



## Minutes of the Board meeting

13 June 2019

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### Present:

Professor Stephen Holgate CBE (SH) *Chair*  
Mr Paul Brooker (PF)  
Professor Chris Denning (CD)  
Mr Paul Finnemore (PF)  
Professor Paul Garside (PG)  
Professor Stefan Przyborski (SP)  
Dr Frances Rawle (FR)  
Dr Vicky Robinson (VR)  
Dr Sadhana Sharma (SS)  
Professor Jon Timmis (JT)  
Professor Lucy Walker (LW)

### Office:

Dr Esther Pearl (EP)  
Dr Nathalie Percie du Sert (NPdS) *item 6*  
Dr Mark Prescott (MP)  
Dr Helen Prior (HP) *item 8*  
Dr Suzanne McArdle (SM)  
Kayleigh Purdon (KP) *Secretariat*

### Apologies:

Dr David Lovell (DL)  
Professor Blanca Rodriguez (BR)

## 1. Welcome

- 1.1 SH welcomed members to the meeting.
- 1.2 Dr Sadhana Sharma, Head of Strategy for Bioscience for Health has replaced Dr Ceri Lyn-Adams as the interim BBSRC representative on the Board while Dr Lyn-Adams is on maternity leave.

## 2. Board recruitment and QQR update

- 2.1 VR and SM provided the Board with an update on the Quinquennial Review (QQR) and Board member recruitment.
- 2.2 We received 21 applications to join the NC3Rs Board namely three from government departments, six from industry and 12 from academia. The applications will be reviewed and those shortlisted will be invited to interview with the appointments panel, chaired by SH, in July. The new Board members will be appointed before the next Board meeting.
- 2.3 MRC colleagues, Jonathan Pearce, Associate Director of Biological Medicine and Simone Bryan, Programme Manager for Policy, Ethics and Governance are overseeing the arrangements for the upcoming QQR. VR and SM have been working with MRC on the draft QQR terms of reference and to clarify the conflicts of interest policy for the review process.
- 2.4 VR and SM will present a draft report to the Board at the October meeting. In advance of this, VR will contact members of the Board individually for their input and comments.
- 2.5 Under the draft timeline, the QQR report will be submitted at the end of November 2019 although this is scope for a small extension if needed.

### 3. Review of the NC3Rs Governance Framework

- 3.1 SM highlighted the updates made to the NC3Rs Governance Framework, in consultation with FR, to better reflect the NC3Rs relationship with MRC as part of UKRI and the establishment of relevant roles and committees within UKRI.
- 3.2 A copy of the updated Governance Framework will be provided to the QQR panel as part of the formal review process.

### 4. Summary of activities - November 2018 to May 2019

- 4.1 The Board noted the update on current activities.
- 4.2 The Board discussed the following activities in further detail:

#### The NC3Rs Gateway

A total of eight method articles, one review and one editorial have been published since the launch of the Gateway in May 2018. This number of publications exceeds the Office's target for the year. The Board noted the potential that the Gateway has to become a very valuable resource but also acknowledged the level of internal resource required to maximise and sustain this.

Allowing non-NC3Rs funded researchers to publish papers on the Gateway and the appropriate time to permit this was also discussed.

**Action:** A copy of the most recent F1000research gateway statistics report to be circulated to the Board.

#### CRACK IT

The CRACK IT Advisory Panel met in March to review seven potential Challenges for the 2019 call. Out of the seven put forward, three were recommended by the Panel for investment. The 2019 call will see the NC3Rs collaborate with four new sponsors, including Takeda, Bayer, the Royal Veterinary College and the University of Sheffield.

The CRACK IT review will be launched at a showcase event in September 2019. Further details will be circulated to the Board in due course.

#### Pharma Showcase

An event showcasing the NC3Rs work and partnerships with the pharmaceutical industry will be held at the end of June 2019. The meeting will also contain sessions to discuss future 3Rs opportunities within the drug development process.

