



PHE Board Paper

Title of meeting PHE Board
Date Wednesday 28 January 2015
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Title of paper Update on PHE Research

1. Purpose of the paper

- 1.1 The purpose of the paper is to provide PHE Board with:
- a) an opportunity for direct input to the public consultation on the strategy for Research, Development & Innovation; and
 - b) update on PHE support for these activities, including working with partner health sector and academic organisations.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Board is asked to:
- a) **COMMENT** on the strategy for Research, Development & Innovation;
 - b) **ENDORSE** proposed strategic partnership working with NHS England and Health Education England (HEE); and
 - c) **NOTE** updated PHE research governance and support arrangements, and research activities particularly in the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Health Protection Research Units (HPRUs).

3. Strategy

- 3.1 Development of the PHE strategy for Research, Development & Innovation has involved engagement with external partners, e.g. health sector organisations, academics and research funders, and consultation with PHE colleagues. It is available for external comment until March 2015. It is proposed that the final, post-consultation strategy will be published together with an implementation action plan. The strategy document is at Annex A and PHE website:

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/doing-supporting-and-using-public-health-research

PHE Board is invited to **COMMENT**.

- 3.2 Strategy development included interactions with NHS England and HEE. The HEE strategy for R&D was published recently and that for NHS England is under consideration. It is proposed that a small Scientific Advisory Board be established among our three organisations. The functions of that Board are set out at Annex B. PHE Board is asked to **ENDORSE** the establishment of the proposed Scientific Advisory Board.

4. Research Governance and Support

4.1 Oversight of research activity within PHE is provided by its R&D Group. The work of the group has been revised and sub-groups established as follows:

- Health Protection Research Unit Governance (see below).
- Academic Relationships: oversight of the management of clinical and non-clinical academic honorary contracts from PHE for academic support.
- Research Ethics: consideration of ethics arrangements for research outwith NHS research governance arrangements; agreement on PHE sponsorship.
- Research Performance and Review: oversight of PHE's strategic research funding, including PhD studentships (students undertake work in PHE with supervisory teams of PHE and university staff), pump-priming funds to enable preliminary data collection or team development for major research project proposals to external funders and decisions on contributions to intervention costs (also called excess treatment costs) for public health projects supported by NIHR or its partner funders and for which there is no other provider. This sub-group will bring consistency to such decision-making and enable tracking of effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of PHE-supported research.
- Sub-group yet to be established - Research Workforce: meeting PHE staff needs for research skills.

PHE Board is asked to **NOTE** this revised structure.

5. NIHR Health Protection Research Units (HPRUs)

5.1 All 13 HPRUs are now operating with PHE as their common partner. Most (11 of 13) partnership agreements are already in place – well in advance of the April 2015 deadline. Each Unit is led by a university-based Director working closely with named PHE Leads. Launch events have taken place as have meetings of Scientific Advisory Boards. Excellent working relationships with the Department of Health / NIHR enable, for example, flexibility in managing finances and work programmes to accommodate the demands on PHE and some universities of the ebola emergency response. Annex C describes the HPRUs and their research interests.

5.2 High quality publications are already being achieved within an agreed framework that allows DH and PHE to manage emerging content and plans are in place for further development of research capacity and capability, e.g. the NIHR HPRU Academy to provide bespoke research training for PhD students and early career researchers; promotion of good practice in the involvement and engagement of people and service users (commonly termed PPI / PPE).

5.3 To achieve impact, this initiative requires effective processes so that new knowledge can be translated to inform innovative PHE programmes. The PHE Action Plan to implement the strategy for Research, Development & Innovation aims to ensure that.

PHE Board is asked to **NOTE** the successful initiation of HPRUs.

Professor Bernie Hannigan

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