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| **Agenda item:** | **13** |
| **Attachment:** | **F** |

**HRA BOARD COVER SHEET**

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| **Date of Meeting:** | 15/04/2015 |

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| --- | --- |
| **Title of Paper:** | REC MEMBERSHIP REPORT |
| **Purpose of Paper:** | At its meeting in September 2014 The Health Research Authority (HRA) Board were presented with the REC Annual Reports which included information related to the turnover of REC members. The Board requested further information about the reasons why members leave the service before the completion of their term of office.  There has also been a request to consider ways in which the new Board can engage with REC members and Chairs and for information on current communication mechanisms.  This paper provides that information. |
| **Reason for Submission:** | This paper is presented to the Board to provide the information requested in relation to the turnover of REC members, member recruitment, and to suggest ways in which members of the Board could consider engagement with REC members and Chairs.  The Board is asked to consider this paper and whether it is useful to have this information provided quarterly or at the end of the annual reporting period only as in previous years. |
| **Details:** | See attached paper. |
| **Time required for item:** |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Recommendation / Proposed Actions:** | **To Approve** | | **Y** |
| **To Note** | |  |
| **For Discussion** | | **Y** |
| **Comments** |  | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name:** | Joan Kirkbride/Sheila Oliver |
| **Job Title:** | Director of Operations and Approval / Head of RES (England) |
| **Date:** | 07/04/2015 |

**BOARD PAPER**

**REC MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

**Background/Context**

Research Ethics Committee (REC) Annual Reports presented to the HRA Board in September each year include information related to the turnover of REC members. Information reported to date has only included the number of members leaving and new members joining, and the classification of those members whether lay or expert. Membership turnover is circa 20% each year. For the most recent year 181 members left the service, 109 were expert members and 42 of those were clinicians, 157 new members were recruited, 85 were expert members and of those, 34 were doctors or retired doctors. It should be noted that until 2014 RECs were expected to have up to 18 members, this was reduced to 15 as the optimum number based on attendees at REC meetings. Members are appointed for a 5 year term of office and can be re-appointed for a second 5 year term if they wish within the same REC and their membership in terms of meeting terms and conditions of membership is satisfactory.

It has been reported informally that expert members, especially clinicians, leave the service before the end of their term of office due to workload pressures and lack of support from Trusts for their attendance at REC meetings. The HRA has a letter from Dame Sally Davies which encourages organisations to release staff for non-clinical work and where we are notified of difficulties with particular organisations the HRA writes to the Chief Executive about this issue. It has also been suggested by a clinician member that the HRA should reflect on its membership requirements and allow members to serve for more than ten years on a single committee. This suggestion will be addressed

At the end of 2014 a members leavers checklist was introduced to capture the reasons for members leaving in order to consider whether any measures can be taken to reduce turnover.

**Scope**

This report includes information for quarter four 2014/15 related to members leaving the service, the reasons for leaving and the number of new members appointed.

**Members leaving the service**

From January to March 2015 only 15 members left the service, from 10 different RECs, 7 were expert members (including 2 doctor and 3 nurses), 5 Lay members and 3 Lay plus members.

The reasons for leaving were reported as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | End of term of office | Change of job | Workload/work commitments | Personal commitments | Moving to a new location | Dissatisfaction with the HRA | Other |
| Expert |  | 2 | 2 | 1 |  |  | 2 |
| Lay | 1 |  | 1 | 3 |  |  |  |
| Lay + |  |  |  | 2 |  |  | 1 |
| Total | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 |  |  | 3 |

**Recruitment**

From January to March 2015 thirty three new members were appointed (this included 2 members transferring to other RECs at the end of their term of office). New appointments were across 27 RECs with the largest number of new members to one REC being 4.

Classification of members recruited was as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Expert | Lay | Lay + |
| 20  (4 Doctors, 5 Nurses, 3 Pharmacists, 8 other professions allied to health or care and others) | 9 | 4 |

Two successful advertising campaigns have been held in the first quarter, one for Pharmacists and one for Statisticians.

44 expressions of interest in joining a REC have been received in this quarter, including 23 pharmacists and 2 statisticians.

**Engagement with REC Chairs and members**

The main engagement with REC Chairs and members is via the REC Managers at REC meetings. Additionally Regional Managers and Deputy Regional Managers visit each REC annually to undertake a REC review meeting which is a formal part of the Quality Control process. Operational Managers may also attend REC meetings though this is generally when there is a specific message to deliver.

Operational Managers engage with REC Chairs and members at training events. In quarter 4 the annual members training event was held in Leeds and attended by the Director of Operations and Approval and the Head of RES (England). The event was not as well attended as in previous years.

There is an opportunity for members to feedback via the member feedback survey on the HRA website and through targeted feedback requests from HRA QA. This feedback is reported in the 6 monthly user feedback reports provided to the Board.

In quarter four issues raised by members included some dissatisfaction related to the way in which Proportionate Review Sub Committees are managed and the lack of a Vice Chair in one REC, both issues are being addressed.

Twice yearly NREAP hosted Chairs meetings are held in each region attended by Senior Operations Managers with an opportunity for REC Chairs to discuss issues face to face. The agenda for the meeting has two parts, one focussed on ethical issues and the other on operational matters. Chairs and many of the members know, and are well known to, the Senior Operations team; we have an open door policy and it is not unusual to have direct contact either by phone or email and we welcome this approach.

**Opportunities for the Board to engage with REC Chairs and members**

The Board may wish to consider opportunities to engage with REC Chairs and Members. Attendance at REC meetings, member training events, and NREAP hosted REC Chairs meetings could be arranged.

**Conclusion**

The introduction of the member leavers checklist is useful in providing information other than anecdotal about the reasons why members leave the service. Quarterly reporting will allow a better focus on member turnover, recruitment and monitoring of trends.