



Association for Clinical Cytogenetics

<http://www.cytogenetics.org.uk>

**ACC Council Meeting
British Society of Hematology, 100 White Lion Road, London
Tuesday 10 March 2009**

Kim Smith (KS)	Chair
John Wolstenholme (JW)	Treasurer
Teresa Davies (TD)	Secretary
Katie Waters (KW)	Assistant Secretary

Amanda Dixon-M ^c Iver (ADM)	Ordinary Member/Treasurer elect	Karen Thompson (KT)	Genetic Technologist
Sandra Birdsall (SB)	Ordinary Member	Beverley Royston (BR)	AGTC Representative
Nick Bown (NB)	Ordinary Member	Val Davison (VD)	Trustee
Hazel Harvey-Smith (HHS)	Ordinary Member	Rod Howell (RH)	Trustee
Peter Howard (PH)	Ordinary Member	Gordon Lowther (GL)	Chair, ETC
Mandeep Bahra (MB)	Junior Member		
Phillippa May (PM)	Junior Member		
Suzanne M ^c Phee (SMc)	Junior Member		

1 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from, Ian Cook (junior member), John Crolla (Trustee), Lorraine Gaunt (chair of PSC), Rod Howell (trustee), Stephen Mountford (junior member), Ann Reilly (genetic technologist).

2 **Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 2nd December 2008**

These were accepted with two minor amendments.

3 **Chairs Report**

Modernising Scientific Careers (MSC)

Consultation closed on 6 March. KS thanked MLC for their contribution. A joint ACC/CMGS response based on discussions at Heads of Departments meeting was submitted by KS on 6 March.

National Definition set for Medical Genetics services (no 20)

KW and Tony Parkin updated definition on behalf of ACC earlier this year. The revised document has now gone out for wider consultation. Final version expected by end of March.

Heads of Departments meeting 26-27 January 2009

A proposal by Jacquie Westward on behalf of UKGTN for a national service specification for arrays was discussed as a possible mechanism to secure service funding. However it was noted that there are now labs that have funding. LG (chair of PSC) proposed taking a responsive position at present and to review ACC position if needed. Therefore no timetable or deadlines were set to take this forward.

Issues around the continued funding of Down syndrome register were also discussed. Pat Ward (FASP) had asked KS to investigate whether Cytogenetics laboratories would agree to submit minimum data set required directly to FASP. Following discussion at the meeting, it was agreed that labs could continue to submit current data set. There were concerns raised over confidentiality and it was considered that if additional information was required then this should be provided by the screening co-ordinators.

Action: KS to feedback to Pat Ward.

Cytogenetics workload units were discussed. The consensus was that the workload units need to be reviewed in line with the UKGTN work undertaken with CMGS. KS asked the original ACC working group to take this forward (JW, KW, Tony Parkin). Subsequently Edna Maltby was invited and has joined the group. A first meeting was held on 9 March in Sheffield. The group has used the molecular model for the basis of revised Cytogenetics scheme. The group is currently testing it with their activity and funding and expect to have a scheme that can be tested more widely in May.

Action: Working group.

Joint Committee for Medical Genetics

It was noted that Diane Paine (DH Genetics Policy Unit) had moved on and no replacement has been made.

KS reported that the committee considered that it required a higher level access to DH than through the Genetics Policy Unit. JMGC Chair will be taking this forward.

Testing and funding of common diseases was discussed with a move to place test costs into mainstream medicine e.g. familial hypercholesterolemia funded via cardiology.

PHG foundation: Non-invasive prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome.

Publication looks at how DH should manage the introduction of NIPD.

UKGTN steering group.

At the HoD meeting there was debate over the value of Cytogenetics laboratories joining UKGTN. It was noted that UKGTN has an important political voice at DH level and that cytogenetics laboratories are taking on more molecular technologies. Generally there was support for joining. Since the meeting UKGTN steering group has taken this forward. Informal discussions have suggested that completion of a standard application will be required that will cover current national service repertoire (as specified in service definition no 20). Specialised tests would require a gene dossier. ACC have been asked to provide guidance on what should be included. Arrays will not be included at present. UKGTN work on the principle of inherited disorders only and therefore acquired abnormalities would not be included although it was noted they are included in the National Definition set.

Action: KS to clarify if will be included or not. ACC to provide repertoire guidance.

