

## **External Affairs Working Party Meeting Minutes – 22 October**

*Apologies – None received.*

*Doris-Ann Williams (DAW) read out the Competition Law notice to attendees.*

*Ollie Mitchell (OM) addressed the previous meeting minutes and no actions needed the group's attention.*

*External Speaker – Tom Salusbury (Horizon Scan & Futures Lead, Data Futures UKHSA Data, Analysis & Surveillance Group) on the new role of the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)*

- Tom presented on the new UKHSA organisation and its priorities and how BIVDA members can work with the new Agency
- The agency is formed from PHE, Test and Trace and the Joint Biosecurity Centre, and it's three weeks old at present.
- The aim of Ministers was to create an organisation of along the lines and influence of the CDCs in the United States. The primary driver has been the pandemic, and the need to take on a growing list of health threats and bring together the expertise of predecessor organisations.
- A lot of operational agility and flexibility has been gained from the pandemic and the intention is to carry this forward into the new Agency.
- UKHSA will inherit over 700 sites across the country, including containment level 4 labs and the Megalab in Leamington Spa.
- As the UKHSA prepares to take on a wider range of health threats, it wishes to work in partnership with organisations across the UK and wider world. It will work in partnership with local authorities to international bodies – public, private, not-for-profit and academic.
- UKHSA is becoming the system leader for health emergency planning/response, a global leader in health security and position health security as a key component of national security. Of most relevance to BIVDA members is UKHSA's role of being a driver of world class health science and innovation in the analytical sector.
- The Agency will build on its strong scientific capabilities and be a hub for innovation, working in partnership with academic and industry.
- Working with trade bodies such as BIVDA and GAMBICA will be a key part of how UKSHA promotes its analytical and surveillance functions.
- Tom works as part of the UKHSA Data, Analytics and Surveillance group (DAS). This is a large group that has been formed mostly from the Joint Biosecurity Centre. It looks at the health data ecosystem, developing technologies and partnerships. Some of the teams are now calculating the R value for the current pandemic and advising on international travel issues. The new DAS DG is Steven Riley, lately Professor of infectious disease dynamics at Imperial College London
- Within DAS, Tom's team are looking at new technologies, data sets and methodologies. Potential new tools such as acoustic monitoring, COVID-19 breathalysers, MIPs and rapid POC systems are being evaluated. If they have promise, Tom's team also has an accelerator function to operationalise them.
- Tom's team also has an Innovation Pipeline where products, data sets and services offered to UKHSA can be triaged and evaluated. This has been set up to drive innovation in data and partnership challenges and to act as the single point of entry for all DAS innovation needs. Examples currently in this process include the Cough in a Box/Speak Out To Beat COVID

acoustic monitoring project and the Next Generation Wastewater programme, which is speeding up the analysis of COVID-19 nucleic acids in sewers and water systems as an early indicator of a hotspot. In the Cough In A Box project, the coughs of test subjects are being compared to CPCR test data from the national REACT study.

- Horizon scanning will lead to the preparation of scenarios to help UKHSA development teams understand the context of their work. Potential innovations may also be identified, such as geospatial data sets, wearable sensors, MIPs, thermal imaging and so on.
- UKHSA are keen to talk to BIVDA members about the evaluation of innovative technologies, and how practical these might be in terms of meeting legislative demands and being scalable.
- Tom's email is [Tom.Salusbury@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:Tom.Salusbury@dhsc.gov.uk)

### *Consultations Update*

- Regarding the MHRA consultation on the future medical devices regime in the UK, this is a set of nearly 500 questions to respond to.
- We have a spreadsheet of all the questions which might help you to circulate the responses around your own organisations before submitting them.
- It would also be helpful to see any issues for your company you'd like BIVDA to highlight in our response for the sector.
- It's important that all companies respond in some way, even if they only use the lay chapter at the end of the Consultation document. The more organisations respond, the higher the balance for IVDs in the Government's analysis.
- The Consultation period continues until the 25 November 2021.
- We continue to support companies regarding the COVID-19 test validation process.
- BIVDA continues to work with ABHI on this and we will be holding a webinar for members on Thursday 28 October from 2-3pm, and are hoping that officials from the CDTA will be able to join to present to companies.
- There are two NICE consultations out at present and there are not many questions or queries from members on them.
- We hold information on the active Consultations on our Weekly Newsletter (sent every Friday).

### *AOBs:*

- Doris-Ann said BIVDA is planning to map out the effect of new ICSs on existing IVD contracts. This follows an excellent presentation at the BIVDA MGM from David Thorne, NHS Insights and Interaction Director.

### *Next Meeting:*

The next External Affairs Working Party meeting will be on Friday 26 October from 10.30-11.30am.

**END**