

Minutes of the Authority meeting on 21 January 2026 held at 2 Redman Place, London

Members present	Julia Chain (Chair) Tim Child Frances Flinter Tom Fowler Zeynep Gurtin Graham James Alex Kafetz	Alison McTavish (on-line) Geeta Nargund Catharine Seddon Rosamund Scott Anya Sizer Stephen Troup Christine Watson
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Apologies

Observers	Steve Pugh, Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) (on-line) Samatha West, Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) (on-line)
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Staff in attendance	Peter Thompson (Chief Executive) Rachel Cutting (Director of Compliance and Information) Clare Ettinghausen (Director of Strategy and Corporate Affairs) Tom Skrinar (Director of Finance, Planning and Technology) Kevin Huddson (PRISIM Programme Manager) Luke Reader (Phoenix Programme Manager) Sophie Tuhey (Head of Planning and Governance) Evgenia Savchyna (Corporate Performance Officer) Alison Margrave (Board Governance Manager)
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Members

There were 14 members at the meeting – 9 lay and 5 professional members.

1. Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest

- 1.1. The Chair welcomed Authority members and HFEA staff to the meeting.
- 1.2. The Chair also welcomed observers and stated that the meeting was being recorded in line with previous meetings and for reasons of transparency. The recording would be made available on the HFEA website to allow members of the public to view it.
- 1.3. Declarations of interest were made by:
 - Tim Child (consultancy work within the fertility sector overseas)
 - Anya Sizer (freelance advisory work within the fertility sector)
 - Stephen Troup (consultancy work within the fertility sector)
 - Geeta Nargund (appointed by the Prime Minister as a Life Peer in [the House of Lords](#))
- 1.4. The Chair and the Authority congratulated Geeta Nargund on her nomination as a Life Peer in the House of Lords.

2. Previous minutes and matters arising

- 2.1. The Chair introduced the minutes from the meetings held on 5 and 19 November 2025.
- 2.2. The minutes of the meetings held on 5 and 19 November 2025 were agreed as a true record of the meetings and could be signed by the Chair.

Matters arising

- 2.3. The Chair informed members that the matters arising from the previous meeting had been actioned as detailed in the report or will be reported under the Performance report.
- 2.4. Members noted the matters arising report.

3. Chair and Chief Executive's report

- 3.1. The Chair gave an overview of her engagement with key stakeholders and her attendance at decision-making committees of the Authority.
- 3.2. The Chair informed members that together with the Chief Executive she had attended the Chair and CEO's ALB Senior Leaders meeting on 27 November 2025. The DHSC Permanent Secretary chaired the meeting and was positive about the work of the HFEA. A meeting has been scheduled with the Permanent Secretary to discuss life sciences and the HFEA.
- 3.3. The Chair informed members that she had attended the all-staff event on 8 December 2025 and remarked on the positive engagement at this event. As agreed at the Authority November 2025 away day members will be given the opportunity to attend future all staff events on a rotational basis.
- 3.4. A member questioned whether there were any concerns or questions for the Authority arising from the all-staff event. The Chair responded that this event was not the mechanism for raising such concerns and she referred to the recent staff survey, the results of which were reported to the [Audit and Governance Committee meeting in December 2025](#). A response rate of 87% was achieved, which is higher than the sector average, with extremely good survey results.
- 3.5. The Director of Strategy and Corporate Affairs reminded the Authority that there are staff equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) champions and it may be appropriate for them to meet with the Authority. The Authority welcomed this initiative.
- 3.6. The Chair informed members that she had spoken at the Progress Educational Trust (PET) event held on 10 December 2025 and provided a summary of the event.
- 3.7. The Chief Executive informed members that he had met with the Regulatory Horizons Council on 28 November 2025 to discuss In Vitro Gametogenesis (IVGs).
- 3.8. The Chief Executive informed members that he had spoken at a conference yesterday at the Wellcome Trust entitled: Embryo and liminal entities: Rethinking questions of status and protection in shifting scientific, legal and ethical landscapes. Authority members Frances Flinter and Rosamund Scott also spoke at this conference. Members were informed that a written summary of the conference was being prepared and when received would be circulated.

