

Chief Executive Officer Report to the Board November 2019

Part 1 Public session

1. We are now fully into the planning round for the forthcoming financial year and progress has been made on the Transparency Strategy and our strategic refresh.
2. Our tightened financial controls this year to operate within a reduced budget have had a significant impact across the HRA and will impact significantly on our ability to continue to deliver the faster turnarounds expected by Industry and others, to improve the researcher experience of our services and our staff's work-life balance. We still have a number of initiatives aimed at addressing all of these in the pipeline but continue to be constrained by resources.
3. We have been continuing to work with colleagues in DHSC to secure funding for the next phase of the IRAS build and funding for increased resilience across HRA. Whilst sickness levels appear to have stabilised, visits to HRA offices highlight how stretched we are across all directorates and staff continue to report significant challenges with workload.
4. We have supported a request from staff at the last staff forum for regular meetings which bring staff together for discussions where there are areas of shared interest and to provide an opportunity for some social interaction. To support this each of the Directors is supporting these new meetings which will all have a different agenda depending on what is relevant to the staff community attending and the locality. Feedback from 3 of the offices where meetings have taken place has been very positive. I recently attended the Nottingham office and was encouraged by the supportive approach that staff were taking towards each other and the discussion topics which included support to a local charity, recycling and ideas around how they can contribute to the "Green Team". Staff shared updates on some of the work being led by Katherine Guerin from the self- managed groups covering diversity and inclusion and a really important discussion on how staff can work differently to understand who is working where and when and how to contact staff and managers in the event of an incident which we need to consider across the HRA. We also had a very engaging and interactive session so that staff including new staff could learn about each other which was great fun and were then all able to share a fantastic cake made by a member of the team. Members of the DHSC Delivery Partners team which has been the main route for all Brexit related issues have been sharing examples of initiatives and changes that have been made across a number of ALBs and there are a few

examples where we could benefit from a more detailed understanding of some of the new systems and processes that have been introduced to improve our own learning.

5. The joint programme delivering the Combined Ways of Working and the first phase of the new IRAS development is now reporting a “Green” status following additional support from DHSC Policy team and the MHRA. The cross-agency team delivering the software changes have been completing testing and work to date suggests that while some fixes were needed, these have not been serious and we remain optimistic that we will be able to deploy into the live environment releasing the software to a selected group of research applications in line with the current planned timelines.
6. We continue to make progress with the work on Student Research and have had positive engagement with a number of organisations including most recently support from the NIHR strategy board.
7. A workshop is planned in December to bring together members from the workstreams who have been supporting the cross- agency interoperability programme. One of the outcomes of this will be an engagement plan as we are now reaching the stage when we would like to engage with the research community and other key stakeholders to share what we have been doing and develop an implementation plan. Recent external Engagement Activity (reduced external activity due to time off during this period)

	Purpose of Meeting	Outcome
NIHR Strategy Board conference	Delivered a presentation with Prof Matt Westmore on the project to deliver an improved process and experience for students submitting research applications	HRA will provide some data to support more detailed understanding of the issues A number of supportive actions from Strategy Board members
HRA, DHSC, NHS England and Public Health England ARSAC	To work collaboratively to improve timelines for radiation approval for clinical trials and secure NHS England support to encourage expert volunteers to support research applications	The ARSAC team have made a number of changes to help fast track applications
NIHR Patient Recruitment Centres Steering Group	To receive an update on progress of this initiative	Continued support from HRA, MHRA and others to support the establishment of these centres which will be

		announced late February 2020
National Chairs Conference	Interactive conference focussing on Partnerships and Patient Involvement	Engagement work with chairs, partners and other agencies to inform our workplan for 2020
Regular catch up meetings with CEOs & Directors in NIHR, AMRC & ABPI	To keep each other updated on specific projects and initiatives	Updates this month included