# NHS Health Research Authority LogoChief Executive Officer Report to the Board March 2020

## Part 1 Public session

1. The HRA has been reviewing Business Continuity Plans for the anticipated spread of the Coronavirus. Whilst we are able to work remotely to conduct many of our daily activities, we need to ensure that the IT infrastructure can host more remote working at a time when business across the UK will be adopting the same model. Briefing notes have been prepared for staff and members. We are directing staff to and following Government and Public Health England advice. The Confidentiality Advisory Group piloted a successful virtual meeting to support this work this month.
2. The Minimum Viable Product version of New Integrated Research Applications System (IRAS) for Clinical Trials Applications was successfully deployed into the live environment on the 2nd March. The Research systems Team, Contractors and a range of other staff and researchers who have been supporting this work have worked incredibly hard to achieve this milestone and as you will see from Janet Messer’s report, we have also now processed over 100 applications through the manual version of the Combined Ways of working model. We are now keen to understand whether as we migrate pilot sites onto the platform if we can make further reductions in manual processing.
3. HRA have been supporting new working groups looking at reducing regulatory burden and proportionate regulation for AI and we will be able to update board members on progress in the coming months.
4. Transparency Strategy: The launch event is still going ahead on 30th March but we took the pragmatic decision to delay the media launch planned for earlier this month while we confirm the funding support for work mapped out for 2021.
5. The Business Planning process has progressed well and the latest version has been submitted to this Board meeting. The teams are learning a new discipline and have had to drop significant amounts of work which offer the potential for future service improvements to ensure that we do not overstretch our staff following the reduction in headcount across the HRA in 2019. The plan remains focussed on innovation in the form of Technology but also includes further work on Proportionality and improving the experience for our staff and volunteer members. If things improve we will be able to draw on this work.
6. In January we reported that customer/applicant satisfaction had dropped slightly. This has improved again following corrective action but is still just below target.
7. PA Consulting are supporting the Research Systems team to develop the Target Operating Model for Research Systems and this work is progressing well.
8. The annual staff survey is live and we hope to be able to demonstrate improvements in areas which had dipped last year following significant efforts across all teams and offices to implement actions and re-engage with each other.
9. Katherine Guerin has been leading a development programme for the Strategic Leadership Team following the inclusion of Assistant Directors. The intention is that this work will align with the current Board Development Programme.
10. Work on Student Research continues with workshops planned in the coming weeks to engage with a range of stakeholders.

### External Engagement

Terence and I have held introductory meetings with Human Tissue Authority (HTA) and Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) CEO and Chairs and have further meetings in the diary. The collective ambition is to ensure that the UK remains a great place to do Research as we transition away from the EU and we have agreed that staff from across the different regulators will work collaboratively to establish what new ways of working can offer the sector.

I have recently joined the NHS Digitrials Board and am still in the process of orientating myself around this work.

At the March Cross Agency Interoperability Steering Group, we took a number of decisions which will allow us to close down the formal programme at the end of March and a supplementary brief will be provided once it has been signed off outlining decisions and next steps.

Janet and I have recently met with Karen Ruthven, Angela O'Connell and Jacqueline Johnson North (International Accrediting Organisation for Clinical Research (IAOCR)) to discuss the new Patient Recruitment Centres

I had regular catch up meetings with Jonathan Sheffield and Clare Morgan who are both leaving National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) this month. Both have been instrumental in supporting and helping us to drive cross organisational improvements during the last few years since I joined HRA.