

Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee meeting on 3 April 2025 held virtually

Members present	Catharine Seddon, Chair Tom Fowler Alex Kafetz, Deputy Chair Anne Marie Miller
Staff in attendance	Tom Skrinar, Director of Finance, Planning and Technology Nicola Fookes, Finance Manager Alison Margrave, Board Governance Manager

1. PRISM

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting to discuss the review of the capitalisation of PRISM as detailed in the paper issued by the Director of Finance, Planning and Technology issued to members on 31 March 2025.
- 1.2. The Director of Finance, Planning and Technology introduced the paper and stated that PRISM development began life as part of the IfQ (Information for Quality) Programme. The programme addressed key, pressing issues with the HFEA's infrastructure, systems and website that were no longer fit for purpose. The objectives for the IfQ programme were to transform the HFEA's approach to the following:
 - The information we collect – what the dataset should include and why
 - How clinics submit data to us – the system for submitting data and how we check data for publication
 - How the information was held – the structure and resilience of the Register database
 - How we publish information – how success rates should be published on the website and what additional information – such as patient experience information – should be presented.
- 1.3. This review focusses only on PRISM – predominantly how clinics submit data to us and how the information is held. The IfQ developments for PRISM focussed on improving, standardising and stabilising how our data was collected and stored, so that it could be effectively retrieved and published.
- 1.4. The Director of Finance, Planning and Technology stated that all clinics are now submitting data via PRISM, whether directly or through third party APIs, but ongoing delays to achieving a steady state of data collection with a number of clinics that submit data via APIs rather than directly into PRISM has meant that we have had to continue working in a transitional phase, supported by specialist development resources, for longer than initially foreseen. The delay also prevents the publication of full reports due to the lack of a complete data set, although interim reports are to be published soon. The final element – the full update of data for 'Choose a Fertility Clinic' (CaFC) - should be complete by the end of 2025.

- 1.5.** The Director of Finance, Planning and Technology commented that the original business case from the programme is over 10 years old and much of the context of the programme has changed. He referred to the full overview of the originally identified benefits which the HFEA can be expected to accrue from PRISM, as detailed in annex A of the paper, and spoke of additional benefits being delivered which were not part of the original business case. The Director of Finance, Planning and Technology explained the rationale for the proposed interim impairment of £93k assuming that the HFEA has delivered 50% of the expected benefits across the three years of the ten year expected useful life of the asset, which would suggest that 15% of the value of PRISM on the balance sheet would be a reasonable estimate for an impairment. The HFEA has not achieved all expected benefits, but a good proportion have been achieved - though they are difficult to quantify in percentage terms - and an impairment of greater than 100% would suggest that no benefits have been realised over the three years, which is certainly not the case.
- 1.6.** In response to a question, the Director of Finance, Planning and Technology confirmed that the HFEA would certainly continue using PRISM over the next ten years, as it is a core part of the HFEA's IT systems and data management. The main driver for the creation of PRISM was to replace a system that was out of date, lacking in functionality and unreliable. PRISM, despite continuing issues for a number of clinics, is a much more resilient system than previously, and also allows us to manipulate data in ways we could not have done previously.
- 1.7.** In response to a question the Director of Finance, Planning and Technology confirmed that the HFEA should be able to accommodate the proposed level of impairment without moving into an overspend position. The Finance Manager confirmed this and stated that accounting standards allow for the revaluation of assets and re-scoping of benefits.
- 1.8.** In response to a question, the Director of Finance, Planning and Technology informed the Committee of his discussions with NAO and confirmed they had received a copy of the paper presented to the committee, and had commented on an earlier draft (as had Anne Marie Miller).
- 1.9.** The Deputy Chair spoke of the difficulties experienced by NHS Trusts in being able to articulate the long-term benefits of IT systems.
- 1.10.** The committee discussed the benefits of PRISM noting the following points:
- that it is an essential system which helps the HFEA deliver on its core statutory duties, and would clearly continue to do so.
 - committee members are aware of the issues relating to transition, as it is closely monitored by AGC. These notwithstanding, PRISM has also allowed the HFEA to be flexible and responsive to the changing market and needs of clinics.
 - PRISM undoubtedly contributed to the recent successful Public Bodies Review (PBR) and message from the HFEA's sponsor Minister, Baroness Mellon, that the HFEA was viewed as a 'model regulator' which did a difficult job with great skill and dedication
 - the HFEA could not be as effective as it is without PRISM: where possible the HFEA should capitalise on messaging around the success and benefits of PRISM – both those outlined in the original business case and those that have become apparent since.

Decision

- 1.11.** The Committee agreed the interim impairment of £93k in 2024/25, with a further review at the end of 2025/26.

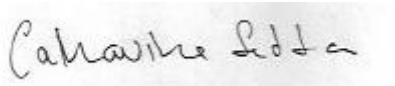
2. Any other business

- 2.1.** The Chair reminded members that they are to review and comment on the draft governance statement before the deadline of 14 April 2025. Members were asked to reply to all on the email, so that all could see the comments made.
- 2.2.** The committee were reminded that the next meeting was in person at 2 Redman Place on 17 June 2025.

Chair's signature

I confirm this is a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Catharine Seddon', is written on a light blue background.

Chair: Catharine Seddon

Date: 12 May 2025