

UNITED KINGDOM ACCREDITATION SERVICE POLICY ADVISORY FORUM

Agreed Report of 4th Meeting Held on Thursday 6th March 2014 at the BIS Conference Centre, London

1- Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed members to the 4th meeting of PAF. He passed on apologies from Lord Lindsay, UKAS Chairman, Martin Jones of CBI, who was retiring from PAF and PAC after many years' service, and Graham Jukes of CIEH, who was attending Buckingham Palace to receive an OBE. Thanks were recorded to Martin Jones and congratulations to Graham Jewkes.

Secretary's note: A list of attendees and apologies received is attached at Annex A.

The Chairman reminded members of the purpose of PAF: to provide UKAS with stakeholder advice on strategy and policy issues. He commented that the PAF is an important part of UKAS' corporate governance arrangements and the input provided is highly valued.

The agenda was agreed without comment.

2- Report of the 3rd Meeting of the UKAS PAF

PAF/05/13

The Chairman reviewed the last PAF meeting. The main feature was the table discussions on the UKAS' strategy for the next five years. The feedback received was much appreciated by UKAS and has been factored into the business plan for the coming year and a number of projects now underway. The issues discussed are still very relevant especially better regulation, food safety and the international context.

There were no comments on the report.

3- Report from 5th, 6th and 7th Meetings of the UKAS PAC

PAC/09/13
PAC/20/13
PAC/28/13

The Chairman reviewed the three PAC meetings held since the last PAF and commented that he was impressed by the level of discussion and advice provided. Main items discussed were:

- Follow up to the PAF strategy discussion
- Pathways to accreditation
- Peer evaluation update
- Review of the operation of PAF and PAC
- Review of development opportunities
- UKAS policy on dealing with vexatious complaints.

There were no further comments on the minutes of these meetings.

4- Re-election of PAC members

PAF/05/14

The Chairman introduced the paper giving details of the proposed PAC membership for the next three years. All current members have offered to serve for another term with the exception of Martin Jones, who is retiring. Following the request for new members, nominations were received for: Chris Rowe of the Health and Safety Executive, Dr Stefan Kukula of the Engineering Equipment and Materials Users' Association and Sarah Veale of the Trades Union Congress, all

of whom UKAS would like to accept on to the PAC.

There were no comments on the proposed membership which was agreed for the next three years. The Chairman thanked those prepared to serve in this way.

5- Report from the PAF Health and Social Care Sub-group

Prof Ian Sharp presented a report from the Health and Social Care Sub-group on behalf of the Prof Adrian Newland, the sub-group Chair. He reported that:

- The group was formed as a sub-group of PAF in January 2013, meeting every 6 months. Prof Newland was elected as Chair and there have been three meetings so far. The next meeting is planned for July;
- The membership of the group is as listed in the slides and other PAF members are welcome to attend. A lay representative is being sought;
- The group is still forming and the meetings have mainly consisted of information exchange so far. Going forward, the group will consider: raising awareness of quality in healthcare; developing the recognition and use of accreditation by the Care Quality Commission; and responding to the challenges of the 'Barnes Review' into Pathology Quality Assurance across all areas of diagnostics.

Prof Sharp provided information about the Pathology Quality Assurance Review which considered the governance of pathology and diagnostics under three workstreams:

- NHS National System – commissioning and reporting including role of UKAS and MHRA;
- Professional development – education and training;
- Quality assurance and governance (led by Prof Sharp);

The overall conclusion of the review was that pathology services are generally working well but there is a need to improve quality assurance. Recommendations were:

- Professional groups to set consistent standards working with UKAS;
- UKAS to become member of the Joint Working Group on Quality Assurance within the Royal College of Pathologists;
- Work to reduce the current variation of standards of external quality assessment (EQA) providers;
- Work with scheme providers to improve publication of data;
- Adoption of ISO 15189 to improve the accreditation of pathology laboratories including unannounced spot checks and use of Key Assurance Indicators (KAIs);

Prof Sharp considered that UKAS featured strongly in the report and the outcome required is for UKAS accreditation to become shorthand for quality assured clinical services.

