

Authority Paper

Committee:	Authority Meeting
Meeting Date:	9 th December 2009
Agenda Item:	2
Paper Number:	525
Paper Title:	Minutes of the Authority Meeting held on 21 st October 2009
Author:	Alexandra Tydeman
For Information or Decision?	Decision
Resource Implications:	None
Recommendation to the Committee:	The Authority is asked to confirm the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting

HUMAN FERTILISATION & EMBRYOLOGY AUTHORITY MINUTES OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING

There were 17 members attending, 11 lay members and 6 professional members.

PRESENT

Lisa Jardine (Chair)
Sam Abdalla
David Archard
Debbie Barber
Chris Barratt
Anna Carragher
Sally Cheshire
Jane Dibblin
Rebekah Dundas
Ruth Fasht

Neva Haites
Richard Harries (up to item 7)
Jennie Hunt
Emily Jackson
Roger Neuberg
Lillian Neville
Susan Price

APOLOGIES

Mair Crouch
Gemma Hobcraft
Bill Ledger
Clare Lewis-Jones
Lesley Regan

IN ATTENDANCE

Alan Doran (Chief Executive)
Mark Bennett
Trish Davies
Catherine Drennan
David Gomez
Brenda Irons-Roberts
Charles Lister
Paula Robinson

Peter Thompson
Alexandra Tydeman

OBSERVERS

Alan Thornhill
Ted Webb – Department of Health
Craig Westwood – Department of Health

1 Apologies, Welcome & Declarations of Interest

1.1 Apologies were received from:

- Mair Crouch
- Gemma Hobcraft
- Bill Ledger
- Clare Lewis-Jones
- Lesley Regan

1.2 Declarations of interest were made by:

- Sam Abdalla
- Debbie Barber
- Chris Barrett
- Jennie Hunt

2 Minutes of 9th September 2009 Authority Meeting [HFEA (21/10/09) 518]

2.1 The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3 Chair's Report (verbal)

3.1 The Chair welcomed Craig Westwood from the Department of Health and Alan Thornhill who had recently been appointed as a Member of the Authority to their first meeting – Alan Thornhill's first official meeting would be in December.

3.2 The Chair announced that it was the last meeting for Jennie Hunt, Chris Barratt and Roger Neuberg and thanked them for all their contributions over the years. The Chair also announced that three new Members had been appointed – Dr Andrew Greenfield, Dr Alan Thornhill and Reverend Ermal Kirby.

3.3 The Chair also commented on the:

- Multiple Stakeholder meeting
- BBC interview regarding the changes in embryo storage rules prior to the new act
- Video she had produced for the HFEA website which was under the 'for patients' section

3.4 The Chair reported on her forthcoming engagements, in particular:

- Radio 4 – Analysis – looking at conflicts between confidentiality and transparency in public policy and wider society
- Radio 3 Free Thinking – Newfangled Families

4 Chief Executive and Director's Reports [HFEA (21/10/09) 519]

- 4.1 The Chief Executive reported that the Annual Conference had had an excellent turn out. A new interactive approach had been taken with plenary sessions and workshops. The main issues arising from the conference were:
- Implications of FOI for centres
 - Publishing incident reports
 - Consent to disclosure of patient information for research
 - Quality improvement
 - Eliminating unnecessary duplication in inspections
 - Sharing HFEA SOPs to aid inspections
 - Patient feedback
- 4.2 Members noted that these issues would receive immediate attention.
- 4.3 The Chief Executive advised that the Hampton Review team were currently in the process of producing a second draft of the Hampton Review.
- 4.4 The Chief Executive presented a paper on the 'Complaints Procedure'. Two updates to the complaints procedure were required to ensure that the wording reflected the latest legislation. There was no change of substance. Members' approved these minor changes.
- 4.5 The Chief Executive also reported on:
- The press briefing on the new Choose a Fertility Clinic service on the website
 - December's open Authority meeting
- 4.6 The Chief Executive reported that the Executive Licensing Panel's first meeting had gone well. He also reported that the secretariat was being reorganised to ensure the separation of functions.
- 4.7 Members noted the Directorates Reports and the Legal Update (tabled confidential document).

5 Corporate Strategy [HFEA (21/10/09) 520]

- 5.1 Paula Robinson, Head of Business Planning, reminded Members that an early set of strategic themes had been agreed by the Authority in October 2008. Following this, a number of discussions had taken place which had helped identify key issues and strategic questions for the HFEA over the next few years.
- 5.2 A set of position papers had been produced focusing on the 5 'big issues' agreed as key areas for further discussion which had been circulated to Members for feedback. The table at Annex B summarised Members' responses on the five Position

Statements.

- 5.3 Members were advised that the corporate strategy would be discussed further at the Authority workshop on the afternoon before the December meeting. The strategy would then be brought to the Authority meeting in January 2010 for agreement. Publication would then follow by April 2010 to coincide with the new business year.
- 5.4 Members were asked to agree the proposed plan and timescale for completing the strategy.

Decision

- 5.5 Members endorsed the recommendation above.

