

National Research Ethics Advisors' Panel

**National Research Ethics Advisors
(NREAs)**

Information Pack for Applicants

Closing date: 20 August 2012

Interview Date: 7th September 2012

A Message from Professor Andrew George Chair of the National Research Ethics Advisors' Panel



Dear applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the role of National Ethics Research Advisor, to serve on the National Research Ethics Advisors' Panel (NREAP). NREAP have provided advice to NHS research ethics committees and ethical support for NRES since it was formed in 2009. We are now taking the opportunity, following the formation of the Health Research Authority, to refocus the panel and are looking for highly motivated individuals from a number of different backgrounds able to contribute to the enhancement of the ethical review process in the UK. You will find a role description in this information pack, as well as details of the qualities required for the role.

I hope that you are attracted to what is an exciting and interesting role. I have very much enjoyed my time on NREAP, not only because of the lively debate but also because of the opportunity to contribute to the improvement of the ethical review process.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. George', written over a faint, light-colored background.

Andrew George

Appendix 1

National Research Ethics Advisors' Panel Terms of Reference

Enclosures:

Advert ([download available here](#))

Application form ([download available here](#))

Background

The Health Research Authority (HRA) protects and promotes the interests of patients and the public in health research. The HRA includes the National Research Ethics Service (NRES), which reviews research proposals to protect the rights and safety of research participants and facilitates ethical research of benefit to science and society.

The National Research Ethics Service (NRES) was originally asked by the four UK Health Departments, through the United Kingdom Ethics Committee Authority (UKECA) to establish a central advisory panel to help with the strategy, quality assurance and service development of Research Ethics Committees (RECs) and improve the research environment in the UK. The 'National Research Ethics Advisors' Panel' (NREAP), consisting of 13 advisors, plus the NRES Ethics Advisor, Dr Hugh Davies, held their first meeting in 2009.

Following the move of NRES to the newly established Health Research Authority (HRA), the panel has conducted a thorough review of its membership and terms of reference. The subsequent revised terms of reference (appendix 1), approved by UKECA in March 2012, emphasise the panel's role in helping research ethics committees deliver robust, consistent and fair decisions.

The primary focus of the panel will be on engagement and consultation with all stakeholders, including RECs, with an interest in health research to inform and deliver appropriate guidance and training to the REC community.

The panel is independent but hosted within NRES and is a resource available to all RECs, funded by the UK Health Departments, within England and the devolved nations.

Further information on the current panel including minutes of meetings and published guidance can be found at: <http://www.nres.nhs.uk/about-the-national-research-ethics-service/nrea/>

Role of the National Research Ethics Advisors' Panel

The overall objective of the panel is to help RECs deliver robust, consistent and fair decisions through:

- Facilitation and provision of ethical training to RECs;
- Facilitation of RECs' knowledge and use of currently available guidance and the development of new guidance where it is identified that appropriate guidance is not available;
- Consultation with REC members and other stakeholders to inform and develop guidance. Each NREA will be expected to consult with appropriate stakeholders as required.
- Seeking and inviting appropriate expertise, as necessary, to advise the panel and contribute to guidance;
- NREAP hosted Chairs' Network Meetings;

- Support for NRES in dealing with disagreements arising from appeals by applicants and from within RECs;
- Oversight of the 'shared ethical debate' external quality assessment programme for RECs;
- Oversight of personal development programmes for REC chairs;
- Advice to NRES or RECs regarding alleged fraud or misconduct in research;
- Support for NRES with relationships with other regulators and stakeholders including research funders, universities, patient groups, professional bodies and industry including AREC;
- Support for NRES with patient and public involvement in research;
- Support for NRES with media enquiries and response to news items or journal articles about NRES;
- Representing NRES at events conferences and meetings;
- Facilitating NRES events;
- Chairing ad hoc advisory groups and working parties as appropriate.

Qualities required for the role

To help you decide whether you wish to be considered for appointment to this role, we have listed below the criteria that will be applied when assessing candidates. To be considered, you must be able to demonstrate that you have the qualities, skills and experience to meet the criteria.

