

UNITED KINGDOM ACCREDITATION SERVICE POLICY ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Agreed minutes of 6th Meeting
Held on Thursday 4th July 2013 at The Lansdowne Club, London**

Present

Ron Gainsford (Chairman)	Trading Standards Institute (TSI)
James Berry	British Standards Institution (BSI)
Susan Brand	English Community Care Association (ECCA)
Chris Elliott	Ministry of Defence (MoD)
Dr Martin Jones	Confederation of British Industry (CBI)
Dr Jeff Llewellyn	British measurement and Testing Association (BMTA)
John Mortimer	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)
Trevor Nash	Association of British Certification Bodies (ABCB)
Prof Adrian Newland	Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AMRC)
Mike Pearson	Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
Prof Ian Sharp	Health Protection Agency (HPA)
Paul Stennett	UKAS
Lorraine Turner	UKAS
Malcolm Hynd (Secretary)	UKAS

1- Welcome, Apologies

The Chairman welcomed members to the 6th meeting of the UKAS Policy Advisory Council. He welcomed James Berry of BSI who was deputising for Daniel Mansfield. He noted that Lorraine Turner was attending for UKAS in addition to the Chief Executive and PAC secretary.

2- Minutes of 5th Meeting of the UKAS Policy Advisory Council

PAC/09/13 Rev1

The Chairman noted that a number of minor amendments were requested following the circulation of the draft minutes, as marked in the copy circulated for the meeting. There were no further comments and the minutes were agreed.

3- Matters arising

3.1 Revision of customer agreement (Item 2)

Ms Turner advised that progress has been made but a number of final amendments were being made to reflect International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) requirements. The next draft would be circulated to stakeholders before the end of the summer.

Mr Stennett advised that the special requirements of the health sector needed to be taken into account to reflect legal reporting requirements as opposed to customer confidentiality. He suggested that a supplement may be needed for the health sector. Mr Nash suggested that legal reporting could impact on all areas of UKAS activity.

3.2 Joint working with FSB (Item 2)

Mr Pearson reported that he had tried to submit an article about UKAS into FSB's First Voice magazine but without success. However, he has had a letter published promoting the use of accredited certification and a copy could be circulated with the minutes of the meeting. The FSB has also agreed not to accept advertising from non-accredited certification bodies. Nash suggested the

main issue was to make sure businesses were not misled. He referred to the work going on in the non-accredited certification working group and invited FSB involvement. Dr Jones agreed that small business needs should be given greater consideration. The requirements for greater separation of consultancy and certification have made the process more difficult. Mr Stennett agreed that UKAS should look at ways to help small businesses achieve accreditation and certification. The Chairman suggested that UKAS might consider more aggressive advertising and could consider an article in the Trading Standards Journal. Mr Berry advised on the launch of the BSI Small Business Forum which might present an opportunity for UKAS to provide a presentation on the benefits of accreditation. Mr Elliott suggested some root cause analysis into why small businesses have these difficulties.

3.3 Pathways to accreditation (Item 6.2)

Ms Turner advised that work has continued on developing a staged approach to accreditation, initially to encourage greater take up of the Imaging Services Accreditation Scheme (ISAS). She said that UKAS had been giving careful consideration to how the results would be publicised, in recognition of the concerns raised at the last meeting. UKAS was still working on the pilot scheme.

Mr Mortimer asked about the commitment made at the last meeting to talk to BIS about recognition of a staged approach. Ms Turner confirmed that this would take place. The Chairman confirmed consensus for this approach but encouraged dialogue with BIS

4- Report of 3rd Meeting of the UKAS Policy Advisory Forum

PAF/05/13

The Chairman welcomed the attendance of the Scottish Government and the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health at the last Forum meeting. Mr Stennett confirmed the value of the stakeholder feedback received and that many of the points raised are being taken up.

Mr Mortimer asked about recruitment of technical staff. Mr Stennett confirmed it remains difficult but is progressing. He also advised that UKAS was seeking to raise management skills. Dr Jones asked about training provided for technical staff wishing to move into management. Mr Stennett advised that UKAS has appointed an internal training manager and is developing an internal training programme.

Dr Llewellyn asked how the input received at the Forum has been considered and if there would be any feedback to PAF on the way it has been used. Mr Stennett advised that the input from the Forum was considered by the Executive during the preparation of the Business Plan and that feedback to the PAF could be considered under Item 6.4.

Mr Mortimer advised that the report on the economic benefits of accreditation is referenced on the European Commission website and that a similar study was being undertaken in Germany.

There were no further comments and the report was agreed.

5- Reports

5.1 UKAS Board Report

Mr Stennett advised that the last Board meetings was held on 22 April and considered:

- Peer evaluation outcome
- Review of business plan for 2013/14 including website upgrade, customer portal, new IT hosting company and unified telecoms system
- Health & safety report
- Healthcare accreditation: Clinical Pathology Accreditation transition to ISO 15189 and transition of CPA employment contracts
- House of Lords roundtable on care homes plus new areas of interest in the health sector.
- Review of the impact of changes to the pension scheme.

