

**Department of Paediatrics
Management Committee/Graduate Studies Committee
Friday 16th June 2023, 12:00-14:00
Via MS Teams**

1. Apologies for absence

Philip Goulder, Carlo Rinaldi, Kristina Tanso, Daniela Ferreira, Rinn Song, Merryn Voysey, Maheshi Ramasamy

GH welcomed Lucy Howarth, Xinxue Liu, Kristina Tanso, Daniel O'Connor and Samantha Vanderslott to the group.

2. Minutes of meeting 09th February 2023

Accepted as true record of the meeting.

3. Conflicts of Interest (SO)

No conflicts were noted.

4. Matters arising and Action Points from meeting 09th February 2023 (not covered elsewhere)

- Create a Departmental Information and Governance Officer, discussed later in the meeting under admin update.

5. MSD research advocacy programme (AR)

- AR provided a brief update as the research advocacy programme is approximately 1yr old. Workshops and strategy meetings have taken place with discussions on how the department can be more cohesive with MSD and the wider University community to have a framework for delivery. It is still a work in progress but the main feedback during meetings for PI's is to ensure all of our teams are following the 10 days off per year for CPD/training. AR has been using Teamseer to record for her team under miscellaneous. AR also provided links where support is available for career development:

- <https://staff.admin.ox.ac.uk/article/research-culture-at-oxford-improving-research-practices-and-supporting-research-careers>
- <https://www.ox.ac.uk/research/support-researchers/researcher-hub>

6. Comms (JB/LF)

- A request has been submitted to the Divisional Protocol for a 1.0 FTE Comms Officer grade 6 as a replacement for Ben. Approval is awaited. In the interim TSS staff have been used.

- Open Access publishing. JB has liaised with MSD regarding publishing opportunities and will add resources relating to open access onto the intranet within the next few months. A policy review is imminent at the end of June or July. JB queried whether it might be useful to PI's to attend training sessions for publishing. These are run by the Bodleian and it may be possible to ask them to come to site to provide a departmental session. RS suggested there are varying complexities with changes that are taking place and it may be more beneficial to undertake further internal consultations before proceeding further. RS also suggested raising the issue at the CLIPS meeting (MSD's Library Committee) and enquiring about what information is being provided by the Division. GH added there are ongoing talks between the University and Bodleian regarding the costs incurred by the University

and agreements with the publishers. In addition, organisations such as the MRC and Wellcome Trust have begun opposing the policy of open access.

- Provided there is sufficient capacity, JB is planning a public engagement event which is targeting healthcare professionals. This would be aimed at GP's, Midwives and Nurses in the context of gatekeepers of the important information for parents who find themselves in difficult situations. The idea is to have short presentations from relevant research groups in order to position ourselves as the go to information hub for paediatric research and to provide them with practical information that they can use already. Such an event is envisaged to take place in November, but format and exact details are still under discussion. GH queried if this was related to research or medical service provision. JB explained that it is down to what a group would prefer to present but could be shaped however we wish. HU added that it would be useful to have a clear focus on the target audience, is this to position the department of paediatrics as part of the NHS Children's Hospital or is it really to position paediatric research as a key focus and how we can build some wider research networks in the future beyond individual diseases. There are a number of patient organisations who would be interested to join these events or to send representatives and to be involved in the planning, HU added that it is an excellent initiative. GH requested that JB let the research groups know with a one-pager what the overall aspiration is in the context mentioned by JB. Dependent on the feed-back, an event can be planned with an agreed focus and uniform content.