In response to a question from the Chair, Prof Sharp confirmed that the review's main focus was on pathology in the UK but agreed that the findings were transferable to other diagnostic areas and internationally.

Secretary's note: A copy of Prof Sharp's presentation is circulated with these minutes.

6- Review of 2013/14

PAF/03/14

Paul Stennett provided a review of 2013/14. Main points covered were:

- The past year in figures showing growth in all areas of the business;
- Scorecard of achievements: Progress made under all the objectives except for customer portals which have been delayed by IT difficulties;
- Recruitment: 32 new members of staff recruited in 2013. Total headcount now 207;
- BIS monitoring: There is a formal requirement for UKAS and BIS to meet but efforts are made to make sure the meetings are informative and constructive. PAF/03/14 summarises the subjects covered;
- Other activities with Government: Paul Stennett highlighted particularly the Handbook for Ministers and discussions with the Scottish Government on the implications of a 'yes' vote in the referendum on independence. He reported positive indications that an independent Scottish Government would continue to recognise UKAS;
- Customer satisfaction surveys: Results are good but there is still room for improvement. He also highlighted positive customer feedback received;
- Corporate communications: Main areas of activity were improvements to the website; a search function for partner websites; video content; mobile friendly website and apps; social media; electronic delivery of UKAS Update;
- Priorities for the business plan for 2014/15 which is Year 2 of a 5 year plan: UKAS to be recognised as employer of choice; improve customer focus of assessment teams; simplify pricing model; widen stakeholder engagement; improve IT; adopt best practice tools; update the website; develop products for small businesses; and develop a growth strategy for new sectors.

Secretary's note: A copy of Paul Stennett's presentation is circulated with these minutes.

7- UKAS international representation – future funding and resourcing PAF/06/14

Rob Bettinson introduced the paper. He explained that there is an obligation on UKAS to represent UK in the European and international accreditation forums and that UKAS needed to be involved in the key committees to protect UK interests. Much accreditation policy is set at international level and many other accreditation bodies take a more restrictive line on the use of accreditation so UKAS' voice needs to be heard. UKAS also needs to participate in the peer evaluation process by providing peer assessors and be involved in standards making activities where relevant to accreditation. UKAS is proposing that this work should continue at a level of approximately £600k per year over the next three years. BIS has traditionally funded this work, as it benefits UK PLC as a whole, but Government funding is reducing and now amounts to around 60% of total costs. Members were invited to consider the international programme, as part of the table discussions under Item 9, and comment on: its importance to the UK conformity assessment infrastructure; whether the amount of resource expended by UKAS should be maintained at the level set out; and whether BIS should continue to provide funding for these activities.

8- UKAS activities with Government – Malcolm Hynd

Malcolm Hynd provided a short presentation on UKAS' activities to raise awareness of accreditation within Government. He emphasised the difficulty of contacting a very large audience with limited resources. The current budget for awareness raising is approximately £320k this year, split 50/50 between business and Government activities, with BIS providing 25%. Activities are therefore divided into general awareness raising, such as advertising (not funded by BIS), dissemination of brochures and email bulletins, and targeted activities, such as receptions, responses to consultations and follow up meetings. Sectors of government identified for targeted action this year are Health, Scotland and Wales but there are many other specific contacts in progress. Members were invited to consider awareness raising as part of the table discussions under Item 9 and to provide any suggestions for how UKAS can improve dialogue with government.

Secretary's note: A copy of Malcolm Hynd's presentation is circulated with these minutes.

9- Table discussions, feedback and discussions

PAF/04/14

Members were invited to discuss one or more of the questions provided in the paper and record ideas and conclusions on the flip charts provided. Following the table discussion, summary reports were provided as follows:

Table 1

SME access to accreditation – Concerns that costs are a real barrier for small laboratories especially medical. Cost of preparation time also needs to be taken into account as well as the cost of fees. A staged approach to accreditation could be beneficial but the case for discounting not yet proven.

