

# Minutes of the meeting of the Human Tissue Authority (HTA) Board

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**Date:** 29 June 2023

**Time:** 10.00 – 12.00 hrs

**Venue:** 2RP

**Meeting Number:** 104

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## Attendees:

### Board Members

Lynne Berry, HTA Chair  
Tom Chakraborti  
Gary Crowe  
Helen Dodds  
Deborah Bowman  
Ellen Donovan  
Andy Greenfield  
Dave Lewis

### Board Observer

Jacky Cooper (DHSC)

### HTA Executive

Colin Sullivan, Chief Executive  
Louise Dineley, Director of Data,  
Technology and Development  
Nicolette Harrison, Director of  
Regulation

John McDermott, Deputy Director for  
Performance & Corporate  
Governance  
Morounke Akingbola, Head of Finance  
and Governance  
Anne Heaton, Head of HR  
Heather Troy, Board Support  
(minutes)

### HTA Staff Observers

Austen Cutten  
Ravi Chana  
Tom Billins (virtual)  
Jonathan Spencer  
Tom Parker  
Gisela Amabilino  
Cerion Williams  
TJ O'Connor  
Karen Wright  
Jessica Porter  
Anjeli Kara

## Item 1 – Welcome and apologies

1. The Chair welcomed Board Members, HTA Staff, observers from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and members of the public to the one hundred and fourth meeting of the HTA's Board.
2. No apologies were received from Board Members.

## **Item 2 – Declarations of interest**

3. The Chair asked Members if there were any declarations of interest, and none were declared. The Chair asked Members to let the Private Office know if they have any personal or pecuniary interests and to make sure the Private Office is kept informed.
4. The Board noted new declarations of interest for a Board Member (though no conflicts were thought to arise), and that the Private Office will update the HTA records accordingly.

## **Item 3 – Chair’s Report**

5. The Chair summarised her recent activities: -
  - Regular meetings with the Chief Executive, Colin Sullivan (CS) and members of the senior leadership team.
  - Meetings with DHSC officials and CS.
  - Meetings with Arm’s Length Bodies (ALBs) and CS about the current government’s Reform and Efficiency agenda, which will be discussed in DHSC’s report (Agenda Item 6).
  - Refresher training on attendance at parliamentary select committees.
  - 1:1s with all Board Members, including completing annual appraisals and setting objectives.
  - Contributing to discussions with officials on reform and efficiency.
  - Involvement in the recruitment of HTA Board Members – interviews will be held in August and a shortlist will go to Ministers around September/October 2023 for approval.

## **Codes of Practice**

6. Prior to the Board meeting, approval for proposed minor changes to the Codes of Practice was sought from Board Members. Members unanimously agreed to approve the changes, which will be published, and come into effect, on 29<sup>th</sup> June via Directions and this was noted.
7. The Chair thanked Board Members for their comments and questions regarding the changes to the Codes of Practice.

## **Item 4 – The Chief Executive’s Report**

8. The Chief Executive, Colin Sullivan (CS), introduced the report which aims to inform the HTA Board of key or current issues.
9. He drew Members’ attention to activities in Quarter 4 including the progress made with regulatory and related activities against KPIs, the 2022/2023 Business Plan being approved by the Department and the issues the HTA is facing this financial year. He praised the work of the Regulation team who have achieved a stretch target of 210 inspections, up 50%. Overall the team completed 249 assessments including LAAVs. The Regulation team concentrated on areas of most concern with a lighter touch on lower-risk areas. During Quarter 4 the HTA continued to support the independent inquiry in relation to the David Fuller case. Staff turnover has improved from 20% in Quarter 4 2022 to 8.6% in Quarter 4 2023.
10. Members congratulated the Regulation team on achieving the stretch target and for improving HTA’s productivity.
11. Deborah Bowman (DB) asked if the stretch target achieved is sustainable and it was confirmed it will be, thanks to the introduction of innovations such as self-assessment at compliant establishments.
12. Andy Greenfield (AG) asked for a further explanation about the high staff turnover in 2022. CS thought that turnover in 2022 was very high, partly because of the employment market post-COVID-19 pandemic and in part because of the organisational development work undertaken. He noted it has improved in 2023.
13. The Chair noted that Richard Sydee, Director of Resources has left the HTA after 6 and a half years’ service. He was thanked for his contribution to the work of the HTA during some difficult times. Morounke Akingbola, Head of Finance, and Anne Heaton, Head of Human Resources attended the Board meeting in his place. His replacement Tom Skrinar, Director of Finance and Resources, is due to start on 21 August.
14. The Board noted the report.

