

GREATER GLASGOW AND CLYDE NHS BOARD
WEST OF SCOTLAND RESEARCH ETHICS SERVICE

Minutes of a Meeting of the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service Governance Committee
held in the Meeting Room C, Ground Floor, Dalian House,
350 St Vincent Street, Glasgow
on Thursday 28 January 2010 at 9.00 am

PRESENT

Professor D H Barlow (Chair)

Dr L de Caestecker Dr B N Cowan
Mr R Cleland Dr M Kapasi MBE

Mr B Williamson

IN ATTENDANCE

Dr J Godden	Manager/Scientific Officer, West of Scotland Research Ethics Service
Professor R Hunter	Associate Director of Research and Development
Ms A H Torrie	Lead REC Administrator, West of Scotland Research Ethics Service
Mr W S Marshall	Secretariat Officer

1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The Chair welcomed members to what was the first meeting of the newly appointed West of Scotland Research Ethics Service Governance Committee and was particularly pleased to see a full attendance. He trusted that this would be the norm for the future. As per the constitution of the Governance Committee, it was agreed that there should be two meetings a year with the next one to be arranged for late September or early October 2010. The Secretariat officer would canvas dates from members in the near future.

ACTION BY

**Secretariat
Officer**

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service Governance Committee [WOSRESGC(M)09/1] held on 29 January 2009 were approved a correct record.

NOTED

3. WEST OF SCOTLAND RESEARCH ETHICS SERVICE: CURRENT STRUCTURE AND STAFFING

The Governance Committee received for information copies of papers submitted by the Manager/Scientific Officer detailing the structure and staffing of the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service.

The Manager/Scientific Officer took members through these papers. She pointed out that the Research Ethics Committees' (RECs) within the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service were part of a national ethics system which had regional responsibility for the West of Scotland NHS Boards although investigators were free to apply to any committee within the United Kingdom system.

The NHS research ethics service is divided into four regional hubs, each running a number of committees. Scottish NHS RECs are governed by the respective NHS Board. The NHS Boards, through GAFREC and the RECs through their standing operating procedures comply with policy guidance issued and/or approved by the Chief Scientist Office (CSO). In the case of CTIMPs, NHS Boards and RECs operate within processes and standards determined by the UK Health Departments under statute and as such might also be seen in that context as a "governing body" for the RECs or NHS Boards. The CSO has a representative on the UK Ethics Committee Authority (UKECA). The CSO partly funds the National Research Ethics Service (NRES) to provide some ethics services on its behalf.

The papers submitted also outlined the staffing and structure of the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service along with its five RECs outlining their particular specialisms. Some discussion followed and the Manager/Scientific Officer clarified some of the acronyms used in the papers. With this in view, Dr Kapasi suggested that a glossary of ethics terms would be a useful tool for circulation to Governance Committee members and this was agreed. The Manager/Scientific Officer undertook to produce a glossary for the next meeting.

**Manager/
Scientific
Officer**

In response to a question from Mr Williamson, the Manager/Scientific Officer provided more detail on the type of submissions considered by each REC. It was recognised that each REC had a membership appropriate to the work they were undertaking.

NOTED

4. WEST OF SCOTLAND RESEARCH ETHICS SERVICE: REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS

The Governance Committee received for information copies of a paper submitted by the Manager/Scientific Officer comprising a review of applications submitted to the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service for the period April – December 2009.

The Manager/Scientific Officer advised that currently the monthly average was 28 applications which was in line with expectations from the level that was seen by the previous committee structure within the same geographical area. The numbers of applications to each individual committee were detailed in the accompanying paper. The RECs also reviewed a considerable number of substantial amendments to previous applications and this was particularly prevalent with the West of Scotland REC(1).

The paper outlined the type of applications submitted and it was noted that almost 52% of applications were from students. The percentages of applications from each of the NHS Boards was also noted.

The Governance Committee noted that the total number of applications received was 252. The total number of substantial amendments was 161. The Manager/Scientific Officer screened all of the applications which were received by the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service and she attended all REC meetings. Dr de Caestecker suggested that it would be useful to record the number of applications which were screened out by the Manager/Scientific Officer in future data and the Manager/Scientific Officer undertook to arrange this.

**Manager/
Scientific
Officer**

The Chair suggested that the data submitted for students should be subdivided in future reports to show undergraduates, postgraduates and those students involved in other ethical applications. The Manager/Scientific Officer agreed and undertook to arrange this refinement of the data for future reports.

**Manager/
Scientific
Officer**

There was some discussion regarding charging for considering applications from outside bodies but it was recognised that this was not in line with current national research ethics policy.

NOTED

5. WEST OF SCOTLAND RESEARCH ETHICS SERVICE: OVERVIEW OF CURRENT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP COMPOSITION

The Governance Committee received for information copies of a paper submitted by the Manager/Scientific Officer comprising an overview of current committee membership composition within the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service.

The Manager/Scientific Officer advised that the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service had been keen to include experienced ethics committee members from previous West of Scotland NHS Board committees. She was pleased to report that there had been a good transfer of members from the old committee structures to the new West of Scotland Research Ethics Service structure. The Manager/Scientific Officer stressed the need to have a membership which was representative of the geographic area which the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service covered. The data presented in the accompanying paper showed the distribution geographically and by organisation for expert members and lay members across the five RECs.

