ARSAC Stakeholder Survey

In July 2016, ARSAC released a survey to stakeholders to collect feedback on the ARSAC application process. The survey was released for a period of 6 weeks and received 151 complete responses. Respondents were from a range of professions including clinicians, physicists and other healthcare professionals as can be seen in Figure 1 and were involved in a range of application types as in Figure 2.

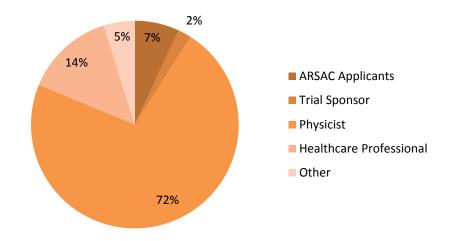


Figure 1: Distribution of professions of respondents to the survey

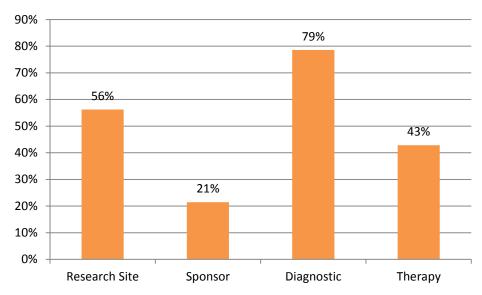


Figure 2: Types of Applications respondents were involved with

Of the 151 respondents, 49% had contacted the Support Unit in the last 6 months. The majority of applicants contacted the Support Unit by phone as can be seen in Figure 3.

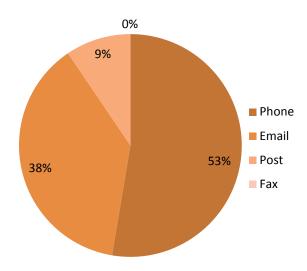


Figure 3: How respondents contacted the Support Unit.

72% of respondents were subscribed to the ARSAC email bulletin and 83% had been on the website. 50% of respondents indicated they were interested in attending a training course on applying for ARSAC research authorisation.

The majority of respondents were satisfied with the information in the application forms, information from the support unit, clarity of letters and time taken for application processing as can be seen in Figure 4.

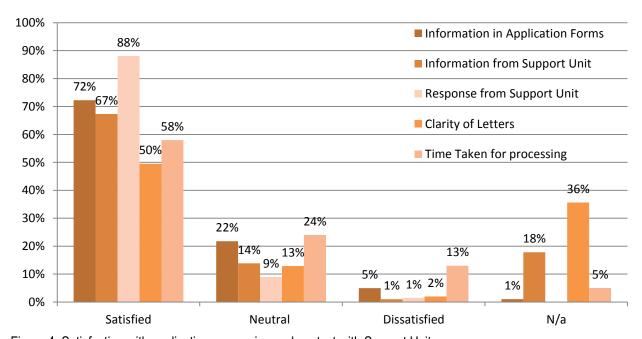


Figure 4: Satisfaction with application processing and contact with Support Unit

56% of respondents left additional comments on the application process which have been broadly categorised as in Table 1.

Table 1: Categorisation of the comments received from respondents

Topic of Comment	Number
Desire for Electronic Applications	14
General comment supporting the process and advice from support unit	21
Problems with IRAS form/research applications	10
Issues with amount of Training Required	12

Comment on proposal for ARSAC application	4
training course	
Comment that further guidance is needed on	14
application process (on website or in notes)	
Comment on the time taken for applications	5
Newsletters	5

ARSAC response to comments

Electronic applications

With the current infrastructure it is not possible to have electronic applications however this is something we are continuing to investigate and hope to have in place with the implementation of new UK regulations. We will continue to send out bulletins to update the community of progress with this.

Problems with IRAS

The ARSAC Secretariat is continuing to liaise with the HRA and IRAS Partners teams to improve the research application process. Guidance is available in Section 5 of the Notes for Guidance (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/arsac-notes-for-guidance) and on the website (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-and-when-to-submit-research-applications-to-arsac)

Training Required

All applications are assessed on their own merit. Standards for training required are taken as equivalent to those required in the RCP Nuclear Medicine Training Programme or RCR Radionuclide Radiology subspecialty training programme for diagnostic applications and the RCP or RCR Clinical oncologist speciality training programme for therapies.

Proposal for ARSAC application training course

Due to current pressures on resources, we do not plan to run a training course at this time. However, following the positive response from this survey we will investigate this in the future.

Guidance on the application process

Detailed guidance on the application process and how to apply can be found in Section 2 of the Notes for Guidance (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/arsac-notes-for-guidance). Specific guidance for how to apply for research studies is available on the website (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-and-when-to-submit-research-applications-to-arsac). ARSAC performs an annual review of this guidance to ensure that it remains up to date. Additional guidance on completing an application can be found in the notes at the end of the application forms (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/arsac-application-forms).

Time taken for Applications

ARSAC and the Support Unit process applications as quickly as possible and try to process all applications within 6 weeks. ARSAC has targets to complete 90% of applications within 60 days which it has met for the last 4 years. The average processing time of applications is currently less than 25 days.

Newsletters

Historic ARSAC newsletters are still available through the national archives website

https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKHPA/subscriber/new?topic_id=UKHPA_43).