## **Item 5 – HTA Performance Report**

15. The Chief Executive introduced the report and provided highlights to Members of performance in Quarter 4 against the HTA's objectives and operational delivery targets. Information regarding overall outturn performance against targets for the year 2022/2023 and an early indication of the initial performance against the new performance indicators for 2023/2024 were provided.
16. In terms of finance, there was an underspend, of which 40% was caused by unutilised salary due to the higher-than-normal staff turnover in 2022. It was noted that debt collection has improved in 2022/2023.
17. CS highlighted that most KPIs and PIs were met. The only KPI not met was 'to have at least 90% of applications processed within 90 days of payment'.
18. Regarding meeting this KPI, Nicolette Harrison (NH) explained that some applications are delayed because they are submitted too early, are incomplete or do not meet sufficient quality standards to be granted a licence. Regulation Managers are aware they need to communicate to establishments that they should only apply for a licence when they are sufficiently close to the standards required.
19. Tom Chakraborti (TC) asked if the Regulation team were planning to do more unannounced inspections and whether they yield a positive result. NH responded these are only carried out if there are specific concerns about an establishment.
20. Ellen Donovan (ED) asked about paragraph 17 in the Performance Report which related to multi-agency activity in response to contamination issues with certain perfusion fluids. CS confirmed the HTA has been working with the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and other agencies, to resolve matters.
21. Finally, CS confirmed HTA's Business Plan has now been formally approved by DHSC.
22. The Board noted the report.

## Item 6 – Update from DHSC Sponsor Team

23. Jacky Cooper, (JC) DHSC submitted a written report as she had to attend an urgent ministerial meeting.
24. The main points in the report were as follows: -

Ministers' focus remains on delivering the government's agenda and making sure that resources are deployed to top priority areas. The DHSC are currently going through an Efficiency and Reform programme. The department grew significantly to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and now needs to shrink again as that work moves into a new phase and its priorities change.
25. This DHSC's work is driven in particular by 3 main factors:
  - The need to adapt to the changing needs of the health care system now that a lot of COVID-related work has concluded,
  - The impacts of fiscal and wider inflationary pressures; and:
  - The need to ensure focus on the current priorities of the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State, while making sure resilience to future challenges and the ability to execute its standing responsibilities is maintained.
26. The ALB savings programme

Alongside the DHSC efficiency and reform programme, the ALB savings programme aims to sustainably reduce ALBs' administrative and capital spend in 2023/24 and 2024/25, including by increasing income from other sources.
27. JC added the DHSC are immensely grateful to HTA colleagues for their support in developing robust and sensible recommendations for efficiencies which Ministers are now considering.
28. The DHSC sponsor team were pleased to confirm approval of the HTA Business Plan in May and are now working closely with HTA colleagues to coordinate laying the HTA Annual Report and Accounts in Parliament and ensuring Ministers are sighted on the report.
29. JC wrote that the DHSC remain grateful for the collaborative and supportive working relationship with HTA colleagues at all levels, particularly during this period of increased scrutiny and reform.
30. The Chair concluded the HTA must deliver on the government's reform and efficiency agenda, which is focused on saving money and being more

efficient, while dealing with expectations of patients, the public and increases in demand.

31. The report was noted by the Board.

### **Item 7 – Living Organ Donation Update – for decision**

32. NH presented a Living Organ Donation (LOD) update paper which set out how we continue to refine and develop our approach to living organ donation and to improve the LOD policy.
33. Jessica Porter (JP) gave an update to the Board on important issues and developments in the area of LOD, and the work undertaken so far to refine and strengthen our systems and processes.
34. A revised Policy for the assessment of living organ donation cases (HTA-POL-102), was attached to the paper at Annex A.
35. Helen Dodds asked for a small amendment to the Policy.  

Paragraph 31(c) should read “claimed relationship *between donor and recipient*”. This was agreed.
36. The Chair thanked JP for all her hard work to highlight the challenges around LOD.
37. The revised policy was approved by the Board.

