

**NHSCR Governance Board
Third Meeting: 7 November 2006**

Minutes

Duncan Macniven, Registrar General (Chairman)
Dr Fiona Bisset, SE Health Department
Muriel Douglas, Head of NHSCR, GROS
Tony Callaghan, NHS National Services Scotland, Practitioner Services Division
Elma Murray, Glasgow City Council
Kirsty MacLachlan, Head of Demography Division, GROS

Welcome and Introduction

1. The Chairman welcomed members (particularly Tony Callaghan, Elma Murray and Kirsty MacLachlan who were attending their first meeting), and noted apologies from Malcolm McWhirter, Graeme Laurie, Rod Muir and Charlie Knox. Kirsty MacLachlan was replacing Graham Jackson as a member of the Board.

Minutes of Meeting on 8 May 2006 and Matters Arising

2. The minutes were agreed. There were no matters arising.

NHS Central Register (Scotland) Regulations 2006

3. Paper NHSCRGB5/06 had previously been circulated for comment in August 2006 and the draft Regulations, amended in the light of comments from consultees, had been approved by the Scottish Parliament and would come into force on 11 November. A copy of the final version of the Regulations was tabled. That completed the process of putting the work of the NHSCR onto a statutory basis, and paved the way for full involvement in the local authority Citizen Account.

4. Elma Murray said that she would brief local authority colleagues on the Regulations. Fiona Bisset expressed interest in the way the CSA recorded dates when a patient lost contact with the NHS in Scotland and Tony Callaghan agreed to provide her with details.

Publicising NHSCR's Purpose, Role and Function

5. Muriel Douglas reported that she had nearly finished work on a revised version of the information about the NHSCR which appeared on the GROS website. A copy of the draft text would be circulated to members and she would be very grateful for comments on whether it adequately explained the work of the NHSCR to lay readers. The website would include the standard documentation used by the NHSCR, including in particular the form which medical researchers used to seek consent to access the NHSCR's data (which would in future be capable of completion on-line).

6. Duncan Macniven explained that it was intended to give the NHSCR information a more prominent position on the website, in particular linking it from the home page rather than putting it under “Statistics – Medical Research” as at present.

7. It was agreed that these steps appeared to give the NHSCR’s role sufficient exposure. It would be important to give as clear an explanation as possible of the NHSCR’s role in the Citizen’s Account (particularly the fact that no medical information was made available to local authorities).

NHSCR’s Quality Assurance Procedures

8. Muriel Douglas reported that little progress had been made on codifying quality assurance procedures – partly because of pressure of work and partly because of difficulty establishing contact with Quality Improvement Scotland. The Board agreed that it was desirable to use Quality Improvement Scotland standards, in the interests of saving effort and underlining the NHSCR’s links with the NHS. But it was important also to adopt wording which looked sensible to local authorities, and these might be read across to other services where the NHS and local authorities worked closely together. It was also important to keep in touch with the protocols used by the NHSCR in England and Wales.

9. Fiona Bisset agreed to make contact with Quality Improvement Scotland to pave the way for the NHSCR adopting its framework for information governance.

Creating a Backup to NHSCR Archive

10. Duncan Macniven reported that, fortified by the discussion at the last Board meeting, GROS had put together a business case which had resulted in an award of £800,000 to digitise and index the NHSCR archive. Kirsty MacLachlan presented paper NHSCRGB0/06 which described the digitisation project. Muriel Douglas underlined the improved searching capability of the new system. Tony Callaghan noted that PSD had spare digitisation (but not indexing) capacity, if that could help with the NHSCR digitisation or more widely. Fiona Bisset noted the need for a clear brief access protocol, which could perhaps be prominently displayed on the access page for the new system.

Relocation of NHSCR – Progress Report

11. Muriel Douglas reported that the next step in the relocation project was to move from the temporary accommodation at Monreith House to permanent accommodation a short distance away at Cairnsmore House. The expected date for the removal was May. In the meantime, the Dumfries staff had coped well with the Autumn peak which involved more than double the usual workload; there was a backlog of 3 weeks’ work but that was well within the 5 weeks service standard. This confirmed that the relocation had been soundly carried out.

12. Duncan Macniven said that Audit Scotland had recently published a report on the Scottish Executive’s relocation policy, which had used the NHSCR relocation as one of its case studies. The report noted that the cost per job of the NHSCR

relocation was the highest of those surveyed – but the tone had not been critical and there had been no negative follow-up to the NHSCR's mention in the report.

NHSCR and the Citizen's Account

13. Paper NHSCRGB7/06 was discussed. Elma Murray confirmed that her view from the local authority perspective was that the NHSCR's involvement was very satisfactory. She would prepare a short progress report for circulation to members, and would prepare a similar paper for discussion at the next meeting.

14. There was a discussion about public views on the sharing of information under the Citizen's Account. Elma Murray reported that surveys carried out by her council consistently showed that the public was supportive of the use of data in this way, with the consent of the data subject. Fiona Bisset said that she was aware of no recent complaints about the link between the CHI and the Citizen's Account, although that might have been a consequence of the fact that the CHI number no longer appeared on the entitlement cards. There were lessons to be learned about how the scope and limit to data sharing could be explained to data subjects.

Tracing People in Scotland

15. Paper NHSCRGB8/06 reported the final version of the protocol for the restarted tracing service, and the volume of requests made in the first 5 months of operation. The service seemed to be working satisfactorily. In particular, Tony Callaghan was aware of no problems within PSD.

Service Contract Between SEHD and GROS

16. Paper NHSCRGB9/06 was discussed. The Service Contract between SEHD and GROS for the operation of the NHSCR (and the provision of data on vital events) appeared satisfactory. Kirsty MacLachlan reported on work which was in hand to increase the accuracy of the costings on which the Service Contract was based and on the intention to develop a separate Service Contract covering the NHSCR's work for the Citizen's Account. It was agreed that Duncan Macniven should speak to Charlie Knox about getting the Service Contract signed.

Any Other Business

17. Muriel Douglas reported that the NHSCR was keeping in close touch with colleagues in England and Wales about the introduction, throughout the NHS south of the border, of the Personal Demographic Spine. The intention was to give the NHSCRs reciprocal access to each others' databases in a way which allowed not only searching but also faster transfer of the records. This would be done on a pilot basis, carefully monitored and under a strict protocol.

Data of Next Meeting

18. It was agreed that the next meeting would be held in late May or early June, either in Edinburgh or in Dumfries (in order to view the NHSCR's new premises). The views of members on location and date would be canvassed.

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