



Site visit inspection report on compliance with HTA minimum standards

British American Tobacco Research & Development Centre

HTA licensing number 12514

Licensed under the Human Tissue Act 2004 for the

- **storage of relevant material which has come from a human body for use for a scheduled purpose**

1 February 2017

Summary of inspection findings

The HTA found the Designated Individual, the Licence Holder, the premises and the practices to be suitable in accordance with the requirements of the legislation.

British American Tobacco Research & Development Centre (the establishment) was found to have met all of the HTA standards. Advice has been given relating to the Governance and Quality Systems (GQS).

Particular examples of good practice are included in the concluding comments section of the report.

The HTA's regulatory requirements

The HTA must assure itself that the Designated Individual (DI), Licence Holder (LH), premises and practices are suitable.

The statutory duties of the DI are set down in Section 18 of the Human Tissue Act 2004. They are to secure that:

- the other persons to whom the licence applies are suitable persons to participate in the carrying-on of the licensed activity;
- suitable practices are used in the course of carrying on that activity; and
- the conditions of the licence are complied with.

The HTA developed its licensing standards with input from its stakeholders. They are designed to ensure the safe and ethical use of human tissue and the dignified and respectful treatment of the deceased. The HTA inspects the establishments it licences against four groups of standards:

- consent
- governance and quality systems
- premises facilities and equipment
- disposal.

This is an exception-based report: only those standards that have been assessed as not met are included. Where the HTA determines that a standard is not met, the level of the shortfall is classified as 'Critical', 'Major' or 'Minor' (see Appendix 2: Classification of the level of shortfall). Where HTA standards are fully met, but the HTA has identified an area of practice that could be further improved, advice is given to the DI.

Reports of HTA inspections carried out from 1 November 2010 are published on the HTA's website.

Background to the establishment and description of inspection activities undertaken

This report refers to the activities carried out by British American Tobacco Research & Development Centre (the establishment) which is located in secure, bespoke premises in Southampton. Governance of work under the Human Tissue licence is overseen by the Human Research Council, which sits at a senior level within the organisation and includes the DI and the Heads of the other research groups.

The establishment has approximately 320 staff with a wide variety of industry, governmental and academic backgrounds. The facility consists of 12 laboratories, located over two floors. Research is mainly focused on understanding cigarette smoke chemistry, identifying toxic constituents (toxicants), understanding smoking behaviour and trying to develop products with lower levels of smoke toxicants. The establishment also looks at the effects of e-cigarettes and tobacco heating products.

The establishment is licensed by the HTA under the Human Tissue Act 2004 for the storage of relevant material for use for scheduled purposes. The scheduled purposes applicable to this licence are: research in connection with disorders, or the functioning, of the human body ('research'); and, quality assurance. The predominant scheduled purpose is research. This was the second site visit inspection of the establishment, the previous inspection being in May 2011. It was a routine inspection, to assess whether the establishment is continuing to meet the HTA's standards.

Relevant material from the living is supplied to BAT from external suppliers. Each supplier is required to give assurance that informed donor consent has been obtained. Suppliers are responsible for transport of material to the establishment. Currently, the establishment stores very few human tissue samples but they plan to increase this over the coming months.

Tissue management happens on a project-by-project basis, where the type of tissue required is identified, sourced and tracked through to usage and disposal. Risks to tissue are considered for each individual study and are based on the study parameters. All studies go through an internal ethics board and are overseen by the Human Research Council.

Samples are stored in a lockable -80°C freezer in a dedicated storage room. Liquid nitrogen storage is also available for new samples coming into the establishment. The storage room itself is not locked but the key to the freezer is kept in a keypad access safebox, to which only a small number of staff have access.

The freezers are linked to a data-logged, continuous temperature and monitoring facility which feeds into a callout system. Excursions outside the set ranges trigger the callout system; which is tested regularly. There is a contingency -80°C freezer and liquid nitrogen storage available, and the freezers are connected to the emergency power supply.

The timetable for the site visit inspection was developed after consideration of the establishment's compliance update information and discussions with the DI. The site visit inspection included a visual inspection of the laboratories and storage areas for human tissue and a review of governance documents and policies. An audit was undertaken of tissue samples held in the freezer, against electronic records, and no anomalies were found.

Interviews were undertaken with the DI, and three PDs responsible for different activities that may involve the use of human tissue.

Inspection findings

The HTA found the DI and the (Corporate) LH (CLH) to be suitable in accordance with the requirements of the legislation.

Compliance with HTA standards

All applicable HTA standards have been assessed as fully met.

Advice

The HTA advises the DI to consider the following to further improve practices:

No.	Standard	Advice
1.	GQ2	The DI is advised to introduce audits against the HTA standards into the audit schedule. This may be particularly useful after the revised standards come into force in April 2017.
2.	PFE3	As animal tissue is also stored at the establishment, to help reduce the risk of sample mix-ups and ensure staff are aware of the need to manage these samples in line with the regulatory requirements, the DI is advised to clearly label areas where human tissue is stored.