Applicants will have one or more of the following expert backgrounds.

- Legal expert
- Experienced REC Chair
- Experienced academic clinical researcher
- Individual with senior pharmaceutical industry experience
- Individual with a high level of understanding of the issues facing patients and/or research participants in the NHS
- Individual with academic expertise in the ethics of research

Ideally, applicants should also have:

- experience of working effectively in high level committees; experience of operating at a strategic level in the public or other sectors;
- a record of achievement and personal credibility within your own field, appropriate to the remit of the panel
- an understanding of NHS research ethics committees. Further information may also be found at the NRES website www.nres.nhs.uk
- excellent interpersonal and communication skills to support effective discussion with all stakeholders with an interest in health research.

- ability to evaluate complex issues and weigh up conflicting opinions;
- ability to influence at a senior level.

How to apply

To apply for this role please complete the [Application Form](#) and return by 20 August 2012, enclosing a copy of your CV.

Please send your completed applications to:

Clive Collett (NREAP Manager)
Health Research Authority
National Research Ethics Service (NRES)
Ground Floor, Skipton House,
80 London Road,
London SE1 6LH

Electronic versions of the application form can be downloaded [here](#). Completed forms should be e-mailed to clive.collett@nhs.net

Once we receive your application

We will process your application as quickly as possible and will keep you informed of progress.

After the closing date for applications:

- We will acknowledge receipt of your application (by email if provided) and check it for completeness and eligibility;
- We will rely on only the information you provide on your application form and CV to assess whether you have the experience required at the appropriate level. Please ensure that you provide written evidence to support how you meet all of the relevant criteria, which are identified in the role description and qualities required for the role;
- If a large number of applications are received, it is likely that your application will be “pre-assessed” before it is passed to the short listing panel for consideration. You should be aware that in this situation, your application might not be considered in full by all the panel;
- Successful candidates will be contacted in writing and invited for interview to take place on 7th September 2012 at the Health Research Authority, Skipton House, 80 London Road, London SE1 6LH;
- Where a candidate is unable to attend an interview on the set date then an alternative date will only be offered at the discretion of the interview panel;
- The interview panel will consist of Prof Andrew George (NREAP Chair), Clive Collett (NREAP Manager) and a United Kingdom Ethics Committee Authority (UKECA) representative;

- If invited to interview, the panel will question you about your experience and expertise and ask specific questions to find whether you meet the specified qualities;
- If you are successful, you will receive a letter from NRES appointing you as a member of the National Research Ethics Advisors' Panel;
- If you are unsuccessful, you will be notified by NRES;
- If your application is unsuccessful and you would like feedback, please contact Clive Collett (NREAP Manager), clive.collett@nhs.net, Health Research Authority, Skipton House, 80 London Road, London SE1 6LH).

On appointment

Remuneration

Although these appointments are unpaid, panel members will have their meeting expenses reimbursed and an optional daily rate paid for attendance at other events in accordance with the current version of the "Reimbursement of HRA Committee Members Expenses" policy.

Warning

Impact of appointment on people in receipt of benefits. Your appointment may have an effect on your entitlement to benefits. If you are in receipt of benefits, you should seek advice from your local benefits office.

Location and Time commitment

The panel meets 4 times a year in London or occasionally elsewhere in the UK as appropriate. Panel meetings last for around 3 hours but members will also be expected to contribute to the work of the panel in-between meetings at workshops and events across the UK. It is expected that this should amount to no more than one day a month.

Appointment and Tenure of Office

Panel members will be appointed initially for up to five years.

For the purposes of this round of recruitment only: where existing NREAs apply and are successful in being re-appointed then their term of office will be for 3 years, rather than the 5-year term offered to new NREAs.

Appointments may be renewed at the end of the first period of office subject to satisfactory appraisal. A degree of change is often sought and there should, therefore, be no expectation of automatic reappointment.

You should also note that these positions are public appointments rather than jobs and are not subject to the provisions of employment law.

