Health Research Authority

Terms of Reference

National Research & Ethics Advisors' Panel (NREAP)

Document Title:	National Research & Ethics Advisors' Panel (NREAP) Terms of Reference
Doc. Version Number:	V1.0
Issue Date:	24/02/2017
Author:	Ethics Guidance & Strategy Manager
Owner (Approver)	Joint Heads of Policy
Status:	Approved
Next Review Date:	24/02/2018

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 The Health Research Authority (HRA) is committed to ensuring that there are robust and transparent reporting frameworks in place, which are also proportionate and appropriate to the nature of the HRA business. HRA will aim to follow an open culture of management which respects the responsibilities of those leading a particular area of work. HRA accountability is through the HRA Board and Executive Management Team supported by management groups for recommendations and risk review.

1.2 The original National Research Ethics Advisors' Panel (NREAP) was set up following a request by the four UK Health Departments, through the United Kingdom Ethics Committee Authority (UKECA). Following the establishment of the Health Research Authority (HRA) in December 2011 a new panel of advisors were appointed in October 2012.

1.3 Following the establishment of the HRA as a statutory Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB) on 1 January 2015, the panel has been revised to better provide the HRA with a transparent source of advice and expertise to enable it to fulfil its statutory functions within an overall UK wide framework for Research Ethics and broader Research Governance. The name of the revised panel is "National Research & Ethics Advisors' Panel" (NREAP).

2. Membership

2.1 The membership of NREAP consists of a wide range of invited professional individuals with expertise relevant to the HRA's remit such as (but not limited to):

- Academics across a range of expertise (focusing on those working in the area of research ethics, consent, and regulation)
- Industry representatives
- Experienced REC Chairs/members
- Bioethicists
- (Health and social care) researchers[1]

[1] The National Research & Ethics Advisors' Panel complements the HRA's established stakeholder routes for seeking advice such as the patient panel, links with industry bodies such as the ABPI, UK wide Boards such as UKCRC and the HRA-convened meetings such as the HRA Collaboration and Development Forum.

2.2 Members are appointed to the panel by direct invitation by the HRA. Where appropriate, appointments of individuals from the Devolved Administrations are made in consultation with the UK Health Departments' Research Ethics Service and the appointing authorities of the RECs within that service.
2.3 All members are appointed on a staggered basis to either three, four or five year terms to ensure continuity of membership (a third of members to be appointed at random to each term initially). Appointments may be renewable at the end of the first period of office; however, members should not normally serve more than two consecutive terms.
2.4 New members may be suggested for consideration by the HRA and appointments made to the panel at any time.
2.5 Members may resign from the panel at any time by giving notice in writing to the HRA.
2.6 Individuals from the panel may be co-opted to form specific working groups as required. Additional individuals can be invited to join the workgroups, provide assistance or supply information as required.
2.7 The Secretariat for the panel and any working groups is provided by the HRA Policy and Public Affairs Directorate.

3. Quorum

3.1 There is no formal quorum for panel meetings.
3.2 Where a working group has been formed, and where necessary, the quorum may be decided by the Chair of the working group, taking into account the importance of the items under consideration, the presence of appropriate stakeholders, and the advisability of taking decisions if few members are present.

4. Meetings

4.1 The National Research & Ethics Advisors' Panel will not normally be required to formally meet as a full group either in person or virtually.
4.2 Where specific projects are required, these may be delivered through smaller working groups consisting of relevant experts drawn from NREAP and commissioned by the HRA to deliver specific, time-limited pieces of work (e.g. development of specific new guidance related to HRA policy in line with HRA strategic objectives).
4.3 Additional experts may be co-opted to working groups from outside the larger panel as required.
4.4 Working groups may meet in person and/or virtually as necessary. A lead member/Chair would be appointed by the HRA for each working group established and a quorum may be agreed
4.5 Other meetings of the full panel or members of the panel may be held as and when required by the HRA.
4.6 Meetings may, exceptionally, be cancelled by the HRA or, in the case of working groups, by the Chair in consultation with the panel secretariat.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Provision of non-binding advice to the HRA on matters related to policy and policy development including formulation and delivery of HRA strategy/policy/guidance to support HRA strategic objectives (e.g. proportionate regulation)
5.2 Provision of comments to inform HRA responses to external consultations
5.3 Review and provision of advice regarding HRA guidance/policy developed outside of the panel or produced by external third parties
5.4 Contribute to the prioritisation process by identifying emerging issues on an ongoing basis, with potential policy implications for HRA as part of its Horizon Scanning duty. The HRA will review prioritised issues to identify specific topics to be taken forward as policy/guidance development.
5.5 Provision of detailed advice related to existing HRA policy/guidance and ethical issues.
5.6 Provision of advice to the HRA on matters related to the remit of the HRA as required.
5.7 Contribute to public debate on ethical issues/policy/guidance at HRA hosted events.
5.8 Whilst the Health Research Authority Directions 2011 apply only in England (by virtue of section 271 of the National Health Service Act 2006) NREAP, appointed by UKECA, will continue to be a resource available to all RECs funded by the UK Health Departments within England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

6. Freedom to Act

6.1 NREAP is an advisory body only.
6.2 The strategic direction of the panel, commissioning new work and subsequent consideration, approval sign-off and adoption of new policy/guidance/advice emerging from the new panel sits with the HRA.
6.3 The Policy and Public Affairs Directorate will manage workgroups and provide gatekeeper/triage function for items put forward for consideration by the panel (either as individuals, groups of individuals or full panel).

7. Reporting

7.1 NREAP reports directly to the HRA Policy and Public Affairs Directorate. The HRA Policy and Public Affairs Directorate will update the HRA Board on NREAP activity as necessary and will produce an annual report for submission to the Board.

8. Papers

8.2 All papers, whether for scheduled meetings or for comment, will be circulated electronically. For scheduled meetings electronic papers will be circulated at least 5 working days in advance of meetings.
8.3 Where appropriate, draft minutes of formal meetings will be circulated within 5-7 working days after the meeting for comment and will provide a clear record of any advice provided and actions agreed.
8.4 Minutes will be jointly approved by the Chair of the working group and the HRA Policy and Public Affairs Directorate.
8.5 All minutes will be published externally.

9. Review

9.2 These terms of reference will be reviewed at least annually.

10. Document Control

Change History

Version	Status	Date	Changes
1.0	APPROVED	24/02/2017	**Author:** Clive Collett (Ethics Guidance & Strategy Manager) **Owner:** Joint Heads of Policy