

NHS GREATER GLASGOW & CLYDE

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
West of Scotland Research Ethics Service Governance Committee
held in Meeting Room A, Ground Floor, Dalian House,
350 St Vincent Street, Glasgow
on Thursday, 29 January 2009 at 9.30 a.m.**

PRESENT

Prof D H Barlow (in the Chair)

Mr R Cleland

Dr L de Caestecker

Mrs A Stewart MBE

IN ATTENDANCE

Dr J Godden	...	Scientific Officer/Manager, West of Scotland Research Ethics Service
Mr J C Hamilton	...	Head of Board Administration
Professor R Hunter	...	Associate Director of Research and Development
Mrs A H Torrie	...	Lead Senior Administrator, West of Scotland Research Ethics Service
Mr W S Marshall	...	Secretariat Officer

ACTION BY

1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed all present to the first meeting of the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service Governance Committee. He extended a particular welcome to Dr J Godden, who had recently been appointed as the Scientific Officer/Manager of the new service..

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Dr D R Colville and Dr B N Cowan.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Research Ethics Governance Committee held on 7 August 2008 [NHSGGCREGC(M) 08/2] were approved as a correct record.

NOTED

The Minutes of the meeting of the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Research Ethics Governance Committee held on 17 November 2008 [NHSGGCREGC (M) 08/3] were approved as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

Minute 21, fourth paragraph -

Omit:

“The fifth committee would replace South Glasgow and Clyde, Lanarkshire, Ayrshire and Arran and Dumfries and Galloway Committee would meet at a location yet to be decided.”

Add:

“The fifth committee would replace South Glasgow and Clyde, Lanarkshire, Ayrshire and Arran and Dumfries and Galloway Committees. This single Committee would meet at a location yet to be decided.”

4. **WEST OF SCOTLAND RESEARCH ETHICS SERVICE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE: DRAFT CONSTITUTION FOR APPROVAL**

The Governance Committee received for consideration copies of its Draft Constitution submitted by the Associate Director of Research and development with the assistance of the Head of Board Administration.

The Scientific Officer/Manager suggested that the word “Local” as appended to the appellation “Research Ethics Committees” be omitted. This suggestion was agreed since “Research Ethics Committee” was now the accepted appellation for these committees.

**Secretariat
Officer**

DECIDED:

That the Draft Constitution be amended accordingly and that the amended Constitution be taken as approved.

5. **WEST OF SCOTLAND RESEARCH ETHICS SERVICE: UPDATE**

The Governance Committee received for information copies of a paper submitted by the Head of Board Administration detailing the recent progress that had been made in moving towards the new West of Scotland Research Ethics arrangements.

The Head of Board Administration commenced his update by confirming that following the recruitment process, the Interview Panel, Chaired by Professor R Hunter (and comprising Dr John Hunter, Chair of the REC Chairs); Mr C Gilbert, Chief Scientist’s Office and the Head of Board Administration) had appointed Dr Judith Godden to the post of Scientific Officer/Manager. Dr Godden would commence her duties on 2 March 2009. The intention was therefore to have the formal commencement of the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service from this date although it was appreciated that a number of elements of the service were already in place and operating.

The Head of Board Administration advised that Mrs A H Torrie had been appointed as the Lead/Senior Administrator. The five Research Ethics Committees’ administrators had also been appointed along with three support staff. All of these posts had been through the Agenda for Change process and had received the appropriate bandings. In addition, all staff had a KSF and a PDP.

In regard to the establishment of the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service Research Ethics Committees, steps had been taken to carry out a second survey of REC members from the committees within Ayrshire and Arran, Dumfries and Galloway, Lanarkshire and South Glasgow and Clyde, the intention from the returns received would be to form what would be called West of Scotland REC5. This Committee would meet within the Lanarkshire area during office hours and would be served by the Research Ethics Team based within the Western Infirmary.

There had been some debate about the actual meeting time of this particular committee but the possibility of it meeting in the evening had never been agreed. From the survey returns it was clear that the vast majority of its membership preferred a daytime meeting which was in line with the accepted procedures being adopted within the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service.

If there were more expressions of interest from current members to continue to be involved than places available within the West of Scotland REC5, it would be the intention to fill any relevant vacancies on the four other RECs to ensure that they were represented by the West of Scotland members and not just from the host Board. If necessary, a bank of interested individuals would be held which would be used for future ad hoc vacancies on any of the committees. If the levels of interest from current members wanting to continue were significant, consideration would be given to an appointments process for positions on the RECs.

In regard to the retention of records, advice had been received regarding those created by the current RECs/NHS Boards and where these should be stored or archived. The advice given was that the legal entity which had created the records remained responsible for those records and for the decisions taken by the RECs. Therefore, all such records should be retained and archived by the NHS Board which created them. Only those files which refer to ongoing cases should be transferred to the new West of Scotland Research Ethics Service in February/March 2009. It was noted that RECs would continue to be indemnified.