Training

Induction and continuing training will be provided to enable you to increase your skills and understanding of the work of the panel the National Research Ethics Service and the Health Research Authority.

Conflict of Interests

You should note the requirement to declare any conflict of interest that arises in the course of NRES business and the need to declare any relevant business interests, positions of authority or other connections with organisations relevant to the business of NRES.

Any actual or perceived conflicts of interest will be fully explored by the panel at shortlisting or interview stage.

Diversity and equality of opportunity

We value and promote diversity and are committed to equality of opportunity for all and appointments made on merit. We believe that for any organisation to be successful, it needs to work with the most talented and diverse people available. We positively encourage applications from people from all sections of the community, from all backgrounds and with a broad range of experience. We undertake that your application will be dealt with fairly and that all decisions we make about it will be based on merit and your ability to meet the role specification

The role holder must, at all times, carry out his/her responsibilities with due regard to the HRA Equal Opportunities Policy.

Appendix 1

National Research Ethics Advisors' Panel (NREAP)

Terms of Reference

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The National Research Ethics Service (NRES) was originally asked by the four UK Health Departments, through the United Kingdom Ethics Committee Authority (UKECA) to establish a central advisory panel. The objective of this panel was to help with the strategy, quality assurance and service development of RECs and improve the research environment in the UK.
- 1.2 A panel of 13 advisors, plus the NRES Ethics Advisor, Dr Hugh Davies, were appointed through open competition and the National Research Ethics Advisors' Panel held its inaugural meeting on the 23rd September 2009.
- 1.3 The panel is independent but hosted within NRES and is a resource available to all RECs, funded by the UK Health Departments, within England and the devolved nations¹.

2.0 Terms of Reference of the National Research Ethics Advisors' Panel

- 2.1 The overall objective of the panel is to help RECs deliver robust, consistent and fair decisions through:
 - Facilitation and provision of ethical training to RECs;
 - Facilitation of RECs' knowledge and use of currently available guidance and the development of new guidance where it is identified that appropriate guidance is not available;
 - Consultation with REC members and other stakeholders to inform and develop guidance. Each NREA will be expected to consult with appropriate stakeholders as required.
 - Seeking and inviting appropriate expertise, as necessary, to advise the panel and contribute to guidance;
 - NREAP hosted Chairs' Network Meetings;
 - Support for NRES in dealing with disagreements arising from appeals by applicants and from within RECs;
 - Oversight of the 'shared ethical debate' external quality assessment programme for RECs;
 - Oversight of personal development programmes for REC chairs;

¹ N.B. Whilst the Health Research Authority Directions 2011 apply only in England (by virtue of section 271 of the National Health Service Act 2006) NREAP, appointed by UKECA, will continue to be a resource available to all RECs funded by the UK Health Departments within England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

- Advice to NRES or RECs regarding alleged fraud or misconduct in research;
- Support for NRES with relationships with other regulators and stakeholders including research funders, universities, patient groups, professional bodies and industry including AREC;
- Support for NRES with patient and public involvement in research;
- Support for NRES with media enquiries and response to news items or journal articles about NRES;
- Representing NRES at events conferences and meetings;
- Facilitating NRES events;
- Chairing ad hoc advisory groups and working parties as appropriate.

3.0 Membership

3.1 The membership of the panel should include:

- Chair²
- Legal expert
- Experienced REC Chair
- Experienced academic clinical researcher
- Individual with senior pharmaceutical industry experience
- Individual with Patient and Public Involvement (PPI)/NHS experience
- HRA Ethics Advisor³ (Ex Officio appointment)
- Individual with academic expertise in the ethics of research

3.2 The NRES Director (or their nominated NRES representative) will attend meetings by invitation of the panel.

3.3 The Chair is appointed by the HRA, on behalf of the Department of Health and the devolved nations. It is expected that the Chair will fulfil at least one of the membership categories listed above (other than “Chair”) however; this is not a mandatory requirement for appointment to the position.