Decision

- 3.9. Members noted the Chair and Chief Executive's report.

4. Committee Chairs' report

- 4.1. The Chair introduced the report and invited Committee Chairs to add any other comments to the presented report.

- 4.2.** The Statutory Approvals Committee (SAC) Chair (Frances Flinter) stated that the committee has met three times since the last Authority meeting and the minutes of the December 2025 meeting are now approved.
- 4.3.** The SAC Chair spoke about the workload of the committee. A paper looking back at the last year of licensing activity would be brought to the March Authority meeting by the Head of Licensing. The Chair welcomed the opportunity for this paper to come to the next Authority.
- 4.4.** The SAC Chair informed the Authority of the progress in reviewing the Pre-implantation Genetic Testing for Monogenic Disorders (PGT-M) list. As medical treatment has advanced it is prudent to review the conditions authorised for testing to see whether they still meet the legal threshold for being licenced and several expert reviewers are working with the HFEA to complete this work. We will also be looking at the way in which chromosomal disorders are licensed because at the moment they are effectively in one group and given the advances in testing technology, this should be reviewed.
- 4.5.** The Licence Committee (LC) Chair (Graham James) informed the Authority that the committee had met in November 2025 and their most recent meeting was held last week, the minutes from this meeting are not yet approved.
- 4.6.** The LC Chair commented that at the last meeting they had three staff observers, all observers are asked for written feedback on the meeting which is included in the committee's effectiveness review. Whilst these were new staff members observing as part of their induction process, he would welcome more experienced staff to also observe meetings.
- 4.7.** The Director of Strategy and Corporate Affairs welcomed this initiative and would ensure that staff are informed accordingly.
- 4.8.** The Audit and Governance Committee (AGC) Chair (Catharine Seddon) informed members that the AGC met on 3 December 2025. In their pre-meeting the committee had discussed the Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) ALB proportionate audit proposal and had agreed not to proceed as it was inflexible and not considered value for money. The committee had agreed to go out to tender for the DSPT audit for 2026/27 and potentially for full internal audit provision for 2027/28.
- 4.9.** The AGC Chair informed members that the committee had discussed the audit plan which is currently projecting an indicative rating of 'moderate'. The committee were pleased to note that the quality of evidence being submitted by the HFEA had improved. The committee had discussed the Strategic Risk Register.
- 4.10.** The AGC had received reports on the PRISM and Phoenix IT programmes. The bi-annual HR report and results of the staff survey were presented with the committee noting the excellent results of the survey. The committee had reviewed their effectiveness and identified several quick wins.
- 4.11.** In addition to the formal meeting a training session on External Audit with focus on planning, identifying risk and how the audit is structured was held, this session was led by the HFEA's External Auditors and National Audit Office.
- 4.12.** The Deputy AGC Chair remarked on the agile way in which the committee had worked in 2025 to ensure that business needs were met without delay.

- 4.13.** A member commented on the interesting work of all the committees and the value that they bring to the Authority. All the committees are well managed and whilst the information presented to committees can be dense it is presented in a user-friendly way.
- 4.14.** The Chair thanked the Committee Chairs for the reports and stated that the Scientific and Clinical Advances Committee (SCAAC) will meet next month and therefore be reported to the March Authority meeting. The Chair expressed thanks to the committee members and the staff who service the various committees for their hard work. The Chair stated that committee papers and minutes are published on the [HFEA](#) website.
- 4.15.** Members noted the Committee Chairs' reports.

