HRA key messages March 2022

Health Research Authority

What we do and why it matters

- Our core purpose is to protect and promote the interests of patients and the public in health and social care research

- Our vision is for high-quality health and social care research that improves people's health and wellbeing

- To achieve it we:
  - make sure that research is ethically reviewed and approved
  - promote transparency in research, and
  - coordinate and standardise research regulatory practice

How to use these messages

- Everyone who is part of the HRA should be able to explain what the organisation does and why it's important. This document will help you speak with confidence when asked about the HRA, its impact and our current priorities.

- This isn't a script and we don't expect you to learn it off by heart. Read it, know where to find it and check back regularly. It's updated every four weeks. These messages are a useful starting point for conversations about the HRA, make them your own.

- Slide 7 sets out some of the current issues we're managing. If you get difficult questions about the work of the HRA that you're not sure how to answer, the communications team can help.

- Don't email this document to anyone outside the organisation, it's to support you.

How are we doing?

- Our ethics committees in England have reviewed and approved almost 4000 studies this year (1)
- Combined review with the MHRA, the new way that all trials of medicines are approved, is on average twice as quick as two separate systems were (2)
- When asked for feedback on the HRA, applicants consistently say that our staff were the best part of the process, scoring them ten out of ten (3)

Did you hear that we…?

- Reviewed and approved the PANORAMIC study in only nine days. The world's largest study into new COVID-19 antiviral treatments, which can be given at home, now has more than 10,000 participants

- Worked with the Academy of Medical Sciences to 'future gaze' how the HRA can continue to meet the needs of researchers and facilitate high-quality innovative studies. This is part of our tenth birthday celebrations and a full report will be published soon

- Are making it quicker to set up research in the UK by helping commercial companies and NHS organisations share information consistently. Our new templates apply across the four nations

Coming soon

- We’ve brought together 15 organisations to make an ambitious shared commitment to public involvement in research, launching later this month

- A new campaign to recruit more doctors and medical professionals to our Research Ethics Committees. Look out for our ads and share them with anyone who might want to step forward to join a REC

- Improvements to new IRAS, making it easier for teams to collaborate on an application for research approval

Talk to us about …

- Research transparency. We're making it easier for researchers to fulfil their responsibilities so that trusted information about health and social care research studies is always publicly available to the benefit of all

- The Future of UK Clinical Research. We're working with partners to make changes so that everyone across the health service can participate in delivering research and people across the country can take part in research that relevant to them

- Clinical trials. We're supporting the MHRA's consultation, especially the proposal to make involvement of people with relevant lived experience a legal requirement

Current issues

- We’re investigating concerns raised with us about Spectrum 10K, a research study involving autistic people. The study has been paused by the research team and we are reviewing information that they have provided to the REC. We have committed to updating complainants by the end of this month. For more information contact Eve Hart.

- We are working closely with sponsors to make sure that automatic registration of clinical trials of medicine, part of our Make it Public campaign, does not result in studies being registered in two locations. Dual registration is considered poor transparency practice. For more information contact Naho Yamazaki.

- We are supporting combined review users who are submitting studies involving ionising radiation. These studies involve a complicated workaround between new and legacy IRAS. The ionising radiation module for new IRAS has been delayed pending the outcome of the strategic review of the research systems programme. For more information contact Eve Hart.

References

(1) The exact figure is 3832 studies at 1 March 2022 and is calculated by financial year, from 1 April 2021. The number includes studies granted HRA Approval, and those reviewed by a REC in England

(2) This performance data is taken from timelines for CTIMPs going through separate and combined review from 2018 to present (to February 2022). Combined review halves the time it takes for studies to get approval and cuts the time from application to recruiting a first patient by 40 days

(3) This data comes from the HRA user feedback survey and responses received in February 2020. Overall satisfaction with the HRA was 83% (measured by respondents scoring their experience 7 out of 10 or higher) and 88% of respondents scored our staff 7 out of 10 or higher. 41% scored staff 10 out of 10, the highest score of all aspects respondents are asked to comment on.