In regard to the Governance Committee, the Head of Board Administration reminded members that NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde has had for many years a Research Ethics Governance Committee made up of NHS Board Members. This was a Standing Committee of the NHS Board and sought assurance from officers that all governance matters associated with Research Ethics were adhered to and the RECs operated appropriately (within the governance arrangements for RECs (GAFREC) and the National Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

The Director of Public Health sought clarification on aspects of the Governance Committee arrangements. The Head of Board Administration explained that the Committee would widen its responsibilities and carry out this function on behalf of the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service. It would remain a formal Committee of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's Board and the officers would ensure that the agenda, papers and minutes for each meeting were shared with the Directors of Public Health within the NHS Boards of Ayrshire and Arran, Dumfries and Galloway and Lanarkshire. This was intended to give them and their NHS Boards the assurance that the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service operated appropriately and within the governance framework set for research ethics.

The Head of Board Administration emphasised that these procedures were particularly important in dealing with the concern that the managerial changes involved in establishing the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service might compromise the independence of the RECs. This was on the basis that the research ethics service would transfer to the Research and Development Directorate and this could lead to a commercially driven and non-commercially driven (for example, grants re the Medical Research Council) pressure through research and development affecting the decision making of RECs. Clearly, the administration of the RECs would be managed within research and development; however, the REC Chairs would remain accountable to the Director of Public Health and research and development staff would not have any presence on the RECs. In addition, REC Chairs would continue to be responsible for the independence of REC decision making, as they were currently, and this was an important role in the protection of patients and other research participants.

The Lead Senior Administrator confirmed that during February 2009 the refurbished accommodation within the Tennent Institute at the Western Infirmary would be completed and all staff would be re-located to these premises. This would be made easier by the fact that all staff were now located within the Western Infirmary and this further move would just be an internal move within the hospital grounds.

The Head of Board Administration had met with Dr Godden and arrangements would be put in place for further meetings during this period of transition which would also include discussions with Professor R Hunter and Dr J Hunter in his role as Chair of the REC Chairs. An induction programme would be drawn up for Dr Godden and she had indicated that she was keen to establish key relationships with the other West of Scotland NHS Boards in order to give them confidence that it was recognised that this was a West of Scotland wide service.

NOTED

6. ROLE DESCRIPTION AND CANDIDATE REQUIREMENTS: REC CHAIRS

The Governance Committee received for consideration copies of a paper submitted by the Head of Board Administration seeking members' comments on the draft Role Description and Candidate Requirements/Job Description for the REC Chair post and asking them to endorse its use in the future appointment of REC Chairs.

At the previous meeting of the Governance Committee there had been discussion around how the appointment of REC Chairs should be managed and what thought could be given to measuring the performance of Chairs and members of RECs.

The Head of Board Administration suggested that once endorsed, this document could then be used in the future appointment processes for REC Chairs and the next stage would see the development of similar information for the appointment of members to RECs, in particular, when a recruitment exercise was required to appoint lay members to RECs.

ACTION BY

The Governance Committee would now develop criteria to measure Chairs' and members' performance in order that annual assessments could be made. Chairs would assess members and consideration needed to be given as to who would undertake the annual assessment of Chairs.

The documentation provided by the Head of Board Administration was carefully perused by members and a number of amendments were made to its content. Mr Cleland was concerned that the documentation should not be too verbose in nature. He also suggested that candidates for these posts should have some level of technical knowledge. The Lead Senior Administrator pointed out that the criteria laid down for such processes in the past had in fact served the ethics system very well.

The Head of Board Administration clarified the detail of the Chairs appointment process in response to a question from the Chairman.

DECIDED:

That the documentation circulated be changed in the light of the various comments received and that the Head of Board Administration and Mr Cleland liaise on the production of an amended set of documentation.

**Head of Board
Administration/
Mr R Cleland**

7. FUNCTIONS, REMIT AND MEMBERSHIP OF RECs

The Governance Committee received for information copies of papers submitted by the Lead Senior Administrator which detailed the operation of RECs, including functions, remit and membership. The Lead Senior Administrator emphasised that these documents were circulated for information and she recognised that they would have to be modified for future use by the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service.

The documentation provided by the Lead Senior Administrator was carefully perused by members and a number of amendments were made to its content. Mr Cleland was concerned that the documentation did not actually clarify in greater detail the role of members and what their expectations should be on being appointed to RECs. He also referred to some contradictory statements in the advertisement and the job descriptions circulated. The Lead Senior Administrator acknowledged these points and would amend the documents accordingly.

DECIDED:

That the documentation circulated be changed in the light of the various comments received and be modified for the future use of the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service as required.

**Lead Senior
Administrator**

8. MRS AGNES STEWART

The Chairman noted that this would be the final meeting attended by Mrs Stewart. He thanked Mrs Stewart for her regular attendance at the Governance Committee and for her considerable contribution to its work over many years. She would be greatly missed. These sentiments were endorsed by all those present.

NOTED

9. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Secretariat Officer was instructed to arrange the next meeting of the West of Scotland Research Ethics Governance Committee for June or July 2009.

The meeting ended at 11.10 a.m.