

AIR QUALITY INFORMATION SYSTEM REVIEW STEERING GROUP

MEETING SIX: MINUTES

Thursday February 2nd, 2023
10:30 – 16:00

HYBRID MEETING in Nobel House, London and via Microsoft Teams

<u>ATTENDANCE</u>		
<u>Chair:</u>	Bill Parish	<i>Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)</i>
<u>Members:</u>	Chloe Owen Anna Hansell John Newington Matthew Clarke Andrew Grieve Gillian Mawdsley Angela Hands Jo Feary Karen Exley Kirsty Smallbone	<i>Asthma + Lung UK Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP) Defra Hertfordshire County Council Imperial College London Lay Representative Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) Respiratory Consultant UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) University of Brighton</i>
<u>Secretariat:</u>	Shaun Brace Sarah Haley Aran Prince-Tappe Stuart Aldridge Naomi Earl Alison Gowers Katharine Mcenery	<i>Defra Defra Defra UKHSA UKHSA UKHSA UKHSA</i>
<u>Observers:</u>	Tim Dexter Nelson Noel Sarah Robinson	<i>Asthma + Lung UK Met Office UKHSA</i>
<u>Apologies:</u>	Ally Lewis	<i>Air Quality Expert Group (AQEG)</i>

ABRIDGED MINUTES

ITEM 1: Welcome and Introductions:

- 1.1. Members, observers, and the secretariat were welcomed to the meeting.
- 1.2. Apologies were received from Ally Lewis.
- 1.3. Angela Hands was introduced, joining the steering group as a representative from the Office of Health Improvements & Disparities (OHID).
- 1.4. Chloe Owen was introduced as the new representative from Asthma + Lung UK, replacing Rob Day.

ITEM 2: Actions from Previous Meeting:

- 2.1. The Chair confirmed progress against all actions agreed in the previous meeting.
- 2.2. Steering group members were presented with a presentation asking them to reflect on to what extent the review of health advice should consider indoor air quality. The Chair advised the steering group to be mindful of what is achievable within the scope and timeline of the AQIS review regarding indoor air pollution.
- 2.3. There was a short discussion of indoor air quality in relation to the objectives of the AQIS review. It was flagged that indoor air quality is outside of the remit of the AQIS review. Members reflected that individuals with respiratory conditions are generally well-informed of the effect indoor air quality can have on their conditions, but that other members of the public have a limited understanding of the sources and effects of indoor air pollution.
- 2.4. The measures to improve air quality included in Defra's Environment Improvement Plan (EIP) were mentioned.

ITEM 3: Intelligence Sharing

- 3.1. Members and the Chair provided relevant updates:
- 3.2. The EIP contains updated targets for PM_{2.5} and an ongoing pipeline of work to reduce PM_{2.5} emissions.
 - 1.1. On February 9th 2023, Defra will announce the amount of money awarded under the Local Authority Grant scheme.
- 3.3. The findings from a survey of attendees at a recent UKHSA air quality stakeholder event were presented. Few attendees reported providing air quality alerts, and those that did claimed that public uptake was low. Attendees suggested a number of potential messengers trusted by the public to deliver air quality information, including medical professionals, local authorities, and health charities. It was suggested that research commissioned as part of AQIS could explore how to engage hard-to-reach groups.
- 3.4. Members briefly discussed which messengers would be trusted to deliver air quality information to the public. The Government's revised Air Quality Strategy, and the opportunity for local authorities to feed in suggestions for public messaging, was also discussed.

- 3.5. It was noted that the UKHSA extreme events team is looking at a single adverse weather plan and is open to including air quality forecasts in this in future, although it is not part of the project plan at present.
- 3.6. A sub-group of the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP) has been established to support the AQIS review. They will begin reviewing the evidence commissioned for the review thus far.
- 3.7. The Met Office is nearing the conclusion of the SPF Clean Air Project, and its outputs and datasets are almost ready to be used. The organisation is developing online framework containing datasets, aimed at specialists in air quality and health, and has begun to consider combining health-related warnings. Have started a knowledge exchange forum with Clean Air Champions, to see how they can facilitate greater impact.
- 3.8. The Air Quality Expert Group (AQEG) is making progress on a report on PM modelling. They will discuss microplastics and other emerging pollutants at their next meeting.

ITEM 4: Update on Workstream 1

- 4.1. The secretariat presented *AQIS_SG06_02_Workstream 1 Update Slides* which summarised the progress of evidence projects commissioned under Workstream 1.
- 4.2. The secretariat has commissioned three secondary research projects, looking at groups at risk due to individual characteristics, groups exposed to higher levels of air pollution, and the effect of conducting physical activity in air pollution.
- 4.3. The future activities of the COMEAP AQIS subgroup were summarised:
 - Current sub-group tasks:
 - To consider what an Air Quality Index for long-term exposure might look like. What effects should be considered, who is most at risk and who would the stakeholders be?
 - To steer existing Workstream 1 commissions
 - To evaluate lag times between exposure to air pollution and asthma exacerbation and impact on advice for exercise
 - Future sub-group task: to assist with scoping of possible review of DAQI banding and cut points
- 4.4. There was some discussion of the possibility of having more blending between index categories in the DAQI, as the existing cut points between bands do not account for uncertainty.
- 4.5. Members discussed the scope and definition of physical activity. Potential tensions between discouraging physical activity and discouraging driving simultaneously during episodes of air pollution were also acknowledged.
- 4.6. The secretariat summarised the behaviours recommended by members' advisory networks to reduce individuals' exposure and personal contribution to air pollution.
- 4.7. Members of the steering group discussed what behavioural outcomes information provision should be aiming to promote. Members agreed that behaviours should be evaluated on the basis of the evidence supporting their efficacy, achievability, and cost. The importance of understanding potential barriers to uptake of these behaviours among the public was also agreed. The importance of ensuring optimal messaging frequency to prevent user alert fatigue was raised in the discussion.
- 4.8. The Chair invited members to reflect on how the Workstream 1 evidence projects can be synthesised into actions. It was agreed to hold a special meeting of the steering group where the research teams would present their findings to the group.

