

# UNITED KINGDOM ACCREDITATION SERVICE

## POLICY ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Agreed minutes of 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting  
Held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013 at UKAS, Feltham**

### Present

Ron Gainsford (Chairman)	Trading Standards Institute (TSI)
Christine Burgess	Health Protection Agency (HPA)
Dr Martin Jones	Confederation of British Industry (CBI)
Dr Jeff Llewellyn	British Measurement and Testing Association (BMTA)
Daniel Mansfield	British Standards Institution (BSI)
John Mortimer	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)
Trevor Nash	Association of British Certification Bodies (ABCB)
Chris Rowe	Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
Clive Tayler	Engineering Equipment and Materials Users' Association (EEMUA)
Paul Stennett	UKAS
Lorraine Turner	UKAS
Rob Bettinson	UKAS
Malcolm Hynd (Secretary)	UKAS

### 1- Welcome, Apologies

The Chairman welcomed members to the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the UKAS Policy Advisory Council. Clive Tayler was deputising for Mike Pearson (Federation of Small Businesses), Chris Rowe for Chris Elliott (Ministry of Defence) and Christine Burgess for Prof Ian Sharp (Public Health England). Apologies were received from Prof Adrian Newland (Academy of Medical Royal Colleges) and Sue Brand (English Community Care Association). Lorraine Turner and Rob Bettinson were attending for UKAS in addition to the Chief Executive and PAC secretary.

### 2- Minutes of 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the UKAS Policy Advisory Council

**PAC/20/13 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 3.1)

Lorraine Turner advised that there had been a further delay for legal advice but a draft of the revised customer agreement was now ready and a meeting had been arranged with the major customer organisations (BMTA, ABCB and SAFed) for later in the month. She commented that consultation with the representative organisations was important but many of the changes were driven by external factors that provide UKAS with little room for manoeuvre.

#### 3.2 Pathways to accreditation (Item 3.3)

Lorraine Turner advised that the work to develop a staged approach to accreditation specifically to assist smaller organisations under the Imaging Services Accreditation Scheme was making slow progress but with no applicants as yet. She reported that there was also interest in a staged approach from the Forensic Regulator to support the uptake of accreditation by police forces. The Chairman recorded that there was general PAC support for the approach although John Mortimer noted that he was still reserving his position until the detail was clearer.

Lorraine Turner also reported that UKAS was working on the possibility of group accreditation schemes aimed at making the accreditation process more accessible and reducing costs for micro businesses. The Chairman suggested there may be read across to the work of the Better Regulation Delivery Office with primary authorities and trade associations.

### **3.3 Peer evaluation – update (Item 5.4)**

Malcolm Hynd confirmed that information about the outcome of the peer evaluation of UKAS had been published in Update magazine and on the UKAS website. He advised that the September edition of Update was the last in hard copy form as Update would be delivered electronically from December. Malcolm Hynd also reported on the availability of a UKAS search app for handheld devices and the recent launch of a UKAS Twitter account.

The Chairman commented on the value of Update in providing information to customers and stakeholders. He drew attention to the article on the House of Lords reception which he thought was a very valuable outreach opportunity. He also welcomed news about UKAS activity on fair banking and recommended discussion with Jo Swinson (Consumer Affairs Minister) and Stella Creasy (Shadow Minister) on this matter.

### **3.4 German study on economic benefits.**

John Mortimer reported that a German study on the economic benefits of accreditation was available.

Secretary's note: A copy of the summary report is circulated with these minutes. The full report (in German) is available from <http://www.bmwi.de/DE/Mediathek/publikationen,did=596580.html>.

### **3.5 Blue Guide**

John Mortimer advised that the deadline for comments on the Commission's Guide on the implementation of EU product rules (the Blue Guide) was the following day. Malcolm Hynd and Jeff Llewellyn confirmed that UKAS and BMTA had provided comments.

