Humphreys (F&P) for item 18: Finance and Procurement Report

1. Apologies and Announcements

1.1 Apologies were received from Jonathan Mogford and John Quinn.

2. Draft minutes of the 4 October Corporate Executive Team meeting (CET/16/285) including table of actions and final minutes of the 31 August Corporate Executive Team (CET/16/286)

2.1 The draft minutes were agreed. The CET reviewed and provided updates on the table of actions. The final minutes of the 31 August meeting were noted.

3. Draft minutes of the Agency Board meeting of 14 October (CET/16/287) and final minutes of the Agency Board meeting of 12 September (CET/16/287)

3.1 The draft minutes of the Board meeting of 16 October and the final minutes of the Board meeting of 12 September were noted – of both the public and closed Board sessions.

STRATEGY

4. Post EU Referendum – update and discussion (CET/16/288)

4.1 [Redacted under section 35 of the FOIA (Formulation of government policy)]

5. Digital capability (CET/16/289)

5.1 Siu Ping Lam presented a paper informing CET on the progress of the Digital Skill Review discussed in the November 2015 CET as part of the overall Annual Skills Review paper. Results of staff survey on Digital Capability have been analysed; these indicate that staff across the Agency who took part in the survey are competent at basic and working levels; almost 100% of staff are proficient at a basic level and 70% at a proficient working level. Staff are generally keen to learn and improve on their digital capability further. Practitioner and expert levels may require further development in certain areas.

5.2 A number of actions were proposed. CET agreed with the direction of travel; and supported the proposal that the survey results are disseminated on the digital capability of staff throughout the whole Agency. The results will inform individual Divisions/Centres of their staff capability and these can be used to help define training needs required for their part of the business. CET endorsed the action that each division should identify a digital capability lead to support the L&D team in scoping and rolling out the appropriate training solutions, to monitor and communicate progress and to keep up to date as the training rolls out. This could be the existing Training Coordinator or another staff member as decided by that division.

5.3 CET agreed that the results of the survey can be used as the baseline to monitor and report on our progress both in-house and annually to the CS for their skills audit. It was noted that 50% of staff didn't respond to the survey – this could be improved in further surveys. IT proficiency is an area which could be tested during recruitment exercises. It was noted that different roles may require different digital skills.

Action: disseminate survey results throughout the Agency. Divisions to nominate digital capability lead from each division and work on developing training plans as necessary.

6. Moving towards greater transparency on using animals in research (CET/16/290)

6.1 [Redacted under section 35 of the FOIA (Formulation of government policy)]

7. Needs & Vision Update (CET/16/300)

7.1 [Redacted under section 43 of the FOIA (Commercial interests)]

8. International Strategy (CET/16/302)

8.1 [Redacted under section 35 of the FOIA (Formulation of government policy)]

GOVERNANCE & DELIVERY

9. Apprenticeship Update (CET/16/303)

9.1 [Name redacted under section 40 of the FOIA (personal data)] gave an update on the apprenticeship programme. The Agency is on track to reach the 2.3% target by February 2017, mainly as a result of management apprenticeships. The CET were asked to consider how best to make the most of these management apprenticeships, which supplement other management training programmes. TOPRA are involved in creating 2 new regulatory standards; there has been some concern whether the Agency would be able to commit resources to this. TOPRA require 1 person from the relevant division to commit to 2 or 3 meetings over the next 12 months, and would like input in how the final assessment would be undertaken of these apprentices. TOPRA needs 10 employers to contribute for the standard to go through. Whether this programme would be relevant to the work of the Agency wasn't clear at this point. Going forward the Agency needs to identify other ways of meeting the 2.3% target.

9.2 HR has clarified that the target refers to new apprentices each year. It was confirmed that for current staff they would remain in post/current grade during the apprenticeship period. There have been some discussions with DH about rotation of apprenticeships however this creates payroll/employer difficulties. The standard in development by TOPRA will be shared with CET. If the Agency doesn't reach the 2.3% target there are no financial penalties but it would be picked up in the quarterly reports to DH/Cabinet Office.