ITEM 5: Workstream 4 Discussion

- 5.1. The secretariat presented *AQIS_SG06_04_Qualitative Research Panel Slides* updating members on the qualitative research panel recruited to support the AQIS review. The presentation summarised the aims and approach of the research, the design of sample, and asked the steering group to consider what questions they felt the panel should focus on answering.
- 5.2. There was an extensive discussion of the sample of participants collected for the panel. Points of discussion included:
 - The size and geographic spread of the sample
 - What messaging could be tested
 - Whether the right medical conditions, and diversity in the severity of symptoms, had been included in the sampling criteria
 - How exposure to pollution could be included in a recruitment variable
 - Projects which could run in parallel to this project.
- 5.3. The steering group were satisfied with the sampling approach and groups covered, however it was suggested that more bespoke work may be required to reach digitally excluded groups.

ITEM 6: Look back/Year 1 Report

- 6.1. The Chair invited members to reflect on paper *AQIS_SG06_05_Year One Report Skeleton* members were asked to consider the following questions:
 - Are you happy with topics?
 - Are there any key decisions the group has made that aren't reflected in the report?
 - Is there anyone happy to volunteer to draft sections of the report?
- 6.2. The Chair explained that the report will be more impactful if drafted genuinely independently by members of the steering group.
- 6.3. Members discussed potential alterations to the structure outlined in the report skeleton, including a summary of the policy landscape prior to the AQIS review.
- 6.4. There was a general discussion on the content and language of the Year 1 Report. The secretariat confirmed willingness to support in writing the sections on the review terms of reference and steering group membership.
- 6.5. Members discussed responsibility for leading on writing the review. Several members of the steering group agreed to help draft sections of the report relevant to their expertise.

ITEM 7: Look Back and Forwards – Ways of Working / Decision Making:

- 7.1. The Chair invited members to consider how they would like to synthesise the evidence collected into recommendations at the conclusion of the review.
- 7.2. Members agreed that a process should be established to simplify how members' communities and networks are engaged with.
- 7.3. Members agreed that findings from research commissions should be presented to the steering group in bullet point format to make it easier to cascade information.
- 7.4. Members discussed how areas of disagreement should be reported in the final report, if the group was unable to reach consensus. Contributions stressed the importance of adhering to transparency, with COMEAP reports cited as a positive example. Members agreed to create a process for resolving disagreement.

- 7.5. Members agreed that the final report should be accessible to a broad audience, with the key conclusions presented in a shortened summary. The potential to produce different versions of the report with different levels of detail for different audiences was discussed.

ITEM 8: Look Forward

- 8.1. Shaun Brace summarised the research questions in each workstream and invited members to comment on which they considered priorities for Year 2 of AQIS.
- 8.2. **Workstream 1:** The steering group reflected on the outstanding evidence needed to answer Workstream 1 research questions. It was acknowledged that aside from exercise, there was currently little evidence commissioned on what advice to give to different groups. Members were asked to consider if communicating long-term air quality conditions was a priority. Members agreed that ensuring accessibility of data was a priority. The different elements of health advice were also discussed
- 8.3. **Workstream 2:** Members discussed the level of granularity the public might want from air quality forecasts, and what the existing technology has the capacity to provide. It was suggested that the steering group consider this question from the perspective of promoting positive health outcomes. The steering group also considered what level of uncertainty the public would accept from the projections.
- 8.4. **Workstream 3:** Members agreed to hold a separate meeting to agree an approach to reviewing the DAQI. There was a brief discussion of the most important information to convey to the public. Members were invited to volunteer to join a working group focusing on Workstream 3.
- 8.5. **Workstream 4:** Members discussed the most effective messengers and messaging language for promoting behaviour change. Several existing behaviour change campaigns from the third sector, healthcare providers and media were discussed as examples. The simplicity of messaging and evaluating messaging effectiveness were suggested as important principles.
- 8.6. **Workstream 5:** Members agreed that diverse communities will have different information needs and different mechanisms for delivering messages, but that we lack a holistic understanding of these needs. It was also noted that an evaluation of the effectiveness of text alerts would be useful.

ITEM 9: Next Steps and AOB:

- 9.1. The chair briefly summarised the actions to be completed ahead of the next steering group meeting.
- 9.2. On request, the chair confirmed that the review was scheduled to be concluded by December 2023.
- 9.3. The secretariat confirmed members would be canvassed for acceptable dates for future meetings on the DAQI review and Workstream 1 research outputs.

Air Quality Information Systems (AQIS) Steering Group Secretariat, February 2023