5. Performance Report

- 5.1.** The Chief Executive introduced the performance report and reminded members of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which are used to measure performance.
- 5.2.** The HFEA's performance across all KPIs had been variable in December, with 10 indicators rated Green, two Neutral, four Amber and three rated Red. This has been a broadly consistent pattern throughout the year and does not indicate any structural issues.
- 5.3.** The Chief Executive referred to the HR KPIs and stated that both are green, although he cautioned that the 'staff sickness' KPI is close to the threshold, but this could be attributed to seasonal viruses.
- 5.4.** The staff turnover KPI is now at 13% and the Chief Executive stated that this is not overly concerning, with the results of the staff survey indicating a high level of morale.
- 5.5.** The Chief Executive informed the Authority that the HFEA had submitted written evidence to the [House of Lords Industry and Regulators Committee](#) inquiry into the relationship between regulators and economic growth. If the HFEA is called to give oral evidence the Authority will be informed.

Strategy and Corporate Affairs

- 5.6.** The Director of Strategy and Corporate Affairs informed members of the reduction in proactive media at the end of the year, which is typical for this period. At the start of the new year, the HFEA participated in BBC Woman's Hour to discuss the rise in single patients having fertility treatment.
- 5.7.** Members were informed that the HFEA had submitted written evidence to the House of Commons [Women and Equalities Select Committee](#) regarding egg donation and freezing and it is likely that the HFEA will be called to give oral evidence.
- 5.8.** The Director of Strategy and Corporate Affairs stated the HFEA had been represented at Fertility 2026 and had a poster session presenting some aspects of the 2024 National Patient Survey.
- 5.9.** The Director of Strategy and Corporate Affairs spoke of the Persons Responsible (PR) event which will be held at the end of April 2026. There had been a good response to this event and the programme is being finalised.
- 5.10.** The various committees had completed their committee effectiveness reviews and will be proposing a few minor changes to the standing orders at the March 2026 Authority meeting.

- 5.11.** The Register Research Panel (RRP) had met recently to discuss applications from researchers to access register information. The Authority were reminded of the remit of the RRP. The Scientific and Clinical Advances Committee (SCAAC) will be meeting in February 2026 and key agenda items were highlighted.
- 5.12.** The Director of Strategy and Corporate Affairs reminded members that in [September 2024](#) they had made recommendations regarding communicating licensing, regulatory activity and incident information. Information regarding the [latest decisions on clinics](#) is provided on the HFEA website and is now updated weekly.
- 5.13.** The Authority were informed that the [December 2025 Clinic Focus](#) included an article on The Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) report on the compliance of advertising in the fertility sector. This report showed that there was a high level of compliance with the advertising rules.

Compliance and Information

- 5.14.** The Director of Compliance and Information informed the Authority that fewer Opening the Register (OTR) requests were processed in December 2025, with 80 OTRs closed against a target of 110. This was due to annual leave, the Christmas period and a staff member being on jury service for two weeks.
- 5.15.** Although fewer requests were processed the Director of Compliance and Information stressed that information was provided to 80 applicants and the waiting list has been reduced accordingly. The average waiting time for applicants receiving responses is down to three months, with some applicants receiving their information within six weeks although more complex applications can take longer to be processed.
- 5.16.** The Director of Compliance and Information informed members that Kartik Taneja joined the HFEA as Head of Information in December 2025.
- 5.17.** The Authority was informed that it was a busy fourth quarter for the inspection team, with the team being impacted by maternity and sickness leave. In addition to their usual workload inspectors are supporting the Phoenix IT project.
- 5.18.** The Director of Compliance and Information stated that the compliance KPI performance was variable in December 2025. The 'Inspection Reports to PR' was rated red due to three of the eight reports being deprioritised, the three clinics were in a group and it was decided to renew licences at the same time for convenience. The 'Inspection Reports to Committee' KPI was rated Amber, with two of seven reports slightly delayed due to their complexity. The Director of Compliance and Information stressed that the most important KPI of 'end to end licensing' is rated green.
- 5.19.** The Director of Compliance and Information informed the Authority that she had attended Fertility 26 where the theme of the conference was shaping the future. There were many interesting lectures and she had presented in a session on research and had outlined how the HFEA regulates research and what was included in the HFEA's law reform proposals.
- 5.20.** A member congratulated the OTR team for the reduction in the overall number of respondents waiting for information and the time required to process the information but commented that three months is still a long time for people to wait for such sensitive information and questioned whether this could be reduced further.

