

HTA Board meeting, 4 December 2025

Paper Title (+Reference)	2.4 - Chief Executive's Report
Information / Decision	Information
Decision Making	N/A
Recommendation	Board is asked to note and comment by exception on the latest updates from the CEO
Strategic Risks	Risk 1: Operational Risk 2: Reputational Risk 3: Financial Risk 4: Strategy Risk 5: People Risk 6: Security
Strategic Theme	Efficient and Effective
Core Operations / Change Activities	Core Operations
Business Plan Item	Senior Management Team – strategic direction and leadership of operational delivery across the organisation (including risk management and seeking opportunities for ALB collaboration)
Board / Committee Oversight	Board only
Finance / Resource Implications	Various due to the range of items covered
Timescales	2025/26 latest position
Communication(s) (Internal / External)	N/A
Legislative Implications	N/A

Chief Executive's Report

Purpose of paper

1. To inform the HTA Board of key or current issues from the CEO's perspective.

Action required

2. The HTA Board is asked to **note** and comment on the issues raised.

Update on Quarter 2 (Q2) of 2025-26

3. During Q2, we continued to progress our regulatory and related activities against our Key Performance Indicators. We also progressed aspects of our 2025/26 business plan and responded to matters arising.
4. In July, the 2024/25 Annual Report & Accounts (ARA) were finalised, certified by NAO and laid before Parliament. Then, in September we published our Annual Review (AR) which highlights the progress made in 2024/25 with our main regulatory activities, inspection outcomes, and our strategic goals to be:
 - more outcome focused and proportionate in our approach and better equipped to use our authoritative and expert voice to bring about change in areas of concern
 - more consistent and evidence-based both in our risk assessments and the corrective action taken
 - recognised as an invaluable partner in the regulation and growth of the life sciences
 - less reliant on manual processes, with strengthened digital capacity and capability
 - able to demonstrate a continuing commitment to investing in and developing our workforce.
5. In Q2, we continued trialling Evaluated Self Assessments (ESAs) on half of our Public Display (PD) licences. This process went smoothly and we intend to carry out ESAs on the remainder of the PD sector next year (2026/27).
6. The Learning Event held on 19 September 2025 was well attended and I am grateful for the positive comments from Board members. We have also received many positive comments from those Designated Individuals (DIs) and other staff from licensed establishments who were present. The event was an opportunity to outline the key messages from our AR and to answer questions

raised by the diverse audience. Details of the feedback received are provided in a paper for discussion later on today's agenda.

7. Throughout Q2, and as part of our ongoing Digital and IT Strategy delivery, further improvements to our IT systems were implemented with a redesigned and updated HTA portal as part of our continued journey to modernise of our core IT solutions which started with delivery of an updated CRM (Customer Relations Management) system in Q4 2024/25. The last of our core systems requiring an upgrade is our Finance System (which is planned for Q4 2025/26).
8. In Q2 we have continued to progress the HTA's People Strategy, as discussed at the meeting of RemCo in September. There has been much engagement with staff on this work with recent activity including: the launch of our Leadership Programme for all line managers, coaching throughout the summer for SMT, policy reviews and updates, an upgrade to our HR System that will allow us to use the performance management module to support greater consistency across the organisation, new agreed performance objectives including two for managers, development of a new approach to induction for new starters, and updates to the HTA intranet in relation to Wellbeing, Mental Health and Health & Safety.
9. In mid-September, the NI Minister of Health announced the appointment of Nicole Lappin as the HTA Board member selected by the Department of Health in Northern Ireland. It was pleasing that only a few days later Nicole was able to attend her first Board meeting and the Learning Event early in her term of office. Her appointment brought the HTA Board to full complement.

Current Issues

10. We continue to support the Programme Board established to progress recommendations flowing from Sir Jonathan Michael's Inquiry and the wider strategic picture regarding care of the deceased. The Inquiry reported in July with one of the 75 recommendations (No.26) falling to the HTA with a proposal that the HTA should amend its guidance and require reporting of incidents in the Anatomy sector. This was already happening informally, but Sir Jonathan recommended it should be a routine and formal expectation. In response, we have expanded the scope of the HTA's reportable incidents (HTARIs) system to include the Anatomy sector which required reconfiguring our reporting portal. We issued a Regulatory Alert (29 October) which set out the scope of the work and actions for establishments, followed by a further update on 20 November for the 51 Anatomy licences involved. Go-live and completion of the recommendation came into effect on 1 December 2025. I am very grateful to colleagues across the organisation in the Regulation Directorate, IT and

Comms who worked together to implement this recommendation ahead of the target date.

