

# AIR QUALITY INFORMATION SYSTEM REVIEW STEERING GROUP

## MEETING SEVEN MINUTES - ABRIDGED

Wednesday 26<sup>TH</sup> July 2023  
10:00 – 16:00

VIRTUAL MEETING via Microsoft Teams

<b>ATTENDANCE</b>		
<b>Chair:</b>	Bill Parish	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
<b>Members:</b>	Ally Lewis Chloe Owen Anna Hansell  John Newington Matthew Clarke Andrew Grieve Gillian Mawdsley Jo Feary Karen Exley Kirsty Smallbone	Air Quality Expert Group (AQEG) Asthma + Lung UK Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP) Defra Hertfordshire County Council Imperial College London Lay representative Respiratory Consultant UK Health Security Agency University of Brighton
<b>Guest Attendance:</b>	Stephen Holgate Paul Pfeffer Mike Holland Gary Fuller Klea Katsouyanni Ian Mudway Paul Agnew Noel Nelson Paul Willis Mark Miller Martin Clift Jo Barnes	Air Quality Champion Consultant respiratory physician EMRC Imperial College London Imperial College London Imperial College London Met Office Met Office Ricardo University of Edinburgh University of Swansea University of West England
<b>Secretariat:</b>	Shaun Brace Sarah Haley Aran Prince-Tappé Stuart Aldridge Eve Draper Alison Gowers Katharine Mcenery	Defra Defra Defra UKHSA UKHSA UKHSA UKHSA
<b>Guest Presenters:</b>	Louise Skowron Penny Stothard	Kantar Public Kantar Public
<b>Apologies:</b>	Andrew Grieve Angela Hands	Imperial College London OHID

## **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 Angela Hands and Andrew Grieve.
- 1.3. The Chair summarised the aim of this meeting: to help shape the Steering Group's final recommendations.

### **ITEM 2: Actions from Previous Meeting**

- 2.1. The Secretariat confirmed that all actions from the previous meeting are complete or in progress.

### **ITEM 3: Intelligence Update**

- 3.1. Members and the Chair provided relevant updates.
- 3.2. Defra is focused on delivering the commitments made in the Environment Improvement Plan 2023.
- 3.3. The AQIS Year 1 Report has not been published, although the Secretariat hopes it can be published following Parliament's summer recess.
- 3.4. AQEG's report on PM2.5 has been finalised and is being readied for publication. The group is preparing papers on several topics:
  - A short paper on the effects of the use of hydrogen as a fuel on air quality.
  - A longer paper on health inequalities and air quality.
- 3.5. COMEAP is starting to look at indoor air quality in response to the recent AQEG report.
- 3.6. The Met Office is progressing with Wave 2 of the SPF Clean Air project and held a successful network meeting in Birmingham. The Met Office will be holding a Roundtable meeting with Local Government officials in November.
- 3.7. The COMEAP sub-group formed to support the AQIS review is continuing to work, focused on three main activities:
  - Identifying groups susceptible to air quality over the long term.
  - The potential of a long-term DAQI-like communication tool.
  - Lags.
- 3.8. Hertfordshire County Council have passed a motion to oppose expansion of the London Ultra-Low Emission Zone and are supporting Global Action Plan's "Clean Air Night" initiative.
- 3.9. Members discussed methods to disseminate the findings of the AQIS review steering group.
- 3.10. Several updates from UKHSA were shared:
  - A meeting will be held with UKHSA, OHID and the Chief Medical Officer where he will be updated on the progress of AQIS.
  - COP28 will have a health pavilion, and UKHSA will put in a pitch for a section for air pollution communications.
  - UKHSA launched its strategy, which has a priority 'Protect health from threats in the Environment' that includes a strategy on air quality.

- UKHSA are organising an upcoming conference in November and UKHSA's Air Quality Events in December.

#### **ITEM 4: Update from Workstream 1 Sub-Group Meeting**

- 4.1. Attendees were informed of a recent meeting of the Workstream 1 sub-group, held to consolidate members' views of the evidence commissioned under Workstream 1. Members were directed to paper *[AQIS\_09\_02\_Workstream 1 Sub-group Meeting Note]*.
- 4.2. The views of the sub-group were summarised:
  - The group found that there was insufficient evidence for them to recommend providing specialised advice to people with different subtypes of asthma.
  - For diabetes and obese individuals, it was felt that it was important not to undermine messaging about the benefits of physical activity, and the evidence was insufficient to recommend specific advice about the risks of short-term exposure. However, it was felt that AQIS should consider messaging for diabetics around long-term exposure.
  - The medical community should be involved in developing messaging about long-term exposure to air pollution.
  - Work should be done to raise awareness among certain occupations that might be exposed to air pollution.
  - The advice in the Daily Air Quality Index should emphasise that most healthy people should not be dissuaded from exercise.
  - Schools, families and local authorities should be involved in developing messaging about children's exposure.
  - Work needs to be done to ensure that ethnic minorities and low-socio-economic status individuals are reached by messaging for the public, as well as other seldom-heard groups.
- 4.3. The sub-group recommended the following actions as next steps:
  - Engaging seldom-heard groups
  - Drawing on research from the COMEAP AQIS sub-group on susceptible groups.
  - Further engagement with healthcare professionals.
  - Refining further messaging related to physical activity, commuting, indoor air quality and transport.
- 4.4. Members discussed these suggestions in relation to the objectives of the AQIS review. There was preliminary agreement with the conclusions of the sub-group; however, it was agreed that the group needed to have a wider discussion of how to target air quality information in a future meeting.
- 4.5. The Secretariat summarised the actions and next steps.

