

AIR QUALITY INFORMATION SYSTEM REVIEW STEERING GROUP

MEETING ONE: MINUTES

Monday 13th December 2021
15:30 – 17:00

VIRTUAL MEETING via Microsoft Teams

ATTENDANCE		
<u>Chair:</u>	Bill Parish	<i>Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)</i>
<u>Members:</u>	Ally Lewis Rob Day Anna Hansell Matthew Clarke Andrew Grieve Gillian Mawdsley Karen Exley Kirsty Smallbone	<i>Air Quality Expert Group (AQEG) Asthma + Lung UK Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP) Hertfordshire County Council Imperial College London Lay Representative UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) University of Brighton</i>
<u>Secretariat:</u>	Sarah Haley Shaun Brace Stuart Aldridge	<i>Defra Defra UKHSA</i>
<u>Observers:</u>	Elizabeth Trinder Sarah Peters	<i>Defra Department for Health and Social Care</i>
<u>Apologies:</u>	John Newington Jo Feary Eleanor Sykes	<i>Defra Respiratory Consultant UKHSA</i>

ABRIDGED MINUTES

ITEM 1: Welcome and Introductions:

- 1.1 Members, observers, and the secretariat were welcomed to the meeting.
- 1.2 The chair gave a short introduction. It was stressed that the group should be considered a safe space for exchanging honest views.
- 1.3 Members participated in a round of introductions. *Member bios are documented in meeting document AQIS_SG01_05_Member Bios.*

ITEM 2: Scope of the Air Quality Information System (AQIS) Review:

- 2.1. The secretariat provided a verbal update on the background to the AQIS review:
 - The UK air quality information system includes the Daily Air Quality Index (DAQI), which alerts the public and at-risk groups about short-term changes in levels of air quality and provides accompanying health advice. Alongside the DAQI, several air quality-related websites and messaging services disseminate information and issue alerts.
 - The Prevention of Future Deaths coroner's report (April 2021) following the inquest into the death of Ella Adoo Kissi-Deborah raised low public awareness of the sources of information about national and local pollution levels as a matter of concern.
 - Subsequently the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC), the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) along with the chairs of Air Quality Expert Group (AQEG) and Committee on the Medial Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP) have agreed on the need to review the current provision of air quality information to the public.
- 2.2. Members were invited to comment on document *AQIS_SG01_01_Terms of Reference (ToR)*.
- 2.3. Members agreed the remit of the steering group. The group will sit for a period of 24 months, in which time members will:
 - Advise on the scope and nature of research required to review and improve the current air quality alerts and advice system.
 - Provide clear, actionable and evidence-based recommendations on the changes needed to the present system.
 - Offer a view on the realistic impact that improvements to the air quality information system could have and determine what measures of success for future evaluation could be.
- 2.4. The following points of clarification were raised:
 - The geographic scope of the review is UK-wide.
 - The term "vulnerable groups" requires a clearer definition encompassing individuals at risk due to existing health conditions but also those who are more frequently exposed to higher concentrations of air pollution.
 - It is not necessary for the group to wait until the end of the two-year review period to make recommendations.

ITEM 3: Structure of the AQIS Review Steering Group:

- 3.1. Members were referred to document *AQIS_SG01_03_Steering Group Membership* – a diagram detailing the structure of the AQIS steering group.
- 3.2. The secretariat outlined the expected interaction between steering group members and advisory networks:

- Steering group members agreed to collate and represent views of their wider advisory networks.
 - The secretariat will provide support to members in growing and maintaining networks.
- 3.3. Sir Stephen Holgate - Clinical Professor of Immunopharmacology from the Medical Research Council and Clean Air Champion - will act as an advisor to the chair for the AQIS review and receive all relevant meeting information.
- 3.4. The following comments were raised regarding steering group structure:
- Care will need to be taken to ensure representation of ethnic, socio-economic and age diversity via advisory networks.
 - Asthma+Lung UK have a role in representing all vulnerable groups on the steering group – this includes both the clinically vulnerable and those groups vulnerable due to increased exposure to air pollution. The secretariat will provide support to Asthma+Lung UK to widen their network if required.

ITEM 4: Ways of Working:

- 4.1 The following ways of working were agreed:
- Meetings will be held every two months, to be attended by the full steering group.
 - Initial meetings to be attended virtually – secretariat will review this in future.
 - Any unpublished papers shared with members to be treated with confidence.
 - Outputs from the AQIS review will be published on UK-Air and/or the Defra science search website.
- 4.2 The chair led a short discussion to determine initial actions for the AQIS review. Members made the following suggestions:
- It would be useful to gather user data to understand existing public engagement with air quality information.
 - Members would find it helpful to understand how current forecasting works including strength and limitations of the current modelling approach.
 - It may be helpful to engage with people involved in the 2011 DAQI update.
 - Local authorities should be engaged when developing messaging.
- 4.3 Relevant members agreed to sense check initial long list of technical and medical questions with members of AQEG and COMEAP and feed back to the wider steering group.
- 4.4 The steering group shared details of known projects relevant to the AQIS review:
- UKHSA has completed a literature review examining advice for asthma sufferers during air pollution episodes.
 - The Met Office have an ongoing project aiming to improve health and wellbeing services (including UV, pollen count and air pollution).
 - Defra has commissioned Global Action Plan (GAP) to work with health professionals to develop communication materials that could be integrated into patient pathways.
 - The World Health Organisation (WHO) has recently published new global air quality guidelines.
 - Defra has funded the Office for Health Improvement Disparities (OHID) to carry out qualitative research to better understand public attitudes to air quality and appetite for changing air quality related behaviours.

ITEM 5: Next Steps and AOB:

- 5.1. Members were set the task of testing out UK-Air, the DAQI and any other sources of air quality information ahead of the next steering group meeting in preparation for a frank discussion on the positives and negatives of the present system. It was noted that members would be expected to feed in views from their constituents to the discussion.

- 5.2. Members had a brief discussion about publicising the AQIS review. Members agreed that the review process should be as open and transparent as possible, with relevant progress published on UK-Air.
- 5.3. No further items of AOB raised.

**Air Quality Information Systems (AQIS) Steering Group Secretariat
December 2021**