John Barber (Wessex Genetics Service) has submitted a gene dossier for 'Syndromic Mental Retardation' to detect genomic imbalance using array technology. The dossier will be submitted for approval at Gene Dossier meeting today. Barbara Gibbons and Jonathan Waters have been invited to attend to provide expert opinions on dossier.

Genetic Technologist training programme

ACC council and CMGS executive agreed that only career framework stages should be used and any reference to Agenda for Change (AfC) bands should be removed.

HPC consultation documents. Three documents have been received.

Action: NB volunteered to review documents and write ACC response(s) as appropriate.

ACC chair. KS completes her term in September 2009. This provides an opportunity to review workload of chair. KS identified the critical meetings that she considers that the chair should attend (JCMG, UKGTN steering group, NGRL steering group). Meetings for each committee/group are two/three times a year. Other meetings can be attended by nominated ACC representatives who can provide continuity of attendance and feedback. HHS was nominated to take over from KS and attend FASP meetings.

It was suggested that the number of council meetings could be reduced from four to three and to arrange the dates to fit in with the critical meeting dates. Council agreed to reduce the number of meetings.

Action: September 2009 meeting is cancelled. Dates for 2010 will be confirmed later in the year.

4 **Education & Training Committee**

Report circulated and presented by GL.

Genetic Technologist Training. GT training programme is now live with 14 labs accredited to deliver training. Major changes made to programme following feedback have been the potential to backdate GT training for those commencing in 2008 provided training equivalence can be demonstrated and removal of reference to Agenda for Change banding in the entry requirements.

Training for Trainers. Course was run at end of February with 16 participants. It was funded by ACC. The course was oversubscribed and another is planned for later in the year.

Modernising Science Careers. Val Davison formally co-opted on as MSC lead.

Representatives for both CMGS (Dave Baty and Maggie Williams) and ACC (Gordon Lowther and Eileen Roberts) are working on curriculum development and methods of assessment. Next meeting is 24 March 2009.

Due to the scheduled roll out of the Genetics Pilot in Autumn 2009 and the greatly reduced intake in numbers of trainees expected this year ETC propose that the national training courses (Oct 2009 and April 2010) are not run. This proposal was discussed and some concerns were raised by Council.

Action: GL to consult with Heads of Departments on recruitment plans for 2009/10 in particular whether recruitment is to existing or new training scheme. Pending this information a decision to run the courses or not will be made by Council.

Workforce Data. Data / reports for 2007 and 2008 are almost ready to be circulated, along with

requests for 2009 data. KS requested that table linking Whitley grades and AfC bands was reviewed prior to ratification of the reports by Council.

Action: GL.

RCPATH E-Learning. Work is continuing on the modules and case studies.

ETC Committee. Sarah Willis (GT Rep) has completed her term and a nomination from AGTC is awaited. Paul Campbell has resigned as Study Day co-ordinator. Replacement currently in abeyance pending further clarity around MSC and HSST

5 **Professional Standards Committee**

No report.

6 **Membership Liaison Committee**

Report circulated and presented by MB/SMc.

ACC Membership Profile. PM has been working on profiling the membership using data obtained from the BSHG. The information stored by the BSHG does not include details of the role of the member. New members now provide this information on joining; there is no mechanism for the BSHG to keep track of promotions and role changes. Council considered that this was an important piece of work that needed to be completed because a minimum of 25% of GT on voluntary register should be members of their professional body for registration process to be taken forward.

Spring Conference 2009. MB has organised a stand at the conference to promote the awareness of ACC activities. SMC has obtained booklets from HPC on CPD which are to be distributed at the conference. These booklets will be helpful in view of the forthcoming CPD audit for Cytogenetics. KS suggested a slot at AGM where information could be presented.

Action: Secretary.

Sample Registration portfolio. IC has provided his portfolio as a sample for the ACC website subject to review by GL.

MLC response to MSC consultation. The response was sent to GL and KS.

Careers. PM has completed another case study for Durham University.

Website. MLC page to be amended. Wording was approved by Council.

MLC recruitment. Members will be recruited as and when required for a specific project. Selection will take place from responses to a person specification distributed to the laboratory contact. Recruitment will be for a specified fixed term (e.g. recruiting a conference liaison from the relevant laboratory for a period of one year prior to the conference). This will give members an opportunity to gain experience in committee work and encourage participation in ACC activities.