Action: (i) HR to share standard in development by TOPRA with the CET for comment and to discuss further details with the operational divisions, such as Licensing Division.

10. Performance management process review (CET/16/304)

10.1 [Name redacted under section 40 of the FOIA (personal data)] presented an update on the performance management process review. In 2015 the CET agreed a number of changes to the performance management scheme; the next year ran smoother with more concise guidance and fewer appeals. Feedback from business partners was that staff felt more comfortable with the performance management process. HR reviewed the scheme again to ensure all aspects make sense and are clear for staff. CET were asked if they were happy to reconfirm the agreement to share pre-validation ratings (once agreed through the line management chain) before the moderation panels; CET agreed this. It was proposed that the new Oracle Fusion HR system could be used to record appraisals; CET agreed to mandate recording of appraisals on this new system. This will be implemented in March 2017.

10.2 The paper made a proposal to revise the policy to be clear on performance reviews for those on maternity leave, those on long term sick leave and leavers. The previous approach had been different according to reasons and in some cases inconsistent across divisions. The CET agreed with the new policy; to be included in the performance review, those on maternity leave or long term sick leave have to have been in work for more than 3 months. In relation to leavers, the CET agreed that they should be included in the end of year rankings if they had been in post for a minimum of 3 months, to be consistent with the other elements.

10.3 The CET agreed that a rating of 4 or 5 will automatically trigger the informal stages of the Managing Poor Performance Policy, and a performance improvement plan developed for the member of staff. The CET discussed the nature of the warnings; if a warning is still live on the individuals' record then in year one this should be reflected in their ratings. The CET noted that there are a number of staff members who are in box 4 or 5 for a number of years;

this could be interpreted as a failure of management as these staff members should have either improved or left.

10.4 Currently rankings take place in individual divisions; however ranking for the smaller corporate divisions is done as a group due to the smaller divisional sizes. A proposal was made to undertake ranking for corporate divisions by individual division; the CET agreed to this proposal. The CET did not endorse a recommendation to amend the performance appeals process to be a written appeal only; as the CET felt that employees need to have the chance to appear before the panel on appeal. The recommendation to consider extending the 360 feedback tool to G6 staff in 2017 and G7 in 2018 was considered; the CET agreed to offer this on a discretionary basis but not to mandate it.

10.5 The CET were consulted on establishing a peer review process for objective setting; the CET agreed that it would be good to see this standardised within divisions therefore endorsed this recommendation, but suggested further work was necessary to ensure appropriate selection of peers.

11. Quarterly special bonus report (CET/16/305)

11.1 Vanessa Birchall-Scott presented an update on special bonuses; CET were given the opportunity to review the profile of bonus awards across the divisions with reference to the equality analysis. The CET noted the paper.

12. Talent management update (CET/16/306)

12.1 [Names redacted under section 40 of the FOIA (personal data)] presented a paper on talent management. An update was given to CET on the progress made against the Talent strategy 2015-2020 and CET was asked for their agreement on direction of travel and next steps. It was recommended that all agency staff are to have a discussion with their manager about their career plans and how the Agency could help them to achieve these. It was recommended that career conversations using the 9 box grid are extended to include grade 6 for 2017 in addition to SCS. It was recommended that Directors assess their capability and succession planning needs, within Centres\Divisions, at SMT where appropriate, making reference to the career conversations and 9 box grids of Grade 6 and business critical staff. Assessors will need to be considered separately, as to whether they should be included in career conversations using the 9 box grid in 2017. The CET endorsed these recommendations.

12.2 It was recommended that succession planning should be reviewed at the Talent review Board again in 2017 with the additional consideration of 'business critical' roles at a more junior level.

12.3 The CET noted the good progress made in the career pathways project; the skills framework will go live for a number of grades within divisions (except CPRD and Ops). Over the next 12-18 months all skills frameworks should be delivered for all grades in all divisions. The areas not involved with the project should agree separate timelines for progress and to review the impact on staff when tool published in December and ensure internal communications explain their position as to why they were not involved at this stage. CET noted the role of recruiting managers in cross referencing career pathways as this work is integrated into HR recruiting tools.