International funding – Concerns about the reduction in BIS funding. International programme regarded as a 'must do' activity. Important for customers and businesses that UKAS has an effective voice otherwise the 'accreditation zealots' will take over and costs will increase for customers as a result. With reducing BIS funding, the cost of the programme will have to be met through fees, further reducing the competitiveness of UK conformity assessment bodies. Need to work smarter with greater focus and selection. The legal requirement for BIS to help fund this work was noted.

PAF/PAC – Considered that PAC is working well but PAF needs more time for discussion. Presentations are too long. Not asking for longer meetings but better use of time.

Government awareness – OK at top level but needs to be better targeted at middle ranking officials. Awareness of accreditation is still patchy between departments.

Table 2

Government awareness – Consider use of the Civil Service Live events. Could also consider presentations to directorate meetings but accept it is difficult getting access. Policy hubs or networks could also be effective medium. The use of case studies with impact assessment figures is recommended.

PAF/PAC – Annual meetings lose effectiveness. More regular engagement would be beneficial. Useful to increase awareness of common issues across sectors.

International funding – Agreed the programme is very important but questioned the value of hosting large meetings and events.

SME access to accreditation – Cost (initial and ongoing) is the main issue. Staged approach with recognition may be helpful. Possibility of group accreditations to share costs.

Table 3

Government awareness – Considered that there is still a vast sea of ignorance about accreditation and confusion over terminology. Basic education is required at the grass roots level with case studies written in government language. Need champions in Government including at politician and senior official levels. Need to foster a more considered approach to accreditation, not just knee jerk reaction to policy problems.

PAF/PAC – structure works well but need more time for feedback in PAF with less reporting. As the name suggests, it should be an interactive Forum for Advising on Policy issues.

Table 4

International – Considered very important for the work to continue. UKAS needs to regain lost influence (eg EA Executive) and needs to restrain other organisations in Europe from adding complexity. The programme is needed to support UK businesses to work internationally. Ensure most efficient use of resource.

PAF/PAC – Very useful but reporting needs to be more focused. Provide detail in advance to give more time for discussion and feedback.

SME access to accreditation – UKAS efforts to simplify accreditation appreciated but also need to simplify certification. Accept not primary focus for UKAS but can influence. Cost of accreditation and certification needs modification.

Table 5

Government awareness – Industry can also influence government. Need to focus on the key policy area eg purchasing, specification.

KPIs for non-customer stakeholders – Recognise it is a challenge to get information from organisations two steps away but it is important. CAB clients' complaints registers are inked to UKAS performance.

PAF/PAC – UKAS should use to receive not transmit. Discussion and networking time too short. The health sector report was interesting and would have benefited from more time to consider synergies. The ToRs should be issued with the papers as a reminder.

The Chairman thanked members for their participation and comments which would be fully considered by UKAS. In particular, he agreed on the importance of making sure that the format of PAF was right and would try to factor in more time for feedback at future meetings.

10- Confirmation of Next Meetings

The Chairman confirmed the arrangements for the next meetings as follows:

PAC	Thursday 10 July 2014 at the Lansdowne Club, London
PAC	Thursday 13 November 2014 at UKAS, Feltham
PAF/PAC	Tuesday 10 March 2015 at the BIS Conference Centre, London

11- Closing remarks

The Chairman thanked members for attending and for their input to the discussions.