The Governance Committee was pleased to note that there was appropriate representation across both the expert and lay membership and that the geographical criteria was being adequately applied where necessary.

NOTED

6. WEST OF SCOTLAND RESEARCH ETHICS SERVICE: RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES FOR MEMBERS

The Governance Committee received for information copies of a paper submitted by the Manager/Scientific Officer outlining the recruitment strategies proposed for obtaining lay and expert members to serve on various RECs within the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service.

With regard to lay member recruitment, the Manager/Scientific Officer advised that under national research ethics guidance all RECs must have a third lay membership. When all of the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service RECs were formed and members transferred in April 2009 there was a shortfall in lay membership.

An advertisement was run in the 'Big Issue' during August for lay members. Eight applications were received from which four new members were recruited. Three withdrew and one was deemed unsuitable at the interview stage.

Further recruitment was required due to members retiring at the end of the year. The Manager/Scientific Officer was planning to advertise again in March 2010 but may use a different publication due to the relatively poor response from the 'Big Issue'.

In view of this, Dr Kapasi suggested that the Patient Partnership Forums within the various CH(C)Ps could provide a suitable source of recruitment in the future. Dr de Caestecker also referred to another database which the Board had which could also be utilised. The Manager/Scientific Officer noted these suggestions.

With regard to expert member recruitment, the Manager/Scientific Officer advised that the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service had recruited a small number of expert members who had voluntarily approached it. Once all lay members were in place the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service would seek to recruit further expert members.

The Governance Committee noted that the travelling expenses awarded to lay members of RECs in Scotland were significantly lower than those awarded in England. The reasons for this anomaly appeared to be largely historical. Dr Kapasi suggested that all of the Scottish NHS Boards needed to pursue this matter collectively for there to be any chance of successfully resolving this issue. The Manager/Scientific Officer intimated that she had raised this issue nationally but without any success so far.

NOTED

7. WEST OF SCOTLAND RESEARCH ETHICS SERVICE: TRAINING UPDATE

The Governance Committee received for information copies of papers submitted by the Lead REC Administrator detailing the training sessions held in 2009 under the auspices of the West of Scotland Research Ethics Service.

The Lead REC Administrator advised that 21 REC members and 7 ethics staff members had attended the two half day equality and diversity training sessions held on 18 September 2009 and 28 October 2009. These sessions were open to all but were aimed specifically at lay members who did not routinely have access to this type of training. The sessions were provided by the Equality and Diversity Team within the Learning and Education Service of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. These sessions had been very well received.

The Lead REC Administrator advised that 62 REC members, 7 ethics staff members and 3 research and development staff members had attended the annual ethics training session held on 20 November 2009. The session comprised an excellent group of speakers and the programme was extremely well received by all of the delegates present. Professor Hunter agreed that the training session had been most useful and referred to the informative dialogue which had taken place between the audience and the guest speakers.

Mr Williamson sought clarification on the training courses run by the National Research Ethics Service and the Manager/Scientific Officer undertook to follow this up.

**Manager/
Scientific
Officer**

NOTED

8. NATIONAL RESEARCH ETHICS SERVICE AUDIT

The Manager/Scientific Officer advised that the National Research Ethics Service conducted regular audits of RECs across the country and had now commenced work within NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. The West of Scotland REC(1) had been the first local committee to have its work audited and the other four local RECs would be audited in the near future. The Manager/Scientific Officer would present a report of the audit process to the next meeting of the Governance Committee.

**Manager/
Scientific
Officer**

DECIDED

That this issue be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the Governance Committee.

**Secretariat
Officer**

9. ANNUAL REPORTS OF RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEES 2008-2009

The Governance Committee received for information copies of the Annual Reports of the following RECs for 2008-2009:

- West of Scotland REC (1) formally West Glasgow Research Ethics Committee (1)
- West of Scotland REC (2) formally West Glasgow Research Ethics Committee (2)
- Glasgow Royal Infirmary REC
- West of Scotland REC (3) formally Glasgow and Clyde Primary Care Community and Mental Health Ethics Committee.

Some discussion followed regarding the future format for submissions of annual reports. The Chair suggested that a summary report or review be submitted with these reports in the future. Mr Cleland agreed that this was normal clinical governance procedure and he suggested that the Governance Committee should also consider producing a work plan as well. The Manager/Scientific Officer undertook to look into these matters and report back.

**Manager/
Scientific
Officer**

Mechanisms also needed to be found to strengthen the relationship between the Governance Committee and the RECs. It was thought that it might be useful if individual members of the Governance Committee attended REC meetings in the future and the Manager/Scientific Officer was asked to circulate the dates of REC meetings to members accordingly. Similarly, it might be useful to invite the Chairs of RECs to Governance Committee meetings on an individual basis. It was agreed that this issue should be revisited at the next meeting.

**Manager/
Scientific
Officer**

DECIDED

That these issues be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the Governance Committee.

**Secretariat
Officer**

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Secretariat Officer would canvas dates from members for a meeting in late September or early October 2010.

**Secretariat
Officer**