6 High Level Risk Register [HFEA (21/10/09) 521]

- 6.1 Members noted the high level risk register which had been reviewed by the Corporate Management Team at its meeting on 20 August 2009. Various controls and scores had been added and updated and the risks had each been discussed.
- 6.2 Members also noted that a further risk had been added in September about the operation and development of the licensing function, owing to temporary resource gaps.

7 Programme 2010: Making change happen [HFEA (21/10/09) 522]

- 7.1 Charles Lister, Programme Manager, reminded Members of the initial objectives of Programme 2010 which were to:
- Manage the implementation of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008
 - Improve the Authority's compliance with Better Regulation requirements and the Regulator's Compliance Code
 - Improve the Authority's processes and procedures to fulfill the goal of being a world class regulator
- 7.2 These objectives were set against four main work streams – Members, Staff and Stakeholder Engagement, Organisational Development, Compliance and Information.
- 7.3 Members noted the key achievements of Programme 2010 and how these had assisted the Authority in demonstrating high quality, consistent decision making backed up with robust processes and well trained, enthusiastic staff.
- 7.4 Members also noted that the programme had reached the stage where it was appropriate for on-going project work to be led by each Directorate. This would be carried out within a Programme Management structure and linked to the Authority's business plan.

7.5 Members were asked to:

- Agree that Programme 2010 be formally closed
- Delegate decisions on the evaluation of Programme 2010 to the Audit and Governance Committee

Decision

7.6 Members' accepted the recommendations above but emphasised that this was not a terminus of Programme 2010 but that it was an on-going process which needed to link seamlessly into business planning.

7.7 Members also felt that going forward there should be a greater focus on external factors such as patient experience.

8 Demonstration on Choose a Fertility Clinic

8.1 Members were given a demonstration of how the Choose a Fertility Clinic service worked.

8.2 Members noted that the Choose a Fertility Clinic site had been launched on 1st October 2009. On the launch date the website received 1800 visits when previously 'Find a Clinic' averaged 300 visitors per day. Most people were finding the site predominantly through search engines, 32% were through referring sites and then 12% were going to the site directly.

8.3 The top referring sites had been Google, BBC news, Fertility friends, NHS Choices, Times Online and Sky news.

8.4 Members noted that the new site had received a lot of press coverage which had mainly focused on the way that the HFEA was now presenting success rates and the depth of information contained on the site.

8.5 Future promotion of the site included affiliations with:

- NHS choices
- Patient organisation websites
- NHS Communications link – GPs / hospitals
- Fertility Show 2009
- Google Adwords
- Social media channels
- Future Guide to infertility

9 2009/10 Business Plan Objectives [HFEA (21/10/09) 523]

9.1 Paula Robinson, Head of Business Planning, reported that the business plan for 2010/11 was under development and that the expected deadline for submission of a full draft to the Department of Health was early to mid December.

9.2 Members considered the following draft objectives:

- Embedding the new regulatory and licensing framework
- Improving the HFEA's information provision to the public and patients
- Corporate efficiencies and improved governance
- Regulatory policy developments

Decision

9.3 Members approved the objectives above but requested minor revisions to the wording. It was also suggested that consideration be given to the possible effects of the opening of the register to researchers.

9.4 It was also agreed that the Chair, the Chief Executive and the Head of Business Planning would finalise the business plan.

10 Communications Report [HFEA (21/10/09) 524]

10.1 Brenda Irons-Roberts, Head of Communications, presented this item and reported that the past six months had been a busy period for communications with the launch of the new website, Choose a Fertility Clinic, the Annual Conference, The Insider and numerous and varied press issues and enquiries.

10.2 Members noted that the HFEA website had been launched on 15th April. Visits to the new website initially dropped which was common with new websites and it was now attracting an increasing number of visitors.

10.3 Members noted that the new Choose a Fertility Clinic (CAFC) service had been launched on 1st October and on this date had received nearly 4000 visits. Visits throughout October were up by about 30 per cent on previous months and were now around 1800 daily.

10.4 Members also noted that there had been a number of high profile media stories. Public queries had remained static.

10.5 Members welcomed the update and suggested that the communication strategy:

- Explore the public's understanding of the HFEA's role and remit
- Identify the publicity around the opening of the register to ensure that the right audiences are targeted and that people are aware of the information available to them

11 Update from Committee Chairs

11.1 Committee chairs provided verbal updates on committee meetings since September's Authority meeting.

- 11.2 The Deputy Chair of the Scientific and Clinical Advances Advisory Committee (SCAAC) reported that there had been concern about the lack of regulatory oversight of embryo culture media and its possible effects on the embryo and potential future child.
- 11.3 SCAAC felt that the composition of culture media should be regulated as a matter of priority and that the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulation Agency was best placed to carry this out.
- 11.4 It was agreed that SCAAC would take forward issues identified around culture media and that the Chair of the Authority and the Chair of SCAAC would in consultation with the Chief Executive, agree how best to raise these issues with the Department of Health.

12 Delegations at Authority Meeting on 21st October 2009

- 12.1 The evaluation of P2010 was delegated to the Audit and Governance Committee.
- 12.2 It was agreed that a working party would be established to look at practical arrangements for convening committees.

13 Date of next meeting

- 13.1 The next meeting will be on 9th December 2009, The Vermont Hotel, Newcastle

I confirm this to be a true and accurate record of the meeting

Chair

Date