- 5.21.** The Director of Compliance and Information outlined the various steps in verifying information and the fact that some clinics are not responding to the HFEA's communications in a timely manner which delayed responses to applicants. The legal responsibilities of clinics providing this information will be communicated in a forthcoming Clinic Focus and inspectors will be asked to mention it during visits.
- 5.22.** In response to a question regarding the number of inspections being more than planned the Director of Compliance and Information responded that there is always some flexibility built into the schedule to allow for additional inspections which are needed for enhanced regulatory oversight, for example where we have concerns following an incident, complaint or whistle blowing allegation.
- 5.23.** The Chair stated that inspections are a core element of HFEA's regulatory work and that the HFEA manages this process well. Feedback is sought from the sector through different avenues and the review of inspection feedback through an online post inspection survey, which was reported to the Authority in November 2025, highlighted that the HFEA could be challenged to ensure a greater number of clinics provide feedback on the inspection process. The Chair asked that further information be given to Authority in the performance report in June 2026 on whether any of the planned actions have increased inspection feedback.

Finance, Planning and Technology

- 5.24.** The Director of Finance, Planning and Technology informed the Authority that the Internal Audit on Risk Management had been concluded and the final report will be brought to the February 2026 Audit and Governance Committee meeting.
- 5.25.** Work is progressing on business plan preparations, the revised Framework Agreement with the Department of Health and Social Care, recruitment of members for licensing functions and supporting the IT Phoenix programme.
- 5.26.** The Planning and Governance team is also busy with updating members' interests and biographies on the HFEA website and planning the 2027 calendar of meetings.
- 5.27.** The Director of Finance, Planning and Technology informed the Authority that the services of a cyber security consultant had been secured and that they will commence working with the HFEA shortly. A 'bring your own' device policy will shortly be rolled out to staff.
- 5.28.** As the AGC Chair had mentioned the HFEA had gone out to market for the provision of the DSPT/CAF process and a new independent assessor had been selected. Members were informed that they have significant experience of working with health-related bodies of different sizes.
- 5.29.** The Director of Finance, Planning and Technology reminded members that since the end of Summer 2025 the HFEA had been forecasting a significant year-end deficit. The HFEA had undertaken a range of actions to reduce this deficit, but this year has been a particularly busy year which has made it hard to reduce costs in-year.
- 5.30.** The HFEA has discussed this situation with DHSC and its Finance Business Partner who has indicated that additional funding should be available, although the Director of Finance, Planning and Technology cautioned that this has not formally been approved.

- 5.31.** At the end of December 2025, the forecast year-end deficit is £435k, with a forecast under-recovery of income of £317k and an overspend against expenditure of £118k. The Senior Management Team continues to scrutinise all decisions that have a financial consequence for the HFEA.
- 5.32.** The Director of Finance, Planning and Technology informed the Authority that the HFEA have had detailed discussions with DHSC finance regarding the 2026/27 budget and fee increase; although confirmation has not yet been received yet regarding Grant-in-Aid (GIA) funding which would allow the HFEA to finalise its fees requirements. A letter will be issued today to clinics regarding fee requirements so that clinics are aware of the likely change.
- 5.33.** In response to a question the Director of Finance, Planning and Technology provided further assurance regarding cyber security and reminded the Authority that the HFEA reports to the AGC on this subject at each of their meetings.
- 5.34.** The AGC Chair confirmed that the committee considers cyber security as a standing agenda item and is reassured by the activities which the HFEA undertakes. The AGC training event in December 2026 will be on cyber security and an invitation was extended to Authority members. Reference was made to the [NCSC](#) cyber training which is available to non-executive directors.
- 5.35.** A member spoke of how some patients may be anxious regarding the level of information held by both clinics and the HFEA and security around this information and whether customer facing communications should be issued on this matter. The Director of Finance, Planning and Technology stated that the results of the DSPT are made public and AGC minutes and papers are published on the HFEA website.
- 5.36.** A member commented that the highest cyber security vulnerability is on the side of suppliers so it would be prudent to ensure future suppliers meet the NHS clinical risk management standards (DCB0129 and DCB0160).
- 5.37.** A member asked for further clarification about how cash flow is reported and reserves held by the HFEA. The Director of Finance, Planning and Technology explained that the cash reserves held by the HFEA more than cover the current budget deficit. He explained that the Department looks at the HFEA's financial position from a budget perspective and that an overspend on the budget can put pressure on the Department, even with the HFEA's cash reserves. The Director agreed to make the cash flow position clearer in future reports to the Authority.