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Attendees

Georgia	Alsop	UKAS
Tim	Bailey	United Kingdom Organic Certifiers Group
Philippa	Bassett	UKAS
James	Berry	BSI Standards
Rob	Bettinson	UKAS
Valerie	Bevan	Institute of Biomedical Science
Sue	Brand	Care England
Emma	Brown	UKAS
Phil	Curnock	ADS Group Ltd
Phil	Earl	Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
Chris	Elliott	Ministry of Defense
Paul	Everall	Construction Industry Council
Ron	Gainsford	Trading Standards Institute
James	Gibb	Federation of Certification Bodies
Alan	Gower	Federation of Certification Bodies
David	Greenwood	Ministry of Defense
Paul	Greenwood	UKAS
Martin	Hall	Association of Independent Research and Technology Organisations
Mark	Hattersley	TechUK
Richard	Hulmes	Safety Assessment Federation
Malcolm	Hynd	UKAS
Lesley	Larkin	Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs
Mike	Lawson	Association of British Certification Bodies
Alexandra	Lipton	Society and College of Radiographers
Dr Jeff	Llewellyn	British Measurement and Testing Association
Alison	Lockyer	Department for Communities and Local Government
Daniel	Mansfield	BSI Standards
John	Mortimer	Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
Trevor	Nash	Association of British Certification Bodies
Graham	Oliver	Association of Independent Research and Technology Organisations
Mike	Pearson	Federation of Small Businesses
Prof Tim	Reynolds	Association of Clinical Pathologists
Stefan	Robinson	Environment Agency
Chris	Rowe	Health & Safety Executive
Jeff	Ruddle	UKAS
Richard	Sanders	National Measurement Office
Prof Ian	Sharp	Public Health England
Paul	Stennett	UKAS
Clive	Taylor	Engineering Equipment & Materials Users' Association
Dr Michael	Thomas	Association for Clinical Biochemistry
Graham	Topley	National Physical Laboratory
Lorraine	Turner	UKAS
Sarah	Veale	Trades Union Congress

Julian	Wade	United Kingdom Organic Certifiers Group
Paul	Whitbourn	Department of Health
Steven	Wilson	Health Improvement Scotland

Apologies

Sarah	Barnard	ADS Group Ltd
Dr Julian	Barth	Association for Clinical Biochemistry
Martin	Baxter	Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
Hazel	Beckett	Royal College of Radiologists
Graham	Beddoe	Association of Independent Research and Technology Organisations
Roger	Bennett	Independent International Organisation for Certification
David	Brackston	British Retail Consortium
Joe	Brown	Scottish Government
Mike	Byron	Independent International Organisation for Certification
Linda	Cavender	Trade Association Forum
Andrew	Damant	Food Standards Agency
Hywel	Davies	Construction Industry Council
Richard	Evans	Society and College of Radiographers
Andrew	Hall	Royal College of Radiologists
Mark	Holmes	Department for Business, Innovation & Skills - Innovation Infrastructure
Martin	Jones	Confederation of British Industry
Graham	Jukes	Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
Dr Eric	Kilpatrick	Association for Clinical Biochemistry
Dr Stefan	Kukula	Engineering Equipment & Materials Users' Association
Davinder	Lail	Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs
Dr Rachel	Liebmann	Royal College of Pathologists
Peter	Lomas	Chartered Quality Institute
Jon	Murthy	UKAS
Dr Jane	Needham	Institute of Biomedical Science
Prof Adrian	Newland	Academy of Medical Royal Colleges
Anthea	Nicholson	Department for Communities and Local Government
Luke	Owen	Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
Prof Audrey	Paterson	Society and College of Radiographers
Robbie	Pearson	Health Improvement Scotland
Grant	Peggie	Technology Strategy Board
Dr Archie	Prentice	Royal College of Pathologists
Andrew	Rennison	Forensic Science Regulator
Bill	Slocombe	Federation of Certification Bodies
Dan	Smith	Institute of Biomedical Science
Tony	Smith	British Measurement and Testing Association
John	Southerden	Society of Maritime Industries
Siobhan	Stanger	Department for Energy and Climate Change
Andrew	Wilby	Independent Healthcare Advisory Service
Jane	Willis	Health & Safety Executive
Dr Marion	Wood	Association of Clinical Biologists