7. Graduate Studies Committee (CR/SE)

- DPhil Day was a success and CR/SE thanked all who took part for their contributions. Feedback has been received and will be used to enhance the day next year. All 6 student who presented passed.
- Student survey has been circulated and responses are being actively encouraged in the hope of a good response rate.
- Highest number of DPhil students due to start their studies in October 2023, so far 15 offers have been made following interviews of 24 selected applicants.
AP queried how funding affects the overall number of offers the department is able to make. GH explained that going forward the intention is to have in general more studentships within the Department that have secured fellowships. The issue of funding is not unique to paediatrics, at the recent HoD meeting this was raised, but in comparison to other departments paediatrics is presently well positioned in making offers with partially or fully paid student fees and living costs. GH acknowledged that funding is nevertheless a major issue, and it continues to affect the number of offers/conditional offers the department is able to make. RS queried whether there is a possibility to offer even 1 fully funded place for the best candidate, which may assist with advertising. SO had previously agreed that course fees would be provided for 2 students. AP explained that currently it is not known if all 15 students who have had offers are funded or not, at some point confirmation will be received, but this may only relate to initial funding and not for the full studentship. It is essential that appropriate records of funding for each student is kept and updated. SO explained that this is already underway with the admin team and KR is putting in place a system to track funding arrangements. GH explained that the Department is not in a position to underwrite partial fellowships as SE commented that an unconditional offer can be made by the University even if funding is only secured for the first year (this is University policy). Pls present were in agreement that this is a very difficult situation to manage. SS asked if it is

possible to have a guide created on how to hire a DPhil student as it is very difficult to navigate this process as it currently is. *Post-meeting note:* All information relating to the graduate studies process is already accessible via central University webpages <https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate> where it is regularly reviewed to ensure it remains up to date.

ACTION POINT:

- PI's to be more aware of these issues and to regularly update KR/SE if their students have changes in funding. SE/KR would welcome feedback on how they can also actively seek this information.
- GH to discuss the issue of funding with CR/SE to try and find a solution or seek advice from other departments.

8. Administrative staff update (SO)

- Information Governance Officer: Still awaiting feedback from the divisional committee after review. *Post-meeting note:* It was subsequently confirmed after the meeting that the Divisional Protocol Committee had approved the request for a new IGO.
- Comms Officer: Still awaiting feedback from the divisional committee after review.
- Formal consultation for IDRMs staff to transfer to paediatrics has now taken place and staff have been moved over smoothly.

9. HR update (CW)

- Current Stats:
 - 12 recruitments currently in progress (shortlisting/interview, staff request raised, awaiting grants approval).
 - 5 recruitments currently in advertising.
 - 39 starters since 9/02/2023.
 - 35 appointments made since 9/02/2023 and due to start soon.
 - 14 left 7 leaving up to 05/09/2023.
- Other HR Updates:
 - Update on the HR team: Caitlin has been appointed as new HR Officer and a new Apprentice post has been advertised. Interviews took place and an offer has been made.
 - Awards for Excellence deadline has past: 45 applications have been received, the committee meets at the end of June.
 - Applications for Professional Development Scheme ended in March, 20 applications were received, and support offered of £23k. Next deadline is in October 2023.
 - Recruitment waiting list has been removed, all recruitments are now within the expected and communicated timescale.
 - Peakon trial is ongoing, and it is hoped to be rolled out in the near future.
 - PDR is the main focus of the HR team currently and there is a plan to visit research groups and provide drop-in sessions to actively encourage participation. A Line Manager mailing list has been set-up and a Teams channel with plans to signpost and offer support for the PDR process.
 - Thriving at Oxford event is taking place on 12-23 June <https://staff.admin.ox.ac.uk/thriving-at-oxford> aimed at the University providing wellbeing support.

- Bystander training planned for 22 June is the last session available.
- Visa extension/renewal support policy has now provided support for 5 individuals since launching.
- Priority nursery places policy has been successful with 3 in use and 1 employee in waiting pool.
- Overview of the staff award for a DPhil student's course fees to a maximum of 80%. Of the 13 students who are also staff 11 are receiving the award. A follow-up will be made by HR to investigate why the other 2 are not eligible. AP added that it is important for DPhil students who are members of staff that their employment is appropriate for the DPhil work. It may be challenging to align with their thesis, it is important to be cautious not to put too great a burden on these students that it becomes impossible for them to carry out their job as well as a DPhil, it is therefore advisable to ensure the pastoral side of things is managed well.