## **4- Reports**

### **4.1 UKAS Board Report**

Paul Stennett reported on the main issues raised at the Board meeting held on 5 November as follows:

- Review of AGM strategy discussion on pricing strategy with ideas under consideration including:
  - Simplification for customers and UKAS
  - Support for smaller businesses
  - Investment to accelerate strategy
  - Reduction of annual accreditation fee by £150 (effectively removing the annual fee for ISO/IEC 17025 laboratories)
  - Applying a standard, average charge for travel and subsistence instead of charging actuals
- Peer evaluation for ISO 15189
- Projected growth of core work and new business
- Transfer of IT outsourcing planned for the weekend of 30 November/1 December
- Health and social care strategy including discussion of reputational risk illustrated by a specific case raised relating to CPA
- 2014/15 Business Plan.

Jeff Llewellyn welcomed the pricing review and commented that, in principle, any simplification of the pricing structure would be welcome as would improved predictability of costs. Trevor Nash agreed but suggested that the calculation of costs for close out work would need to be carefully considered if there was any proposal to estimate or invoice them in advance. Christine Burgess agreed that unexpected costs do cause accounting difficulties. Jeff Llewellyn and Trevor Nash offered to consult their members once more detail was known.

Trevor Nash suggested that customers should be advised of the possible disruption to IT services of the outsourcing transfer.

In response to a question about the discussion of risk management, Paul Stennett advised that this subject was not covered at this board but would be at a future meeting. **Mr Mortimer asked for this to be a subject for discussion at a future meeting of PAC.**

#### **4.2 BIS International contract activity report (2013/2014 Q1)**

**PAC/22/13**

John Mortimer asked about the EA benchmarking exercise of accreditation body performance, the best practice guide for communication with regulators and the ILAC/IAF toolkit for removing rogue websites. **Lorraine Turner agreed to provide further information.**

#### **4.3 UKAS activity reports**

**PAC/23/13**

**PAC/24/13**

The Chairman asked whether these reports were circulated to UKAS staff. Lorraine Turner confirmed that this would be done via the UKAS intranet.

#### Operations (PAC/23/13)

The Chairman commented on the importance of Item 15 on food safety and Item 27 on the Construction Products Regulations. Paul Stennett agreed that there was a need to re-establish contact with the Food Standards Agency at senior level.

John Mortimer asked for further information relating to Item 26. Lorraine Turner confirmed that this item related to organisations considering moving their head offices to the UK in order to secure UKAS accreditation. She advised that UKAS considers these applications rigorously against EU requirements.

Martin Jones asked about Item 31 on the transition of notified bodies to accreditation. Rob Bettinson explained that notified bodies are those organisations appointed to carry out conformity assessment under EU legislation. They were previously assessed by UKAS but would now be accredited. He suggested that there is not a big difference in process but it is a significant step presentationally.

John Mortimer asked about Item 28 on the Health Information Standard. **Lorraine Turner agreed to provide further information.**

#### Development and Technical (PAC/24/13)

The Chairman noted the relevance of UKAS to major current issues such as energy efficiency, Green Deal etc.

Christine Burgess noted, in relation to Item 6, that the roadshows on the transition to ISO 15189 were greatly appreciated.

John Mortimer asked about Item 9 relating to the CEN drafts on crime scenes and the concerns raised around departures from ISO 17020. Rob Bettinson advised that a new draft has been produced for review and confirmed UKAS' determination to ensure that the CEN drafts are brought in line with ISO 17020. Daniel Mansfield offered to raise the issue with the CEN Technical Board if necessary. Lorraine Turner advised that she had raised the issue with ISO CASCO.

## 5- Members' Issues

### 5.1 Pathways to certification

The Chairman explained that this item was raised at the request of Mike Pearson in follow up to the discussion about pathways to accreditation and certification under Item 3.2 of the last meeting. Paul Stennett commented that UKAS is ready to help with this but is currently focusing on pathways to accreditation. He suggested that the certification bodies should really take the lead on pathways to certification. Trevor Nash commented that pathways exist for certification in environmental management and there was no reason why similar mechanisms could not be developed for quality management. **It was suggested that Mr Pearson should contact Mr Nash to exchange ideas.**

## 6- UKAS Issues

### 6.1 Agreements with related bodies

#### 6.1.1 Development opportunities

PAC/25/13

Lorraine Turner introduced the paper as a general indication of the breath of work being considered and the potential for future work in UKAS. Steps were being taken to rationalise and prioritise the programme of work. Consideration was also being given to grouping some of the new management systems standards, some of which have small market demand. **She invited discussion with ABCB on this point.**

In response to a question from Martin Jones about how market demand is calculated, Lorraine Turner agreed this is difficult but UKAS has started some analytical work which would be shared with PAC when it is more developed. Analysis is easier in some areas, eg forensics, but harder in others, eg general management systems, and some are politically driven. Paul Stennett commented that, as the national accreditation body, UKAS has to be responsive to new work items.

