NHS
Health Research Authority

HRA Collaboration and Development Forum

A UK wide group to lead on projects for improvement in the research journey

Background

The Health Research Authority (HRA) is tasked to deliver a unified approval process and to promote proportionate standards for compliance and inspection. To do this effectively it will need to shape this UK wide and work with others to implement shared solutions. This is building directly on the success of the National Research Ethics Service (NRES) in creating the partnerships through which it delivered the Integrated Research Application System (IRAS). The IRAS development was supported by a NRES hosted UK wide steering group. This enabled early awareness of issues, buy in to principles that underpinned solutions and ensured that when IRAS was delivered others beyond NRES were willing and able to adopt it as the application system UK wide. The IRAS was developed in 2007, launched in January 2008 and by the end of that year was the preferred application system for IRAS partners including NRES, MHRA (medicines and devices) and R&D permissions UK wide. It was also successfully adopted by applicants and sponsors who were also engaged in development through the steering group.

The same model was adopted in 2012 in the establishment of the Collaboration and Development Forum, previously named Collaboration and Development Steering Group, to support and steer key elements of HRA and members' business that contribute to the delivery on defined projects and workstreams. There is more than one deliverable and some projects may be led by existing groups outside of the HRA. A key role for the HRA-convened Forum will be the oversight of the current improvement activity and work of a host of different groups that exist at the moment.

Although broad, membership focusses on those for which the HRA provides services (researchers, research funders, sponsors, Industry), rather than just those with whom the HRA has to work with to provide these services. This will enable the Forum to focus on those aspects of collaboration in service provision, and to complement other existing groups through which partnerships are maintained such as subject-specific groups , e.g. clinical trials or medical devices groups

A list of the projects sitting under the Forum will be maintained by the HRA secretariat. Essentially they will be projects where implementation is required not just by HRA but by others as well. So it would not include, for example, HRA shared ethical debate. Although the Forum will be a platform for updating and networking there are other fora for sharing information and the focus will be the prioritisation and identification of projects, early agreement and buy in to principles that need to be adopted in solutions to enable UK wide implementation to improve the research journey in the UK.

HRA Collaboration and Development Forum

A UK wide group to lead on projects for improvement in the research journey

Terms of reference

A UK wide Forum to promote projects that will enable the implementation of a unified approval process and will support the HRA in promoting proportionate standards for compliance and inspection; specifically where implementation will be required not just by the HRA but by others as well to improve the research journey in the UK.

The Collaboration and Development Forum is established by the HRA with a remit to:

- Identify priorities for member action
- Consider wider changes that the HRA needs to be aware of in considering solutions
- Agreeing common principles to underpin solutions
- Promulgating action to achieve these solutions within member organisations or activity area
- Monitoring implementation and improvement.

The Forum will:

- Advise the HRA on issues that which can possibly be addressed by HRA or Forum members and that may be considered within business planning of HRA or other Forum members to improve the research journey in the UK. This may include informing HRA and others' contributions to existing processes to agree UK-wide working a strategic level within 4 Nations, or at other UK-wide groups.
- Advise HRA and forum members on activities undertaken by members to achieve improvements to the research journey in the UK
- Discuss and agree key principles that would need wider adoption outside the HRA to enable the implementation of HRA driven solutions
- Endorse the principle of common formats and solutions for the HRA to implement
- Actively support and promote the work of the HRA in improving the research journey in the UK.

For example solutions may require agreement of common formats for reports, agreement on roles in monitoring and reviewing research, wider support for adoption of a HRA provided project number through IRAS etc. There are many areas where solutions can be provided but can only be implemented if others agree to key principles that underpin them.

The Forum will meet quarterly, Chaired by the HRA Chief Executive.

The following member and observer organisations will nominate representatives, as agreed with the HRA Chair and Devolved Administrations.

HRA
- Chief Executive
- Director of Systems and Development / Programme Director – HRA Approval
- Collaboration and Development Lead

Administration of Radioactive Substances Advisory Committee (ARSAC)

Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)

National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA)

Human Tissue Authority (HTA)

Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC)

Cancer Research UK

Medical Research Council (MRC)

Wellcome Trust

Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)

Universities UK (UUK)

Academy of Medical Sciences

Industry
- ABPI
- EMIG

Observers
- Department of Health
- Devolved Administrations

Additionally, the Forum shall include two senior academic researcher representatives, and one HRA specialist advisers at Chief Executive's agreement.

Secretariat will be coordinated by Business Manager, Systems and Development, HRA.

The HRA will not in any event record the meeting and any member of the group may only record the meeting with the explicit consent of all present and this must then be noted in the minutes.