7 **Genetic Technologists**

Report circulated and presented by BR.

Training Manual: Two new clauses agreed by the ETC/ TAB. Covered by GL in section 4.

Council Elections: A letter was sent to laboratory contacts requesting nominees for GT vacancy.

Suspension from VRC: Following dismissal for gross misconduct and failure to inform the VRC of a change of circumstance, a GT was given a 13 week suspension from the Voluntary Register. The GT has 13 weeks to appeal this decision. If an appeal is lodged the case will proceed to a fitness to practice hearing. Once 13 weeks have elapsed, if an appeal is not lodged, the GT will be removed from the register.

AGTC Representation on ACC Council: Clarification was sought on attendance. Presently two elected GTs and the Vice-Chair of the AGTC attend council meetings. The Chair/ Vice-Chair is the voice of the AGTC on the PB councils and does not have any voting rights on council, whereas the two elected ACC GTs have been invited to sit on the AGTC as ACC representatives and have full voting rights on both committees. As the ACC and the AGTC may occasionally have differing opinions it is important that the AGTC retains an independent voice on the ACC council. KS confirmed that two elected representatives and AGTC vice-chair can attend in their own right.

KS suggested that they have informal council nominee that can contact for opinion. This was supported by BR. **Action: SB agreed to be nominee.**

8 **Scientific and Governance items**

JC will give a presentation on NIPD at the June council meeting.

NQAAP: Jonathan Waters has replaced KW on the panel. A nomination to replace VD in 2010 is

required.

Action: Council.

9 **Networks & European Issues**

NGRL. Reports from HoD meeting were circulated.

FHCS. ADM attended AGM on 16 February 2009. The federation includes 22 different organisations representing 51 disciplines. Currently ACC do not pay a subscription and have been evaluating the benefits before subscribing. The opinion of council was to continue not to subscribe at this time.

BSHG. TD attended council meeting on 15 January 2009. Rob Elles stands down as chair in September to be replaced by Christine Patch. Mark Bale has stepped down as DH representative, a replacement has not been made. Newsletter is to be published twice a year in January and June.

Successor for editor to be agreed and nominations for editorial board are being sought.

BSHG fees have increased by £10.00. ACC executive agreed no increase to ACC fee.

Next conference will be held at University of Warwick which is significantly cheaper than York venue.

None of the constituent groups agreed to a joint meeting with BSHG preferring to retain separate Spring scientific meetings.

'Genetic Testing in Children' is being reviewed by David Gokhale.

10 **Report back from external meetings**

RCPATH SAC: No report. Jo Whittaker will be next chair replacing John Old.

11 **Treasurer's Report**

Accounts were approved by Council.

There have been no travel claims.

KS gave a vote of thanks to JW on behalf of Council in appreciation for his hard work as treasurer over a number of years. This was JW's last meeting.

12 **Correspondence / Applications for Membership**

Membership applications: TD reported that nine applications had been approved.

KS received information regarding website for North West Healthcare Science Network.

Action: KS to forward details to Council and HoDs.

13 **Matters arising from previous meeting**

Nomination for president deferred to next meeting.

Action: Executive.

(3) At HoD meeting it was agreed that reference labs should take on negotiations for block purchasing discounts for array for NHS laboratories.

Action: Secretary to write to reference labs.

(3) 18 week pathway. VD reported from DH meeting that she had attended. Impact on cytogenetics laboratories will be minimal but important for molecular laboratories when sending DNA to another laboratory for testing as results need to be received within 18 week timeline.

(14) Council elections. Three ordinary and one GT have been elected unopposed. Two junior member nominations were received and an election for the one vacancy will be held. One ordinary member vacancy remains on hold.

14 **Any Other Business**

Secretary raised that she has signed copies of council minutes, AGM minutes and financial statements going back several years. As well as ACC newsletters and educational course material. It was agreed that minutes and statements should be kept but other documents could be disposed of.

KS suggested that Wellcome may archive the newsletters.

Action: Secretary.

16 **Next Meeting**

Dates for 2009: All Tuesday. Start time 11.15. Lunch will be provided.

Venue: Board Room, British Society of Haematology, 100 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF.

2 June

1 December

Note: 1 September meeting cancelled.

The meeting closed at 15.40.