Increase in financial delegations

- 5.38.** The Director of Finance, Planning and Technology introduced the paper and stated that the purpose is to seek formal approval to increase the financial delegation limits for the Accounting Office (Chief Executive) and the Director of Finance, Planning and Technology.
- 5.39.** Members were informed that the current financial delegations were set over 10 years ago and no longer reflect the inflationary environment or potential high-value procurement transactions for the HFEA to meet its obligations.
- 5.40.** The proposed increase seeks to improve operational efficiency, reduce administrative bottlenecks in procurement and ensure that the HFEA's governance framework remains proportionate to its current budgetary scale and risk appetite.

- 5.41.** The Director of Finance, Planning and Technology stated that as an Arm's Length Body the HFEA is governed by [Managing Public Money](#) and the framework agreement with the Department of Health and Social Care.
- 5.42.** In response to a question the Director of Finance, Planning and Technology stated that the proposed increase is sufficient for the HFEA's needs.

Decision

- 5.43.** Members noted the performance report.
- 5.44.** Members approved the revised financial delegations of £800,000 for the Accounting Officer and the Director of Finance, Planning and Technology.

Action

- 5.45.** Finance Team to update the Procurement and Tendering Policy to reflect the revised financial delegations for the Accounting Officer and the Director of Finance, Planning and Technology.
- 5.46.** Executive are to confirm to the June 2026 Audit and Governance Committee meeting that future IT suppliers meet the NHS clinical risk management standards, where relevant.

6. Strategic Risk Register

- 6.1.** The Director of Finance, Planning and Technology introduced the paper and reminded the Authority that they review the Strategic Risk Register (SRR) twice a year; with detailed consideration being undertaken by the Audit and Governance Committee (AGC) at each of their committee meetings.
- 6.2.** The Director of Finance, Planning and Technology stated that during the formal review undertaken by the Executive no new risks were identified but one of the current risks was amended and the Director of Finance, Planning and Technology gave a brief overview of this.

Decision

- 6.3.** Members noted the Strategic Risk Register.

7. Phoenix Programme

- 7.1.** The Chair introduced this agenda item by reminding members that the Phoenix Programme is the name given to the HFEA's IT programme which aims to replace the HFEA's inspection scheduling system and electronic records system.
- 7.2.** The Phoenix Project Manager introduced the paper and remarked that it was eight months ago that he reported to the Authority on the aims of the programme and how the programme would be run.
- 7.3.** The programme is now in mid-flight and progressing well which allows the team to look at areas of risk and what is being done to mitigate these risks. The three main areas of risk are governance, testing and staff feedback and he would cover each area in-depth to give the Authority a complete overview of the programme.
- 7.4.** The Phoenix Project Manager said that eight months ago he had stated that the programme would report into the Phoenix Programme Board, the monthly Corporate Management Group and

the Audit and Governance Committee. The Phoenix Project Manager confirmed that reports are made to all these groups. In addition, a weekly programme update is issued to all HFEA staff involved, and that for openness and transparency all those involved in the programme receive the same information via the weekly update.