### **Item 8 – Governance around HTA Insight Network - for discussion.**

38. Louise Dineley (LD) presented a paper to inform the Board of the executive’s plans to establish an insight network to support and strengthen the HTA’s Horizon Scanning capability.
39. The Board was invited to comment on the executives’ plans to establish an Insight Network.
40. ED asked what plans have been made for Members to get access to and consider any information that will come out of the Insight Network. LD confirmed a formal report regarding the Insight Network will be presented to the Board. It is hoped there will be two meetings of the network each year and its membership is still being identified.
41. CS stated an annual review of the Insight Network will be completed towards the end of Quarter 3 as part of the Business Plan. The work of the Insight

Network will be reported to future Board meetings, and it is anticipated that Board Members will be engaged with the stakeholder groups in some way.

42. The Board noted the report.

### **Item 9 – Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) Update**

43. Gary Crowe (GC) provided highlights on the Committee's discussions at the last ARAC meeting on 8 June. He reported on internal audit, Annual Report and Accounts 2022/2023 and on the Strategic Risk Register. The internal auditors gave a 'moderate' annual assurance opinion. The external auditors endorsed signing off the Annual Report for 2022/2023. The Strategic Risk Register was also considered at ARAC. Risk 6 was split into risks 6 and 8. There are 3 risks above tolerance - risks 5, 7 and 8.

44. GC thanked Dave Lewis and Helen Dodds for their support with ARAC in 2022/2023.

45. Tom Chakraborti (TC) asked about potential risk 9 – failure to adhere to corporate responsibilities, and whether this draft risk was still being considered. GC stated this is still a draft risk, and it is currently being discussed by the Executive team.

46. The Board noted the report.

### **Item 11 – Remuneration Committee Update**

47. Ellen Donovan (ED) presented an update to the Board. The paper provided an overview of the business of the Remuneration Committee meeting held on 22 May 2023.

48. Key highlights regarding the Committees discussions were: -

49. Proposed pay award – 2023

A 4.5% pay uplift with an additional 0.5% for lower paid employees is proposed as recommended by the DHSC. Employees on higher salaries will be awarded a lump sum, or a 4% increase whichever is greater. LD added the new pay award has helped with the recruitment of the new Head of IT position, lots of high-quality candidates have applied and she is currently short listing.

50. A further oral update on the organisational development work at HTA was given. It was noted that progress has been made on the values and behaviour work which was supported by the committee, which is having a positive impact on the organisation.
51. TC noted that RemCo had asked for additional data about gender pay. Data was provided and it showed a modest improvement in gender pay equality.
52. The Board noted the RemCo update.

### **Item 11 – Minutes of Meeting on 9 March 2023**

53. The Board agreed the draft minutes as an accurate record of the meeting on 9 March 2023.

### **Item 12 – Matters arising from 9 March 2023**

54. The Board noted the matters arising report.
55. Regarding the Item No B\_2022\_10 – Development Programme, LD gave an update. An initial Project Initiation Document has been drafted that sets out the approach to be adopted. The item was closed.

### **Item 13 – Stakeholder Engagement Update**

56. LD gave an overview of stakeholder engagement in 2022/2023 and plans to engage stakeholders in 2023/2024.
57. A number of different approaches to improve engagement have been adopted over the last 12 months, such as sector focused forums and roundtables and increased use of social media and other communications channels. The values that underpin all communications activity are aligned with HTA's own values. The Communications team are planning to strengthen connections through the insight network.
58. There are plans to publish an annual review which will incorporate the key findings from the HTA's first assessment of its impact. This work aims to assess and understand the impact of the regulation of tissues and cells and to help improve approaches in practice and to enable the HTA to be even more responsive to changing activities in the sector. The annual review will help



inform the Business Plan for the next financial year and will be the focus of a half-day face to face event in early 2024.

59. ED asked how HTA found the right people to invite to the roundtable events and forums. LD replied that we use our stakeholder list to inform invites.
60. The Board noted what has been delivered since the Strategy was agreed in May 2022 and the plans for 2023/24.

### **Any other business**

61. There was no other business.

### **Date of next meeting**

62. **21 September 2023 at 2 Redman Place.**