

Purpose of the NIHR Horizon Scanning Research & Intelligence Centre

The primary purpose of the NIHR Horizon Scanning Research & Intelligence Centre (**HSRIC**) is to supply timely information to key policy and decision makers in the NHS and the research community about emerging health technologies that may have a significant impact on patients or the provision of health services in the near future. It is an underlying premise that the activity and working practices of the NIHR HSRIC will benefit patients and/or change the provision of patient care. **HSRIC** is funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR).

Principal users of our information include the Department of Health policy and research teams, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE); the NIHR Health Technology Assessment (HTA) programme, the NIHR/Medical Research Council Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation (EME) programme, and other NIHR research programmes; the NHS England specialist commissioning and innovation teams; and the UK National Screening Committee and population screening programmes. Other users include the devolved UK administrations, regional and local commissioning teams, healthcare providers, individual healthcare professionals and patients.

Vision

The desired state of **HSRIC** is to be valued as a key provider of intelligence and expertise on new and emerging health technologies.

Values

The specific values of **HSRIC** are that the Centre and its staff will¹:

1. Maintain an **intellectually questioning** culture
2. Work with **honesty** and **integrity**
3. Work with **objectivity** and **impartiality**
4. Work in a **transparent** and **efficient** way
5. Work within a clearly stated policy to **uphold commercial in confidence** and other sensitive material

¹ Honesty - being truthful and open

Integrity - putting the interests and obligations of **HSRIC** and the **University** above your own

Objectivity - basing your advice and decisions on rigorous analysis of the evidence

Impartiality - acting solely according to the merits of the case

Transparent – making full information available with processes open for verification

Efficient - using the lowest amount of inputs e.g. staff time to create the greatest amount of output

As employees of the **University of Birmingham**, all accounting, tendering, employment and other practices will be undertaken in accordance with the University's regulations.

Standards of behaviour

The standard of behaviour expected of all staff is based on the **HSRIC** core values and are expected in dealings with other HSRIC and University staff, and all external stakeholders, information providers and users.

Staff are expected to:

1. Fulfil their duties and obligations responsibly and in a way that is fair, just and equitable
2. Always act in way that is professional and that deserves and retains the confidence of all with whom they interact with
3. Make sure that public and **University** money and other resources are used properly and efficiently
4. Deal with the public, experts, companies and other people fairly, promptly, effectively, sensitively and to the best of their ability
5. Keep accurate records and handle information within **HSRIC's** confidentiality policy, the **University's** Information Security policy and the Data Protection Act

Staff must not:

1. Misuse their position in **HSRIC** by, for example, using information acquired in the course of their duties to further their private interests or those of others
2. Provide advice to any commercial or non-commercial concerns about development plans and/or the assessment or evaluation of products
3. Accept gifts or hospitality or receive other benefits from anyone which might reasonably be seen to compromise their personal judgement or integrity
4. Disclose commercially confidential or sensitive information without authority

Register of Interests

It is a requirement that all **HSRIC** staff should declare any conflict (or potential conflict) of interest that arises in the course of conducting NIHR HSRIC business. **HSRIC** maintains a register of staff interests to avoid any staff being influenced or appearing to be influenced by their private or other interests. The register is completed at least annually and is available for scrutiny.

Interaction with the commercial sector²

Interaction with the commercial sector is an integral part of the work of the Centre. Because of **HSRIC's** role to provide information to decision makers in the health service, the commercial sector may see some advantage in initiating and maintaining a close relationship with the Centre and its staff. It is very important that staff understand their motives, the framework

² 'Commercial sector' in the context of this document includes research scientists, developers, distributors, manufacturers and marketing agencies.

within which they operate, and be very clear in relationships with their representatives. The principles that underlie any interaction are that:

- Published work should not endorse any particular product or company.
- Respect should be given to commercial interests and concerns, especially information provided during the course of the Centre's work.

If **HSRIC** staff become aware that commercial or other interests wish to use the name of the Centre or **HSRIC** reports for the promotion of products, they should pass this information onto one of the Directors of the Centre.

Hospitality

Members of **HSRIC** will not accept gifts from any commercial or other interests on an individual or any other basis. Any such gifts will be returned.

Hospitality, such as sponsorship to attend a meeting, travel and accommodation costs, cannot be offered or accepted from any commercial or other interests, unless it is at a reasonable level³. Any hospitality received from commercial or other interests must be recorded and available for scrutiny.

The use of **HSRIC/University** monies for hospitality and entertainment, including hospitality at conferences or seminars, should be carefully considered. All expenditure on these items should be capable of justification as reasonable in the light of the general practice in the public sector. **HSRIC** staff should be aware that expenditure on hospitality or entertainment is open to challenge by the internal and external auditors, and that ill-considered actions can damage respect for the **HSRIC** and potentially the **NIHR** and **University**.

Relationship and response to the media

Because of the nature of the work undertaken by **HSRIC**, the media may from time to time contact staff at the Centre for information. In general all such enquiries, after requesting contact data and what the enquiry is about, should be passed on to one of the Directors of the Centre and then, if necessary, to the relevant contact within the **NIHR**, **University** and/or **Department of Health** Press Offices.

Requests for speakers and attendance at conferences, seminars and workshops

In general members of **HSRIC** will not accept invitations to speak at events with any form of commercial sponsorship, although acceptance may be allowable if important national collaborators hold events with sponsorship from multiple commercial sources. Members can consider attending events with commercial sponsorship, but should speak to one of the Directors of the Centre before acceptance. Each request to speak or attend any event should be prioritised. Although there will be occasions when the networking potential of activities may override these priorities.

HSRIC staff are encouraged to consider attending national conferences, seminars, or workshops for their own professional development, but in identifying events to attend should

³ A 'reasonable level' of expenses is that which is indicated in the **University** expenses policies.

consider the sponsors of the event and the event's cost, and discuss with their line managers before booking.

There are additional principles and values placed on medical personnel registered with the [General Medical Council](#) which describe what is expected of doctors.

Version	Date	Author	Changes
1.0	6 July 2015	C Packer	Original codes of practice
1.1	19 Feb 2016	C Packer	Standards of staff behaviour developed and added to reviewed codes of practice. Issued to SMT for comment.
1.2	1 Mar 2016	C Packer	Comments from S Simpson incorporated to new version. Issued to SMT for comment.
2.0	8 Mar 2016	C Packer	New codes of practice agreed by SMT