ACTION POINT:

- CW to provide a presentation of Peakon to the department via a Town Hall meeting.

10. Finance update (KS)

- GH/SO thanked KS for all of her hard work and wished her well in her new role.
- SO briefed the committee on a recent meeting with the FRGPC. Key principle of a white paper produced by Division is a new policy that departments are unable to produce a budget which will result in an overall deficit. At FRGPC it was agreed that during 2023/2024 implementation of an intra-divisional transfer (IDT) mechanism to allow funding to flow between departments in order to meet the policy. Deficit to be funded in 2023 was set at £7.1m. The operation of the intra-divisional transfer creates a number of issues around incentives for those departments in surplus and assistance for departments in deficit to reach the goal of a surplus. Many of the issues have not yet been worked out, however, it was clear that paediatrics will need to provide funds for the IDT, which has been set at £748k
- Year to date financial position: Apr-23: Year to date position for the Department of Paediatrics, from August 2022 to April 2023 is £3.3m surplus. The healthy surplus is largely driven by the overheads income generated from the COVID related research projects. Year to date position represents £67K adverse variance to Q2 forecast. The variance is mostly due to slightly lower overheads than anticipated in Q2F.
- Forward view: 2022-23 Q3F: Agreed 22-23 Q3 forecast is set to generate £3.9m surplus. This represents an adverse variance of £381K to 22-23 Q2F. This variance is driven by decrease in research overheads due to changes in utilising industry grants.
- Forward view: 2023-24 budget: Agreed 23-24 budget is set to generate £2.1m surplus. 23-24 budget incorporates Paediatrics IDR budget. 23-24 budget projects £2.2m worsening position to 22-23 Q2F, this is the result of reduced overheads and the new charges levied under the Finance White Paper regime.
- AP asked whether any money in a surplus is the department's to spend? SO explained that the proportion of funds returned to Paediatrics in the form of cash-backed reserves would be made available for use. Provision would also be made for the drawdown of frozen historic reserves for strategic investments.

11. Grants update (KR)

- KR introduced Ludmila who has just started in post as Grants Officer.
- KR asked if the PI's are getting enough information/data on grants, such as make-

up of funding by funder, type, and comparative information by year or success rates? Is this information useful? Please let KR/SO know if there is anything grant related you would wish to be presented during a management meeting.

12. Equality & Diversity Update (RS)

- Staff survey has recently been conducted with an uptake rate of 51%, which is just behind the divisional rate of 56%. Results will be available in July.
- Using data to provide positive cultural change scheme. Data has now been gathered which can be shared at the next management meeting. Data monitoring committee is now in place who can collate the information and feed it back. Please ask RS if any further information is needed.
- There are a number of post-docs who identify themselves as staff scientists but do not necessarily see themselves on a trajectory to become a PI but also do not see themselves as a traditional post-doc because they have technical/operational type skill sets that are usually not offered by less experienced scientists. This group of scientists represents a large network of people that has come together seeking better identification and more information about the career paths available to them. This is being looked into by the EDI Committee which will report back on its findings at the appropriate time. Suffice it to say this is a critical group of staff who should be protected for the success of the individual research groups, but also for their sense of wellbeing and belonging.

13. OUCAGS/ACF/ACL updates (AJ)

- No report

14. AOB

- Global Health Professorship: The Global Health Professorship has been announced in the gazette. This is an endowed post, which the department are currently going through the process with Division to hopefully have Sue Ann Clemens formally appointed as the first postholder.
- PID Course this year will have a new course launched which will include a certificate for general paediatricians and a diploma for specialists in paediatrics. The course is in the process of transferring from continuing education over into paediatrics. This course is income generating and will bring money into paediatrics.
- Feedback from Garden Party: This was an excellent and successful event and it is hoped to run this again next year. RS explained that some students were not sure if they were invited, this is likely just a comms error.

15. Date of next meeting: 06th November 2023