#### **ITEM 5: Theory of Change Workshops**

- 5.1. Members were informed that the purpose of this item was to update the steering group on progress made on developing an DAQI evaluation plan since the DAQI focused meeting in April and then to progress the appraisal part of the DAQI review process through a collection of Theory of Change workshops.
- 5.2. The Chair welcomed members of the COMEAP AQIS sub-group and AQEG who joined for this item.
- 5.3. The Secretariat presented *[AQIS\_SG09\_04\_Defra ToC Tool Summary]*, clarifying the Theory of Change was the new language used in place of "DAQI Appraisal", and explained the progress made since the previous meeting:

- 5.4. Members were informed that the Secretariat had turned the evaluation questions identified by the steering group into a scope for evaluation, and invited members to ask any questions about the Secretariat's approach.
- 5.5. The Secretariat summarised the Theory of Change process and explained that the group would be divided into breakout rooms to begin the process of developing a Theory of Change.
- 5.6. Attendees were invited to their breakout rooms to begin the sessions.
- 5.7. After the conclusion of the workshops, members were invited by the Secretariat to return to the main room for the next item.

#### **ITEM 6: Presentation from Kantar on Wave 2 Findings**

- 6.1. The Chair introduced Penny Stothard and Louise Skowron, to present the findings from wave 2 of the AQIS Qualitative Research Panel [*AQIS\_SG09\_PRESENTATION\_02\_AQIS Qual Panel Wave 2*].
- 6.2.
- 6.3. Penny Stothard summarised the findings from the second wave of the qualitative research panel, which focused on two themes:
  - Encouraging behaviour change
  - Communicating risk
- 6.4. The following key findings for encouraging behaviour change were identified:
  - Participants had a low level of awareness about air pollution and were cynical about the effectiveness of individual action to mitigate the effects of air pollution.
  - Motivators to action include an understanding of how actions can make a difference, including the wider health benefits of actions.
  - The framing of recommended behaviours should be seen as impactful and worthwhile.
  - Participants felt that individual actions should be facilitated by local and central government policies.
- 6.5. At a pause for questioning, members discussed the need for greater public awareness of the sources of air pollution.
- 6.6. Louise Skowron continued the presentation, explaining how members of the panel responded to different forms of risk communication.
  - Participants preferred red-amber-green colour gradients over single-colour gradients, and could interpret it correctly for the most part
  - There was no clear preference among participants for language that emphasised pollution levels vs health in the framing of air quality indices.
- 6.7. Penny Stothard summarised participants' responses to Defra recommended actions and health advice.
  - Participants generally responded positively to advice but suggested improvements: replacing the vulnerable/healthy binary with a spectrum of risk, using consistent language for exercise, which is relevant to people's experiences, and shorter/punchier language.
  - At-risk individuals had a greater appetite for personalised health messaging, and interest in collaboration with other agencies to refine health advice.
- 6.8. Members discussed approaches to risk communication, and the following key points were raised:
  - Comparison of these findings with those from previous public insights research conducted during the 2011 Air Quality Index.
  - The importance of recommending specific actions rather than generic messages.
  - How the work of the AQIS review can build on related work being done by other countries.

- Ensuring risk communication is inclusive of people with colour blindness.
- It was decided that further discussions were necessary on how concentrations should be calibrated on a colour scale.
- How advice given to people with asthma should be framed and presented.

6.9. The Chair summarised the conclusions drawn from the conversation:

- The importance of specific, actionable messaging
- The need for localised information
- Explaining the causes of concentrations helps people to understand their own contribution.

6.10. Members were informed of the next steps:

- There will be a further wave of research, building on this phase.
- The Workstream 4 subgroup will meet to identify the final phase of the research. Anyone is welcome to drop their suggestions to the Secretariat ahead of this meeting.

### **ITEM 7: Year Two and Beyond**

7.1. Members were invited to reflect on how they would like to work towards delivering the final review output in the final months of the AQIS review. Members were reminded that the volume of commissioned work still due to report means that it may not be possible to draw informed conclusions by December 2023.

7.2. The Chair suggested that the Steering Group be kept active past December 2023, and take a stock take in Autumn on remaining work the position they are in to draft recommendations. There was a brief discussion of this suggestion, where the following points were raised:

- How to integrate the work of the AQIS COMEAP sub-group into the final report.
- The most efficient process for agreeing a final report collectively.

7.3. The Chair suggested that the next steps were to consolidate the project plan appraise the level of progress against each workstream and develop a skeleton for the final report. This suggestion was discussed by members.

- It was agreed that the Steering Group would be responsible for writing the final recommendations, and that the Steering Group's role in this process should be discussed further at the next meeting.
- It was clarified that the project plan will specify the process for wrapping up the evidence agenda.
- It was acknowledged that uncertainty around when some projects could be approved for funding might delay the conclusion of the evidence-gathering process.

7.4. The Chair summarised the programme of work over the summer:

- Shaping Wave 3 of the Kantar panel.
- Stakeholder engagement process.
- Completing the procurement process for the DAQI appraisal
- Updating the project plan to capture outstanding work before December.
- Preparing a report skeleton
- The timelines and process for delivery will be agreed at the next Steering Group meeting.
- Engaging with Ministers to update them on work so far, and give them and Chris Whitty the opportunity to discuss the AQIS project

7.5. The Secretariat confirmed they would be in touch to organise the next set of Theory of Change workshops.

### **ITEM 8: AOB**

8.1. There were no items of AOB.

8.2. The Chair summarised the actions ahead of the next meeting and drew the meeting to a close.

**Air Quality Information Systems (AQIS) Steering Group Secretariat July 2023**