5.2 BIS International contract activity reports (2012/2013 Q3 and Q4)PAC/11/13
PAC/12/13

Mr Stennett drew attention to the steps being taken to fill the gap left by Graham Talbot's retirement. He had been elected to the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA) Financial Oversight Committee. Congratulations were also recorded for Jon Murthy on his appointment as Chairman of the IAF and ILAC Communications and Marketing Committees.

Mr Mortimer asked about the reported changes to the 'one plus' approach to the accreditation of notified bodies. Ms Turner advised it was more a question of re-packaging to overcome some opposition to the approach in the EA Horizontal Harmonisation Committee.

Mr Mortimer advised that a revised draft Blue Guide (EU guide on internal market legislation) was expected in September with final publication by the end of the year.

5.3 UKAS activity report

PAC/17/13

The Chairman commented on the value of the report showing the huge breadth of activity within UKAS and this was confirmed by several Council members.

Mr Mortimer noted the activity on forensics. Ms Turner confirmed this is a growth area for UKAS and also internationally with UKAS working closely with the Forensic Science Regulator. EU legislation is also driving greater use of accreditation. Dr Llewellyn confirmed the huge changes taking place in forensic science with police laboratories assuming greater importance. He confirmed the need for accreditation to ensure consistent standards.

Dr Llewellyn advised the Council of a recent BMTA seminar primarily for smaller members. It was attended by the UKAS Chief Executive and other UKAS staff and was a very positive and successful event. He confirmed that there is continued interest in the staged approach to accreditation and also concerns still around payment for travel and subsistence.

Dr Jones asked about Item 19 which reported the concerns of some CEOC (International Confederation of Inspection and Certification Organisations) members regarding the activities of ILAC. Ms Turner explained that this related to concerns about the transition of the co-ordination of accreditation of inspection from a joint IAF and ILAC committee to ILAC but these had been resolved.

Mr Mortimer asked about Item 23 on HSE concerns about ineffective inspection of COMAH sites by UKAS accredited bodies. Ms Turner agreed to provide further information.

Mr Mortimer asked about Item 39 on problems posed by change to the legislation relating to the poultry health scheme. Ms Turner agreed to provide further information.

Mr Mortimer referred to Item 18 in the development section reporting on the transition from the Construction Products Directive to the Construction Products Regulations and asked how many notified bodies under the old legislation were not UKAS customers. Ms Turner agreed to advise.

Mr Nash congratulated UKAS on the successful achievement of transition to ISO/IEC 17021:2012.

5.4 Peer evaluation - update

PAC/13/13

Ms Turner introduced the paper and commented that UKAS was grateful to EA for dealing with the report in a timely manner. She said that some reporting of UKAS activity to EA was still required but that UKAS' continued membership of the EA Multilateral Agreement had been confirmed.

Mr Mortimer welcomed the paper and asked if it could be made more widely available. Ms Turner confirmed that a web announcement would be made shortly. Dr Jones confirmed the value of wider publicity of the peer evaluation process.

6- UKAS Issues**6.1 Agreements with related bodies**

The Chairman introduced the three papers, noting the Council's role in ensuring that any potential conflicts of interest have been identified and adequate steps taken to manage them. He invited

comments.

6.1.1 Agreement with Gemserve for the Green Deal

PAC/14/13

Mr Mortimer noted that Gemserve could make changes to the scheme and asked what would happen if UKAS could not agree with any changes made. Ms Turner confirmed that UKAS would withdraw from the activity. It was suggested that this could be helpfully mentioned in the papers, otherwise the paper was agreed.

6.1.2 Agreement with the British Retail Consortium

PAC/15/13

Mr Nash asked whether withdrawal of an organisation from the scheme would force UKAS to withdraw accreditation. If so, this could be seen as adverse influence over the accreditation decision. Ms Turner advised that the BRC analysis is additional to the UKAS assessment and so should not impact on the underlying accreditation. On this basis the paper was agreed.

6.1.3 Agreement with Security Industry Association

PAC/18/13

There were no comments or questions on this paper which was agreed.

6.2 Addition to the list of management system standards covered by UKAS accreditation

6.2.1 Asbestos Liaison Group - Asbestos Removal competence management systems

PAC/16/13

The Chairman introduced the paper, noting that it is brought to PAC due to the principle that UKAS must have assurance from stakeholders that there is market support for accreditation in support of any new management system standard. Dr Jones asked how this activity relates to other UKAS accreditation work in the asbestos field. Ms Turner explained that existing schemes are for the accreditation of laboratories for testing for the presence of asbestos whereas the proposed standard is for the management of competence of staff in asbestos removal companies. UKAS will accredit certification bodies to certify businesses for compliance with that standard. The proposal was agreed in principle although it was suggested that papers on new management systems should have more background and clarity of the purpose for PAC consideration.