- 7.5.** The Phoenix Project Manager said that the Accountable Personnel for the project is the same as reported to the Authority eight months ago. With the Director of Finance, Planning and Technology as the Sponsor, the Head of IT as the Product Owner and himself as the Project Manager; this provides consistency for the project.
- 7.6.** The Phoenix Project Manager spoke of the different phases of testing used for the project. The suppliers are responsible for quality assurance testing. Demonstrations of early builds have been given to HFEA subject matter experts; with good feedback and steers on the demonstrations being given by the HFEA staff.
- 7.7.** He reported that currently SharePoint technical testing is underway with the HFEA's IT and Information Governance teams to see that the configuration is correct.
- 7.8.** The Phoenix Project Manager spoke of the end-to-end testing and how the links between the portal to dynamics and dynamics to SharePoint will be tested to ensure that it meets the needs of the Inspection and Licensing teams. He stressed that this will be a key phase of the project.
- 7.9.** Security Testing, will be carried out by a third-party specialist. The final phase of testing is the pre-launch 'smoke testing' which will be carried out by the HFEA IT team and subject matter experts.
- 7.10.** The Phoenix Project Manager set out the different stakeholders which included the suppliers, the external users of the clinics who use the portal and internal users which are the different HFEA staff teams.
- 7.11.** The Phoenix Programme was presented at the recent all staff meeting and staff were encouraged to share their hopes and concerns for the project. The Phoenix Project Manager summarised some of the hopes as usability and ease of navigation, efficiency and time saving and reliability, stability and performance. Concerns were summarised as change impact, learning curve and adoption and vendor dependency.
- 7.12.** The Phoenix Project Manager stressed that no concerns were raised around the project not working and staff views not being heard. He concluded his presentation by stating that he was confident that the project team were seeing the bigger picture of staff concerns and ensuring that these are addressed as the project moves forward.
- 7.13.** A member stated that the staff engagement with the project is very encouraging. They questioned what support will be provided post launch and what is contained in the budget for this service. The Phoenix Project Manager responded that supplier support for 12 months post launch had been planned and included within the budget.
- 7.14.** The Director of Finance, Planning and Technology spoke about open and transparent way of working and good involvement from the different HFEA teams. The project will provide the HFEA with a robust system with useful tools, in the longer term the HFEA will look at the IT support requirements and what can be handled by the in-house team and what might need to be provided by external suppliers.

- 7.15.** The Chief Executive commented that when this project started the HFEA had an old system which was vital to its work, but which was no longer supported. The project team were not asked simply to replicate the old system but to look at the processes and see whether these could be reduced and improved.
- 7.16.** The Chief Executive stated that there had been a couple of high-profile incidents in the public sector where IT teams implementing new systems had been disconnected from the staff who would be using the systems; this had led to systems being not fit for purpose. The HFEA had considered the lessons learnt from these projects and had ensured that staff were involved at each stage and that any concerns were listened to and addressed. He commented that any perceived problems with the project would have been identified and dealt with well in advance of the project launch date.
- 7.17.** A member referred to the staff concern regarding change impact and learning curve and questioned how this would be addressed through staff training. The Phoenix Project Manager said that the proposed training plan would be implemented well in advance of the launch date.
- 7.18.** The Chair drew the discussion to a close noting that this project is an enabler which allows the HFEA to improve and enhance its processes and become more agile. The project team were encouraged to engage and utilise the skills of Authority member, Alex Kafetz, if required.
- 7.19.** The Chair thanked the Phoenix Project Manager for his work in leading the project and requested that an update be brought to the Authority later in the year.

Decision

- 7.20.** Members noted the Phoenix Programme update.

Action

- 7.21.** Update on the Phoenix Programme to be brought to the Authority later in the year.