13. February Managers Conference (CET/16/307)

13.1 [Names redacted under section 40 of the FOIA (personal data)] presented an update on the plans for the February managers conference and the SLG. The theme for the 28 February managers conference was proposed to be dealing with ambiguity. Two potential speakers were proposed; a CSL/KPMG training course on helping leaders develop their ability to understand and influence the volatility around them while also maintaining the productivity of their team. The other speaker was David Matthew from Change fx. The CET agreed that David Matthew should be invited to speak. The CET noted that the next SLG meeting would focus on reviewing the people survey findings as well as discussing the main Agency wide projects of Brexit, Accommodation and Operational Transformation; CET suggested that the next managers conference should include driving great performance, which could be linked with the proposed theme.

14. PACC exemption process (CET/16/308)

14.1 [Name redacted under section 40 of the FOIA (personal data)] presented the Professional Assurance Communication Controls (PACC) Annual Report. In 2015/16, the process saved the Agency around £20k. The majority of applications were for events/exhibiting at events. In a recent audit, the National Audit Office did not identify any failings with the Agency's communications and marketing spend control process. There is evidence that more staff across the Agency are aware of the requirement to seek approval for spend; the quality of applications is improving. There is increasing awareness across the Agency about the need to justify spend and keep costs to a minimum; more work is needed to ensure objectives are SMART, and that outcomes are evaluated and reported. New areas for spend in 2015/16 include the FMD campaign and recruitment advertising. In 2015/16, the Agency was successful in gaining approval for the first application for spend over £100k for the FMD campaign; this involved seeking Ministerial, CO, DH and Treasury sign off which took several months. The CET noted the paper thanked those involved for the work in this area.

15. Policy & Procedures Committee – ToR (CET/16/310)

15.1 Gerald Heddell presented the updated Policy & Procedures Committee terms of reference; which the CET endorsed, subject to ensuring an element of appropriate escalation to CET for key policies.

16. Board CET away day 27 January outline programme (CET/16/310)

16.1 Ian Hudson presented an update on the arrangements for the Board/CET away day on Friday 27 January 2017; and the outline for the draft away day programme. A second away day will be held on 24 July 2017. The CET were asked whether the away day should be built round the following four components: (i) Brexit, (ii) Operational Transformation, (iii) stakeholder engagement strategy, and (iii) the accommodation move. The CET proposed changing the last item to Executive/Board interaction rather than accommodation.

17. Business plan quarterly report (CET/16/311)

17.1 [Name redacted under section 40 of the FOIA (personal data)] presented the business plan quarterly report. The Agency is on track for the majority of targets for this quarter. There were two targets – PM2(b) - Medicines licensing - assessment of applications, specifically - % DCP RMS in 70 days; and PM6 (a) - Standards and control - Biologics standards supply - 93% of all materials supplied within 6 working days – which are at risk of delay; explanations were supplied for these. This is an improvement from Q1 when 5 targets were missed; the reasons for missing the remaining 2 targets are unchanged from the last quarter.

17.2 Of the 14 activities due for completion in Q2, the respective divisions reported 12 of these as having been 'completed' by the end of Q2. Two of these activities were reported as 'risk of delay', i.e. – overdue for Q2 but expected to recover and be back on track by year end. In addition, two activities have been completed early, one due in Q3 and one due in Q4, along with an additional three allocated to Q1-Q4. Divisions also provided a RAG rating for activities that are due in future quarters; the majority are on track however CET noted that there are eight at 'risk of delay' and two at 'significant risk of delay'. Reasons were given for each of these.

