

**Draft MINUTES OF THE 1ST JOINT LONDON HEALTH PROTECTION
GROUP
14TH APRIL 2010
CONNECT, LONDON**

Attendees: Barry Walsh (Chair) , Julian Hiscock, Charlotte Ingram, Rachel Heathcock, Tay Potier, Graham Morrison, Sudy Anaraki, Geraldine White, Alan French, Sara Shackleton, Shanna Williams, Ishani Kar-Parkayastha, Giorgios Ketzetsis, Jill Bedesha, Carole Milligan, Sian Hale.

1. Action

BW introduced the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to have an exploratory discussion to take forward initiatives in London under the following headings:

2. Implementing the Health Protection Regulations 2010

There was detailed discussion about the role of the “Proper Officer”, AF pointed out that there are many proper officer roles in Local Authorities. It is an administrative function not always based on expertise. Amongst these is the proper officer for notifiable diseases. There is a need for the legal aspects on the HP legislation to be looked at in detail.

Action all leads

The issue of the lack of notifications coming from Primary Care and GP’s was raised. IKP to consider a study looking at how we might improve primary care reporting of notifiable diseases. There was concern raised that the Department of Health didn’t give adequate time or operational notes on how to implement the regulations. It was agreed that the accompanying communication from DOH would be circulated. Sudi Anaraki to forward existing communication.

SA

IKP

The agreed recommendation of the group is to maintain existing systems that are working well and not to change anything radically in London until there is agreement on a common London approach.

SA

The main actions agreed in the group as interim guidance are:

- It was agreed where that existing systems of sending notifications by RMP’s be maintained until further discussions are completed.
- The HPUs in London where the most appropriate place for urgent calls to be made as it provides a 24 hour per day, 7 days a week service, including weekends.
- The “proper officer” appointment system for notifications (majority are CCDCs working in HPUS) needs to be standardised in London. It was agreed that the proper officer appointment system for notifications needs to be standardized for London (see enclosed template letter, developed by SA with legal advice) for Local Authorities to consider. Legal advice from borough solicitors should be considered. In the past individual names were

listed. If possible it is best done using title, not individual names.

- It was agreed that the boroughs where notifications would normally be faxed that this data be forwarded to the HPUs for the weekly returns to be done. The HPUs to explore how they can best harness HP Zone, as a new mechanism used for reporting upwards to the HPA. It was agreed not to destabilise any reporting system for the present. The weekly reports that Local Authorities are currently doing can continue as they see fit until the group meets again and agrees advice.

3. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Local Authorities

Rachel Heathcock reported that they have done considerable work in SEL on a draft MOU which would be strategic outlining what the HPU does and what LA's do. In addition SEL HPU are looking at generic London Outbreak Plan. It was agreed that both of these documents when ready would be brought to this group. RH pointed out that in addition to the MOU there is a need for London Gastrointestinal Disease Toolkit which would outline standard operating procedures that Local Authority staff would follow. The document would be a reference document combining the guidance and the relevant questionnaires and would be a separate document from the MOU. RH to forward documents once they are ready for discussion.

RH

4. Information Governance

There was discussion about the security of data and how best to protect sensitive information. There was discussion on whether faxes or electronic transmission would be safer. It was agreed that this would be taken forward at a future meeting.

Secure transfer systems – It was hoped that we would have electronic notifications from GPs as hinted in the guidance. There were strong feelings expressed by Local Authority colleagues that they would like to move towards electronic (paperless) systems.

5. Communication

It was felt by the group that there was a need for interim communication to be made to Registered Medical Practitioners as soon as possible. The covering letter, the notification form and the list of notifiable diseases should be circulated to the group in order for them to be customised. It was agreed that the covering letter, all would have the logo of the LA on them and signed off by the chief executive of the Local Authority or delegated person from the Local Authority. It could be co-signed by the Director of the Local HPU if agreed locally.

Methods of distribution: help would be sought locally how best to ensure the documents are emailed to the most up to date list of registered medical practitioners in Primary Care, working closely with the Primary Care Trusts and also the local HPU. Standard approaches to distribute by email could be via the PCT listings of Practice Managers who would forward it to individual RMP's. It was agreed that this should be done in a 3 week period across London, if timescales allow.

However, the point was raised that the need to contact RMP's about the changes to

legislation is not urgent. It was suggested a small sample survey of GP practices may be undertaken to investigate their preferred method of notification.

6. Training

It was agreed that there would be great benefit in a training opportunity on the Health Protection Regulations. Tay Potier to take back this issue to the Association of London Environmental Health Officers to see if there is an opportunity where training/workshop could be held.

TP

7. Lab reporting

It was agreed that there is a need to plan for handling laboratory reporting of organisms, which is expected to be in place by the 1st October. It was agreed that this group would not be able to handle this extra piece of work and suggestion was made that HPA collaborating microbiologists in London could work with colleagues and the HPA London regional office to develop a common lab reporting system. BW to discuss with colleagues.

BW

8. Constitution of Group

It was explained that the people who were at this meeting from LA's were those that expressed interest in coming together to discuss the topic of HPU/LA working together on the PH regs solutions at recent ALEHM meeting. It is necessary that colleagues at the present meeting to seek a mandate from their EH colleagues in their sectors in order to ensure representation in the group. It was agreed that the group should be small enough for us to be able to take some steps and that wider engagement would be very important part of the nature of this group. It was agreed that terms of reference for this group would be sought from colleagues in the coming 3 weeks. Action: All attendees to suggest terms of reference. Correspondence to be directed to Sian Hale, secretary of the group, email address to follow.

All attendees

Following the meeting Tay Potier suggested the minutes (once agreed) and attached draft template documents are uploaded onto a CIEH based website.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 18th May @ 2pm (arrival from 1.30pm, The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, Lower Ground Floor Council Chamber.