8. Choose a Fertility Clinic (CaFC) full publication update

- 8.1.** The Chair introduced this agenda item and reminded the Authority that the updated [Choose a Fertility Clinic](#) (CaFC) was published on 6 January 2026. This is a significant step forward in providing patients with much more recent clinic level performance data. The Chair remarked that this was a vast amount of work for the team and thanks were given to the PRISM Programme Manager for managing this process.
- 8.2.** The PRISM Programme Manager introduced the paper and reiterated that the full publication of CaFC, through PRISM, was achieved on 6 January 2026. During Summer/Autumn 2025 the PRISM team had worked to verify 2023 and 2024 data with 96% of clinics signing off their data (just five clinics did not) in December 2025.
- 8.3.** The PRISM Programme Manager informed the Authority that during December 2025 the PRISM team worked to build and check the data uploads that populate the CaFC website. This included a detailed statistics upload that contained 30,000 lines of numerical data. The Programme Manager said that a small number of historical anomalies in the detailed statistics were currently being reviewed. Concurrently the HFEA Communications team worked to revise the text of CaFC explanatory pages.

- 8.4.** The PRISM Programme Manager reminded the Authority of their decision taken in November 2025, regarding the headline statistics that would be included in the full CaFC. These were:
- Births per embryo transferred (excluding donor eggs and PGT-A cycles)
 - Births per egg collections (excluding donor eggs and including PGT-A cycles)
 - Multiple birth rates.
- 8.5.** The PRISM Programme Manager referred to the proposed next CaFC publication and stated that this CaFC verification would cover treatments in 2025 and live births relating to treatments in 2024. The verification process usually starts eight weeks after the end of the calendar year, which means that this process could commence on 1 March 2026. The ambition would be to publish the new CaFC in June/July 2026.
- 8.6.** A member congratulated the team for publishing the CaFC data, this was a huge amount of work and will be extremely beneficial for patients seeking information about clinics. The member expressed their appreciation of the excellent system and commented on the improved speed of reporting which the system allows.
- 8.7.** The Director of Strategy and Corporate Affairs spoke of the changes which were made for the CaFC publication including revised homepage text, the ability to reach the 'choose a clinic' more quickly and revised explanatory text about the statistics on each clinic page.
- 8.8.** The Authority were informed that the revised text was tested with both professional and patient organisations and members of the Patient Engagement Forum and this gave the HFEA team valuable feedback on both wording and layout.
- 8.9.** Once the full CaFC was ready to launch an update was given from the Chief Executive directly to all PRs, the HFEA website and Clinic Portal had news stories with the update; the Patient Organisation and Professional Stakeholder groups received direct updates and social media posts announced the launch across the HFEA's four channels.
- 8.10.** The Director of Strategy and Corporate Affairs stated that in the first week of the full CaFC there have been over 8,500 views of the CaFC homepage and over 20,000 views on individual clinic profile pages.
- 8.11.** The Authority were informed that the HFEA had published the results of the [public consultation on Choose a Fertility Clinic 2025](#) on its website and some of the suggestions arising from this consultation were regarding how information is presented to increase clarity and transparency for patients and the public.
- 8.12.** The Director of Strategy and Corporate Affairs spoke of the wider questions around data presentation and the different data/information sources on the HFEA website and reminded the Authority that this was an area for consideration under the HFEA's current strategy and would be included in the 2026-27 business plan.
- 8.13.** The Director of Strategy and Corporate Affairs highlighted some potential considerations which the Authority could discuss at a future meeting including, but not limited to, the importance of published verified data versus publishing data sooner; review of inspector and patient ratings and the Authority's previous decisions not to publish data sets that would lead to the publication of 'league tables'.