Secretary's note: Since the meeting the HSE representative on PAF has advised as follows: 'HSE has no issues with what is being proposed in the paper, but we would like to clarify that this is not HSE's Group. It is an independent stakeholder interest group made up of industry, enforcing authority, trade association and trade union representatives that work together to help the licensing industry comply with its legal requirements. The outputs of the group such as memos and guidelines are issued under the name of ALG not HSE.'

6.3 Establishment of PAF Health and Social Care Sub-group

Mr Stennett reported that the sub-group has been established to provide new health sector stakeholders with an opportunity to meet to discuss items specifically related to health and social care. It could also be a useful lobby group in the health sector. Any PAF members are welcome to attend the sub-group and a number of PAC members are members (Prof Newland, Prof Sharp and Ms Brand). A preliminary meeting was held on 4 February when agreement was reached to establish the sub-group. The first formal meeting would be held on 15 July and the minutes would be circulated to PAC.

Mr Mortimer raised a question about the high reputational risk of moving into the health sector. Mr Stennett agreed although reputational risk was not only associated with the health sector as UKAS is working in many other high profile areas. However, he would be discussing risk management with the Board shortly.

6.4 Review of PAF and PAC

PAC/19/13

The Chairman introduced the paper, commenting that, in his view, the formation of the PAF was a major step forward in UKAS' stakeholder engagement. He welcomed the opportunity for cross fertilization of ideas that the broad membership provided. He thought the venue was very suitable for the purpose and size of the meetings.

Mr Elliott thought it was important to remember that the PAF is advisory and suggested that UKAS needs to demonstrate what it is doing with the advice received. He agreed that some reporting is necessary but that the agendas need to contain opportunity for members to provide advice to UKAS. He suggested moving to full day meetings with a more general exchange of experience in the afternoon. Dr Llewellyn agreed there was a case for full day meetings aligned with the UKAS business planning cycle. He agreed that the reporting is useful as this is often the only opportunity to get this information. Mr Nash suggested mixing up the groups more to encourage networking and exchange of experience.

Prof Sharp stressed the importance of considering accreditation policy in the round. He suggested that attention needed to be paid to ensuring that PAC is properly representative of PAF and raised the difficulty of keeping other PAF members engaged. Dr Jones agreed that care needs to be taken to avoid bias towards the traditional engineering base.

Dr Jones suggested that there appears to be little connection between the PAF and the UKAS Board. He asked if the Board values PAF and if there is a way of bringing the groups closer together, particularly as PAF now contributes to strategic input. Mr Stennett suggested that the Board focuses on strategy and finance, rather than the more technical issues considered by PAF. However, he agreed to consider inviting non-executive directors to PAF.

Ms Brand suggested that accreditation in the health sector will be high profile and PAF could be asked to advise on how the risks can be managed. Dr Llewellyn suggested that lessons could be learnt from the more traditional areas of accreditation, some of which have also been high profile.

Mr Stennett and Ms Turner confirmed that the input received from PAF and PAC has been extremely valuable to UKAS and that the exchange of experience across the sectors was very useful. Mr Stennett agreed to consider the length of the meetings but was concerned that many members would be reluctant to commit to a full day.

The Chairman concluded there was general satisfaction with the purpose and record of the PAF so far although there may be scope for further refinement in the way it operates. He suggested that the membership should remain under continual review and that there were pros and cons on increasing the length of meetings.

Suggestions for future topics for discussion at PAF included:

- The development of the customer portal – what is needed and is it delivering?
- International activities and opportunities including the possibility of inviting speakers from other national accreditation bodies.
- Management of risk, particularly in the health sector.
- Review of present and future operation of PAF.

In considering the PAC, the Chairman agreed that it needed to represent the PAF membership as a whole. It was accepted that PAC needed to consider more detailed issues and he considered that the balance of agenda items was about right. There was general agreement that the new PAC structure was more productive and that the venues and other arrangements were suitable.

In discussing the need to renew the membership of the PAC next year, there was agreement that nominations should be requested by correspondence in the new year with confirmation at the PAF meeting in March.

It was agreed that preparation for the next PAF would be important in order to retain the interest of the wider membership. Steps should also be taken to assure the membership that UKAS is taking note of its advice.

7- Any Other Business

- 7.1 Mr Stennett announced the Board's intention to review pricing policy, particularly to consider if more could be done to help small businesses. He invited volunteers to help with the review.
- 7.2 Mr Mortimer advised that the annual tripartite meeting between the French, German and UK officials responsible for standards and accreditation policy was held in May. He agreed to provide a written report for circulation with the minutes.
- 7.3 Mr Mortimer advised that a Handbook for Ministers on standards and accreditation had been prepared and was expected to be circulated to Ministers before the end of the week. A copy of the Handbook would be circulated with the minutes of the meeting.

8- Next Meetings

The following dates and venues of future meetings were confirmed:

PAC	Thursday 7 November 2013 (Feltham)
PAF/PAC	Thursday 6 March 2014 (BIS Conference Centre)
PAC	Thursday 3 July 2014 (Lansdowne Club)

Mr Elliott advised that he would be unable to attend on 7 November.