Daniel Mansfield said that the movement of standards from national to international could be a good indicator of demand. Malcolm Hynd suggested that BSI could provide market information on the uptake of standards but it was recognised that this does not always relate directly to the demand for certification.

#### 6.1.2 Related Bodies – Agreement with PEFC

PAC/27/13

Malcolm Hynd explained that this agreement was only completed just before the meeting, hence the late delivery of the paper. UKAS has been working with PEFC for a number of years but they have only recently asked for a formal agreement. The main issues highlighted in the paper were the ability of PEFC to change the scheme criteria and the need for UKAS to disclose information to PEFC that would otherwise remain confidential. Measures were being taken, as explained in the paper, to ensure that these requirements could not impact adversely on UKAS' impartiality or integrity. Members asked for more time to consider the issues. The Chairman requested that any comments should be sent to the secretary by the end of November otherwise agreement would be assumed.

Secretary's note: No comments were received from members on this paper.

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

#### 6.2.1 Potential pipeline standards for addition to the list of management system standards

PAC/25/13

Discussed under Item 6.1.1 above.

### 6.3 UKAS pricing structure

Discussed under Item 4.1 above.

#### 6.4 Policy on vexatious complaints

PAC/26/13 Rev1

Lorraine Turner presented a draft policy being developed for dealing with vexatious complaints and invited comments from members.

John Mortimer agreed with the need for a policy but was concerned to ensure that the subject is addressed in the right way. The Chairman suggested that the policy needs to be related to the general complaints policy and also needs to be made publicly available. Links with other measures, such as the Local Government Ombudsman, are helpful. Consideration could also be given to linking the policy with a formal standard. Daniel Mansfield suggested that it might help prevent vexatious complaints if it was made very clear on the website those complaints UKAS could deal with and those it could not. Martin Jones recognised that UKAS' public authority role provided justification for this policy.

The Chairman concluded that there was agreement that a policy on vexatious complaints is necessary and that work should continue to develop the policy as part of the general complaints process, perhaps as a composite document with links to any relevant standards.

#### 6.5 Business Plan 2014/15

Paul Stennett reported that work on the Business Plan for 2014/15 was ongoing but that the main elements were as set out in the summary of the annual report which was distributed at the meeting. There was general agreement on the main objectives set out.

#### 7- Any Other Business

##### 7.1 BMTA seminar

Jeff Llewellyn reported on a successful seminar organised by BMTA in Cambridge. He commended Paul Greenwood and Ben Courtney from UKAS for their contributions. He noted that six NHS Trusts were represented and it was clear that the knowledge of measurement and uncertainty principles in the health service is sketchy. The transition from CPA to UKAS accreditation represents a big step up. Lorraine Turner agreed that BMTA involvement with the NHS Trusts is very helpful. **Paul Stennett suggested that it would be good to include an article about the seminar in CPA Update.**

##### 7.2 New market surveillance Regulation

Jeff Llewellyn reported on proposals in the new EU Regulation on market surveillance for the establishment of Government appointed market surveillance reference laboratories drawn from accredited conformity assessment bodies which could undermine the role of notified bodies. The proposal also called for a CE plus mark on product safety. Malcolm Hynd confirmed that UKAS had submitted comments to BIS on the proposals and John Mortimer suggested that these concerns had been addressed in the latest proposals **but would confirm with the BIS Product Regulations team** which had lead responsibility. The Chairman suggested discussion with Malcolm Harbour MEP (Chair of the European Parliament's IMCO (Internal Market and Consumers Committee) if there were remaining concerns.

#### 8- Next Meetings

Future meetings were confirmed as follows:

PAF/PAC	Thursday 6 March 2014 at the BIS Conference Centre
PAC	Thursday 10 July 2014 at the Lansdowne Club (change of date)
PAC	Thursday 13 November 2014 at UKAS, Feltham