- 8.14.** Numerous members congratulated the HFEA team for the CaFC publication, noting the ease of use and presentation of information.
- 8.15.** A member stated that it was good to see that the error rate is very low for those clinics directly submitting their information via PRISM but noted that the error rate is higher for those clinics using an API solution. The member questioned whether a deadline has been set for those clinics who have not submitted their data and whether CaFC will be a subject for discussion at the PR event.
- 8.16.** The PRISM Programme Manager explained the work that is being undertaken by the HFEA operations team with the API suppliers to reduce the error rate. The PRISM Programme Manager explained the process for those clinics who have not yet verified their data. The Director of Strategy and Corporate Affairs said it could be considered whether to add into the PR event.
- 8.17.** In response to a question the Director of Strategy and Corporate Affairs stated that patient ratings were introduced in 2016/17 and some clinics receive hundreds and other clinics very few. The patient and inspector ratings on CaFC would be reviewed as part of the wider piece of work on how data should be presented.
- 8.18.** A member questioned whether the HFEA website had any downtime due to the influx of visitors. The Director of Strategy and Corporate Affairs responded that the website was down for a short period when the update was loaded, but as far as she was aware, there has been no downtime due to visitor numbers.
- 8.19.** A couple of members spoke of the advantage of making the full data set available to reputable organisations and the HFEA being seen as an authoritative source of information and stimulating research. A member spoke about the possibility of providing the full data through APIs, so organisations which had their own patient facing websites in the fertility sector could provide CaFC data.
- 8.20.** A member spoke about the impressive viewing stats for the full CaFC and commented that it reflected the need for this information and that the HFEA was seen as an authoritative source of data. The member asked whether people were just looking at headline data or drilling further down and whether the HFEA had any detail of where website visitors were coming from. The Director of Strategy and Corporate Affairs referred to Annex A of the paper which provided detailed CaFC website views statistics, noting that very few users go down to detailed individual clinics' statistics. The HFEA is looking into where the viewers are coming from but this information is not available yet.
- 8.21.** In considering the future presentation of data on the HFEA website and the whether verified or unverified data could be used, a member felt it was important not to mislead vulnerable users and commented about the commercial sensitivity of unverified data. Suggested principles which could be used when considering the wider question of how HFEA provides its data could be clarity, fairness and user friendliness. The Director of Strategy and Corporate Affairs spoke of the bigger piece of work regarding how the HFEA presents data information and that these items would be part of that future work.
- 8.22.** A member asked whether NHS commissioners and public health consultants had been included in the consultation of stakeholders. The Director of Strategy and Corporate Affairs responded that engagement has not been hugely successful with those stakeholders over the years, but it will be

looked at again. Although it was noted that at some points individual Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) have asked the HFEA for data relating to their regional area.

- 8.23.** The Chief Executive stressed that it is very important for the HFEA to have accurate data for the register but that CaFC data needs to be accurate to a percentage. If all clinics were submitting at the level of the best quality data submission then the data could be publishable in near real time. The more clinics that can improve the quality of their data submission, the gap between entry of data and publication can be closed. He spoke about the balance between fine detail accuracy and timeliness of data submission and the potential ability to provide patients with current data rather than historical data.
- 8.24.** A member spoke of the improvements which have been made with the current system noting that if the next publication is Summer 2026, this will be presenting pregnancy outcomes some 8 months after the last data publication. He believed that patients would like the option of rolling, live data publication.
- 8.25.** The Chair drew the discussion to a close noting that future discussions regarding data presentation will need to consider what is going to be most useful for patients and people becoming patients. The Chair thanked the HFEA team for all their hard work.

Decision

- 8.26.** The Authority agreed that the verification for the next CaFC update should start on 1 March 2026.

9. Any other business

- 9.1.** The Chair reminded the Authority that at its away day in November 2025, members requested the opportunity to observe an inspection at a clinic once per term of office. The Chair informed member that this is being organised and dates will be shared shortly.
- 9.2.** The Chair thanked everyone for their active participation in the meeting and for the high quality of papers presented to the Authority. There being no further items of business, the Chair closed the meeting and reminded members that the next full Authority meeting will be held on 11 March 2026. Details of this meeting, including how to request to observe, is posted on the HFEA website.

Chair's signature

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

Signature



Chair: Julia Chain

Date: 11 March 2026