3.4 The Deputy chair is appointed from among the panel members⁴.

3.5 All NREAs are appointed by the HRA, on behalf of the Department of Health and the devolved nations on a yearly reviewed basis up to a maximum period of five years initially. Appointments may be renewable at the end of the first period of office; however, NREAs should not normally serve more than two consecutive terms of five years.

3.6 In order to avoid the possibility that all NREAs would need to be replaced five years after the initial appointments to the revised panel in 2012 where current NREAs do compete for membership and are successful in being re-appointed then their term of office would be for 3 years, rather than the 5-year term offered to new NREAs.

² The current Chair is Prof. Andrew George

³ Dr Hugh Davies

⁴ The Deputy Chair is currently Dr Hugh Davies

- 3.7 Members may resign from the panel at any time by giving three months notice in writing to the Chair and Chief Executive of HRA.

4.0 Secretariat

- 4.1 The secretariat will be provided by the NREAP Manager⁵ who will report to the Business Delivery Manager (NRES Business Unit).
- 4.2 The NREAP manager will facilitate use of guidance by RECs and support REC training. They will also attend REC and NRES centre meetings (including NREAP hosted Chairs' Network Meetings), as necessary, to present guidance and other panel documents and to seek feedback from RECs on existing guidance and suggestions for items to be the subject of future consultation and guidance.
- 4.3 The NREAP manager will sit on the NRES training steering group to facilitate the provision of ethical training to RECs.

5.0 Meetings

- 5.1 Meetings will be held quarterly (every 3 months).
- 5.2 Meetings will be held in London or occasionally elsewhere in the UK as appropriate
- 5.3 Meeting dates will be set and communicated to all panel members prior to the beginning of each calendar year.
- 5.4 Panel members are required to attend in full at least three quarters of all scheduled NREAP meetings in each year.
- 5.5 Members are required to notify the NREAP Manager in advance wherever possible if they are unable to attend any scheduled meeting.
- 5.6 In the event that any member fails to attend two scheduled meetings in a row, without a reasonable excuse, their appointment will be terminated by the HRA.
- 5.7 Ad-hoc meetings may be held by agreement of the Chair as and when required.
- 5.8 Meetings may, exceptionally, be cancelled by agreement of the Chair.
- 5.9 Where appropriate stakeholders, and other individuals, may be invited to panel meetings to present to the NREAs and take part in discussions.
- 5.10 The agenda will be distributed electronically to members at least two weeks in advance of the meeting date.
- 5.11 The Minutes of each meeting will be approved by the Chair/Deputy Chair and ratified by the panel at the next available meeting. The minutes will be published on the NRES website and distributed to all NRES staff, NRES National Management Group and the HRA Board.

6.0 Quorum

- 6.1 There is no formal quorum for panel meetings, however where the panel is asked to arbitrate on ethical debates and disagreements arising from appeals by applicants and from within RECs the quorum should be regarded as a majority of the current panel membership. Where the panel has an even number of members, a majority means 50% of the members plus one.
- 6.2 A member who is unable to be present at the meeting may participate by telephone or send written comments when the member has received a copy of the

⁵ Currently Clive Collett

documents that are to be reviewed at the meeting. In such cases they will be considered to contribute to the quorum.

- 6.3 For items other than arbitration on ethical debates and disagreements, the quorum may be decided by the Chair, taking into account the importance of the items under consideration, the presence of appropriate stakeholders, and the advisability of taking decisions if few NREAs are present.