#### PhD studentships

The annual NC3Rs Summer school will take place in Bristol in June. As part of the regional collaboration, non-NC3Rs students have been invited to attend following last year's success.

The deadline for outline applications for the 2019 Studentship competition closed in May with 94 outlines received. Of these, 82 applicants have been invited to submit full applications. The Studentship Assessment Panel will meet in October. A total of 18 Studentships are available, including three British Heart Foundation and three Unilever joint awards.

#### Podcast

The Office continues to collaborate with *Lab Animals* and the North American 3Rs Collaborative to produce a monthly podcast to summarise a 3Rs relevant paper. VR will be participating in a teleconference with the North American 3Rs Collaborative in coming months to discuss how to improve and develop the podcast.

#### Use of animals overseas checklists

FR noted the value and usefulness of the checklists in assisting funders and AWERBs in assessing whether animal use overseas complies with the guidance set out in the *Responsibility in the Use of Animals in Bioscience Research* document.

## **5. Public engagement activities**

- 5.1 VR presented the findings from the 2018 Ipsos MORI survey into public acceptance, awareness and attitudes towards the use of animals in scientific research in the UK. The data indicates that public awareness of the NC3Rs currently stands at approximately 10%. VR also presented a summary of the NC3Rs public engagement activities. The Board discussed whether additional resource should be allocated to organisational public engagement activities and agreed that the current balance of activities was appropriate given the size of the organisation and budget.

## **6. Experimental Design update**

- 6.1 NPdS provided the Board with an update on the Experimental Design programme and the ARRIVE guidelines revision. The Board noted the progress made to date on the EDA and the large number of workshops held. FR noted the value of the peer review workshops in equipping new panel members, from multiple funders including the MRC and BBSRC, with the necessary tools and guidance to assess the quality of the experimental design information provided in applications. The Board also commented on the progress made with revising the ARRIVE guidelines and preparation of associated manuscripts.

## **7. Early Career Researcher engagement**

- 7.1 LW led the discussion on the NC3Rs engagement with Early Career Researchers. The Board identified this as a key area for the upcoming QQR and reviewed current activities. Members discussed opportunities for increasing interactions with Early Career Researchers and their Supervisors/ Sponsors and to what scale potential plans could be implemented within the budget available. It was recommended by the Board that the Office explore the feasibility of a 3Rs mentoring system for Early Career Researchers.

## **8. Toxicology update**

- 8.1 HP provided the Board with an update on ongoing activities within the toxicology programme. Members were shown a preview of the survey data collected as part of the second species study, a collaborative project with the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI). The Board were impressed with the wide spectrum of projects that HP and the toxicology team are working on. They noted the second species project to be of very high level and having the potential to generate interest from parliamentarians and campaign groups.

## **9. Genome editing presentation - Guest speakers, Dr Thomas Wishart and Dr Christopher Proudfoot**

- 9.1 Dr Wishart a Reader in Molecular Anatomy at the Roslin Institute was invited to speak to the Board at the suggestion of IJ
- 9.2 Dr Wishart and his colleague, Dr Proudfoot gave a presentation on the research being undertaken within the Wishart laboratory. Their research is aimed at understanding the cellular and molecular processes which underpin the development and stability of the nervous system in health and disease, with a more specific focus on the biology of the neuron. Dr Wishart's presentation also included the comparisons across a diverse array of model systems, moving between pathological assessment and molecular analysis of mammalian (including but not limited to murine, ovine and equine) neuronal systems, through to *in silico* identification of potential regulatory cascades, and lower order model-based *in vivo* assessment of candidate ability to modulate neuronal morphology and/or stability.

## **10. AOB**

- 10.1 The Board asked for an updated staff organogram to be circulated.  
Action: VR to send to the Board following the meeting.
- 10.2 The Board requested copies of all the presentation given.

Action: KP to circulate to the Board following the meeting.