18. Finance and Procurement Report (CET/16/313)

18.1 Richard Humphreys presented the finance and procurement report at the half year point. After the first half of the year, in-year performance shows that all three centres Regulator (operating divisions & corporate), CPRD and NIBSC are ahead of their budgeted surplus positions. Overall, after six months, the agency has a retained surplus of £2.0m, £0.3m above budget. The year-end forecast is positive, with assumptions that the regulator performance continues and recognises that the regulator share of the dividend payment has been reduced by £3.5m due to the super-dividend payment. The regulator income is higher than the previous year; this is primarily EMA income. Certification fees are £0.25m up. There was an overall increase in the cost for NIBSC. Observational work is up for CPRD; staff costs are increasing but numbers are also increasing. The ICT cost also increased due to expenditure on new systems.

19. NIBSC quarterly report (CET/16/326)

19.1 Christian Schneider presented an update on the progress against NIBSC objectives for Q2 of 2016/17. The Standards Programme Board (SPB) reported that the WHO Expert Committee on Biological Standardisation (ECBS) met in October 2016; all standards proposed were accepted. Standards sales have continued strong in both flu and non-flu sales. There was still continued pressure on the sales team to recover to achieve the KPI for turnaround times for supplying standards materials within 6 working days. Although the anticipated natural drop in flu sales due to the seasonal pattern may allow some catch-up, and the sales team staff are now stabilising, they are now reviewing the origin of the KPI and working with the new Head of Standards Processing Division to look carefully at the process to see where further streamlining may be possible.

19.2 The Control Programme Board (CPB) has reported good progress in the second quarter; 99% of targets have been reached. Following the successful launch last year of CT-LIMS, progress is now being made on the objective this year to carry out a benefits realisation from the project and identify future developments.

19.3 The Research Programme Board (RPB) has been reviewing the proposals from potential supervisors for the PhD studentship annual programme which offers three positions; these will be reported to CET in due course. Publication numbers are lower than anticipated; managers have been encouraging staff to publish their work. The objective around supporting the timely supply of influenza vaccines is continuing well; lots of work has been ongoing on this.

19.4 Polio awareness day took place on 24 October; NIBSC collaborated with Comms to make the public aware of the work the Agency does to tackle polio. The NIBSC division of Technology Development and Infrastructure are working to crosslink divisions and provide technical support to scientists. The Quinquennial Review of Biotherapeutics took place in October. Initial feedback was extremely good in which the panel noted excellence in the

science, presentations, posters, and in the leadership of the division. This year's developmental work programme includes the delivery of an agreed pharmacopoeial revenue share standards programme.

19.5 CET had previously requested a short report on grants; the system is currently working well until 2018 – however after this income will drop off if no work is done to replenish these grants. A Grants Office has been set up to identify potential new calls and to support the relevant scientists in their grant applications. Work has been completed on the containment level 4 suite; validation of the area has been completed and the polio group are now starting to transfer materials. The CET thanked Christian for the impressive report; it was noted that a NIBSC newsletter could be used to showcase all the work that has been done.

20. Agreement of team briefing notes (CET/16/314)

20.1 The items appropriate for circulating to staff as team briefing were agreed by the CET.

INFORMATION

21. NIBSC SMT update (CET/16/315)

21.1 The minutes from the NIBSC SMT update from November were noted.

22. CPRD Executive Minutes (CET/16/316)

22.1 The minutes from the CPRD executive meeting were noted.

23. Draft minutes of the 18 October Regulatory Group meeting & final minutes of the 20 September Regulatory Group meeting (CET/16/317)

23.1 The draft minutes of the 18 October Regulatory Group meeting and the final minutes of the 20 September Regulatory Group meeting were noted.

24. Updates from Cross-Agency teams

24.1 These updates were noted by the CET.

Information Management Governance Board (IMGB)	CET/16/318
Finance Sub Committee meeting	CET/16/319
Policy and Procedures Committee	CET/16/320
Health and Safety Strategy Group	CET/16/321
Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	CET/16/322
Risk and Audit Liaison Group	CET/16/323

25. Agreement of 6 December 2016 CET agenda (CET/16/325)

25.1 The CET agreed reviewed and commented on the draft agenda for the 6 December CET meeting.

26. AOB

None.