7.0 NREAP Working Procedures for Consideration of Items

- 7.1 New item identified (e.g. by NREA, NREAP Manager, NRES, HRA, REC via NREA, or other stakeholder) and forwarded to NREAP Manager in writing together with the preferred action option (see below). Items submitted for consideration at a full meeting of the panel must be submitted at least three weeks in advance of the meeting date in order to be considered for inclusion on the next meeting agenda.
- 7.2 The NREAP Chair and NREAP Manager decide jointly whether the item should be taken forward for consideration by the panel (either at a meeting or 'in correspondence').
- 7.3 If panel Chair/Manager decide the item should be taken forward for consideration the submitted item is either emailed (where the item is considered suitable for consideration 'in correspondence') or placed on the appropriate meeting's agenda. The item may be taken forward as submitted or, if necessary, a meeting paper drawn up which should identify any existing guidance relating to the issue. The item will be put before the panel with one of the following options for consideration/action to be taken:
- For information only;
 - For endorsement;
 - For discussion without further consultation;
 - For discussion with a view to issuing NREAP statement identifying existing guidance without further consultation;
 - For discussion with a view to issuing NREAP guidance without further consultation;
 - For discussion and further consultation with a view to issuing NREAP guidance;
 - Other action.
- 7.4 Item discussed by the panel. Where an item is submitted for advice alone, or it is not considered necessary to enter into consultation with a view to producing a statement or guidance, then the panel's recommendation may simply be recorded in the minutes and communicated to the originator of the item by the NREAP Manager.
- 7.5 Where the panel consider that the issue is adequately covered by existing guidance then consideration should be given to drawing the attention of RECs to this guidance by issuing an NREAP statement or other communication. Such NREAP communications should be placed on the next available agenda of all RECs for discussion.
- 7.6 Where the panel consider that the issue requires new guidance to be issued then the main arguments and points to be considered should be outlined at the meeting and further action agreed.

- 7.7 Where the panel agree/decide that the item requires further consultation with the REC community and/or other stakeholders, before NREAP guidance issued, a named NREA will, if necessary, be assigned to be the 'Lead NREA' for the consultation and a consultation paper/other presentation format prepared in conjunction with the NREAP Manger.
- 7.8 Where necessary experts external to the panel may be identified and approached to advise on the issue and assist in the preparation of any consultation paper/presentation. Where appropriate, such experts may be formally co-opted onto the panel for a specified period of time. During this time they will be considered to be a full member of the panel subject to the same terms and conditions as other NREAs for the period of co-option.
- 7.9 The consultation paper/presentation should normally include the following:
- Description of the issue;
 - Background;
 - Existing guidance (to include indication of where this is endorsed by the panel or where the panel disagree);
 - Outcome of preliminary discussions/meetings with other stakeholders (if applicable);
 - Initial recommendations
- 7.10 The consultation paper/presentation is published on the NREAP section of the NRES website and distributed to relevant stakeholders.
- 7.11 All RECs would be expected to discuss the item at the next available full REC meeting. The item should also be considered at NREAP hosted Chairs' Network Meetings where they fall within the consultation timescale. Responses to the consultation to be returned to the NREAP Manager.
- 7.12 Where the issue under consideration is felt by the panel to have significant public interest consideration might also be given to convening a workshop/conference in conjunction with NRES and/or other external bodies.
- 7.13 The consultation period should normally not be longer than two months, however a longer consultation period might be decided upon at the meeting where this is considered to be appropriate.
- 7.14 At the end of the consultation period all responses are reviewed and draft guidance produced for consideration by the panel.
- 7.15 The draft guidance is discussed (at NREAP meeting or in correspondence as appropriate) and further action agreed.
- 7.16 The 'draft' guidance is published online for one month to provide a final opportunity for comment.
- 7.17 The 'final' NREAP guidance is drafted (incorporating any further comments) ratified by the panel and published.
- 7.18 All RECs should be alerted to the fact that the final NREAP guidance has been published and this should be placed on all REC agendas for information.
- 7.19 After one year the published guidance is sent again to RECs and stakeholders for review and feedback on whether it has been considered to be helpful. The panel will then give consideration to revising the guidance in light of the feedback received.
- 7.20 NREAP guidance may be reviewed at any time but will be reviewed at a formal meeting of the panel at least every five years. Where necessary a period of further consultation may be embarked upon in order to inform any update to the guidance.

8.0 Payment of Expenses

- 8.1 All panel members will have their expenses reimbursed in accordance with the current version of the “Reimbursement of HRA Committee Members Expenses” policy.