11. In addition, on 1 October 2025, the HTA published universal guidance designed for all who have responsibility for the dignity and care of the deceased. This chimes with another of the recommendations (No.72) from Sir Jonathan Michael's report. The generic advice prepared by the HTA is not targeted at any specific sector but, drawing upon our experience and our team's expertise, is voluntary best practice guidance designed for any organisation or the public who are involved in the care or management of the deceased. The guidance is on our website and has already attracted some interest. Areas covered include:
 - Suitability of premises
 - Access restrictions and control monitoring
 - Environmental controls
 - Governance arrangements
 - Oversight mechanisms
 - Staff & Training
 - Leadership
12. As an action from the 2024/25 Board Effectiveness Review, Board members held an informal virtual meeting on 7 November 2025 to consider the findings. The Board held a discussion reflecting on relationships and corporate effectiveness and how it might focus its activity to add most value to the organisation, given the priorities of the government in respect of health and regulation. A note of the meeting has been shared with Board members.
13. The HTA has continued to receive a regular flow of cases under The Human Tissue Act 2004 (Supply of Information about Transplants) Regulations (2024), which requires relevant clinicians to report all organ transplants that take place outside the UK, or if they have a reasonable suspicion that an organ donation and transplantation-related offence may have been committed. The overall flow of reports received has increased, having run at an average of 3.25/month in 2024/25 and 3.3/month in Q1 of 2025/26, then 5.3 /month in Q2, with that rate maintained in October, with a further 5 reports received. The HTA has not yet received any reports under the comparable Scottish legislation, effective from 1st July 2025.¹
14. Since the last Board meeting we have worked at pace to bring online our remaining 25/26 Project commitments, agreeing a Business Case at November PSMT (Portfolio meeting of the Senior Management Team) to further

¹ The Human Tissue (Supply of Information about Transplants) (Scotland) Regulations 2025

strengthen our processes for living organ donation approvals (the Project will run across several years), and developing a Project Initiation Document (PID) to upgrade our current Finance System to meet the necessary support requirements and include 'procure to pay' and expenses functionality.

15. Also on the finance front, over the last number of months we have been reviewing our licence fees for the different sectors taking account of inflation and other pressures, whilst seeking to ensure value for money for those licensed establishments we regulate. Our proposals are typically brought to the Board at the December meeting, and there is a paper for Board members consideration on today's agenda.
16. The current framework agreement between DHSC and HTA was agreed in 2022. It outlines the HTA's core responsibilities; describes the governance and accountability framework that applies between the roles of DHSC and the HTA; and sets out how the day-to-day relationship works in practice, including in relation to governance and financial matters. Typically, this agreement is reviewed every three years and working with our DHSC sponsor team, we have started to develop an updated version. Once finalised and agreed with government, the document will be posted on our website.
17. In October, our Chair accepted a request from DHSC Ministers to undertake a further term of office running up to January 2027. David Stanton stands down as ARAC Chair and Board member at the end of January 2026. The executive thank him for his effective challenge and support in the short time he has been able to serve on the Board.
18. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) has developed the following non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism:

"Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities".
19. The HTA's Senior Management Team considered the above definition of antisemitism at our meeting on 23rd October 2025 and unanimously agreed to adopt this definition for the Human Tissue Authority at that same meeting, noting it was completely consistent with our approach to EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) and our core values of: Collaboration, Openness, Respect and Excellence. The decision was recorded in the minutes of the meeting. The Board of the HTA endorsed the decision to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism on 7 November 2025.

HTA 34-25

20. The next meeting of the Board is set for 5th March 2026 in Redman Place.
Other dates for Board Meetings in 2026 are as follows:

- 25 June 2026
- 24 September 2026
- 10 December 2026

Recommendation

21. The HTA Board is asked to **note** and comment on the issues raised.