Concluding comments

During the site visit inspection of the establishment, several areas of good practice were noted:

- There is a good system of governance and quality and regular meetings ensure effective team working and communication between the staff;
- The establishment has regular Human Research Council meetings that oversee any work relating to human tissue;
- The role of the DI and CLH are formalised in the specific role holder functions; for example, the Head of Reduced Risk Substantiation is the DI, along with clarification of what is expected within the DI role ensures that the oversight of storage under the HTA licence is considered at a sufficiently senior level;
- Managing risks and tissue tracability on a project-by-project basis means that they are closely monitored as part of the regular project management meetings;
- The induction training for all staff, regardless of whether they work with human tissue or not, includes relevant information about the HTA and information on tissue sample management and governance.

The HTA has given advice to the DI with respect to the improving audits and freezer labelling.

The HTA has assessed the establishment as suitable to be licensed for the activities specified.

Report sent to DI for factual accuracy: 27 February 2017

Report returned from DI: 15 March 2017

Final report issued: 20 March 2017

Appendix 1: HTA standards

The HTA standards applicable to this establishment are shown below. Individual standards which are not applicable to this establishment highlighted as grey text.

Consent standards
C1 Consent is obtained in accordance with the requirements of the Human Tissue Act 2004 (HT Act) and as set out in the code of practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consent forms comply with the HTA's Code of Practice • Consent forms are in records and are made accessible to those using or releasing relevant material for a scheduled purpose • If the establishment obtains consent, a process is in place for acquiring consent in accordance with the requirements of the HT Act 2004 and the HTA's Codes of Practice • Where applicable, there are agreements with third parties to ensure that consent is obtained in accordance with the requirements of the HT Act 2004 and the HTA's Codes of Practice • Consent procedures have been ethically approved
C2 Information about the consent process is provided and in a variety of formats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard operating procedures (SOPs) detail the procedure for providing information on consent • Agreements with third parties contain appropriate information • Independent interpreters are available when appropriate • Information is available in suitable formats, appropriate to the situation • Consent procedures have been ethically approved
C3 Staff involved in seeking consent receive training and support in the implications and essential requirements of taking consent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard operating procedures (SOPs) detail the consent process • Evidence of suitable training of staff involved in seeking consent • Records demonstrate up-to-date staff training • Competency is assessed and maintained
Governance and quality system standards
GQ1 All aspects of the establishments work are supported by ratified documented policies and procedures as part of the overall governance process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and procedures are in place, covering all activities related to the storage of relevant material for research in connection with disorders, or the functioning, of the human body • Appropriate risk management systems are in place • Regular governance meetings are held; for example, health and safety and risk management

<p>committees, agendas and minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints system
<p>GQ2 There is a documented system of quality management and audit</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A document control system, covering all documented policies and standard operating procedures (SOPs). • Schedule of audits • Change control mechanisms for the implementation of new operational procedures
<p>GQ3 Staff are appropriately qualified and trained in techniques relevant to their work and are continuously updating their skills</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualifications of staff and training are recorded, records showing attendance at training • Orientation and induction programmes • Documented training programme, (e.g. health and safety, fire, risk management, infection control), including developmental training • Training and reference manuals • Staff appraisal / review records and personal development plans are in place
<p>GQ4 There is a systematic and planned approach to the management of records</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documented procedures for the creation, amendment, retention and destruction of records • Regular audit of record content to check for completeness, legibility and accuracy • Back-up / recovery facility in the event of loss of records • Systems ensure data protection, confidentiality and public disclosure (whistle-blowing)
<p>GQ5 There are documented procedures for distribution of body parts, tissues or cells</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A process is in place to review the release of relevant material to other organisations • An agreement is in place between the establishment and the organisation to whom relevant material is supplied regarding the tracking and use of material and eventual disposal or return
<p>GQ6 A coding and records system facilitates traceability of bodies, body parts, tissues and cells, ensuring a robust audit trail</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an identification system which assigns a unique code to each donation and to each of the products associated with it • An audit trail is maintained, which includes details of when and where the relevant material was acquired, the consent obtained, the uses to which the material was put, when the material was transferred and to whom

GQ7 There are systems to ensure that all adverse events are investigated promptly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corrective and preventive actions are taken where necessary and improvements in practice are made • System to receive and distribute national and local information (e.g. HTA communications)
GQ8 Risk assessments of the establishment's practices and processes are completed regularly and are recorded and monitored appropriately
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documented risk assessments for all practices and processes • Risk assessments are reviewed when appropriate • Staff can access risk assessments and are made aware of local hazards at training

Premises, facilities and equipment standards
PFE1 The premises are fit for purpose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A risk assessment has been carried out of the premises to ensure that they are appropriate for the purpose • Policies in place to review and maintain the safety of staff, authorised visitors and students • The premises have sufficient space for procedures to be carried out safely and efficiently • Policies are in place to ensure that the premises are secure and confidentiality is maintained
PFE 2 Environmental controls are in place to avoid potential contamination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documented cleaning and decontamination procedures • Staff are provided with appropriate protective equipment and facilities that minimise risks from contamination • Appropriate health and safety controls are in place
PFE3 There are appropriate facilities for the storage of bodies, body parts, tissues and cells, consumables and records.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant material, consumables and records are stored in suitable secure environments and precautions are taken to minimise risk of damage, theft or contamination • Contingency plans are in place in case of failure in storage area • Critical storage conditions are monitored and recorded • System to deal with emergencies on 24 hour basis • Records indicating where the material is stored in the premises

PFE 4 Systems are in place to protect the quality and integrity of bodies, body parts, tissues and cells during transport and delivery to a destination

- Documented policies and procedures for the appropriate transport of relevant material, including a risk assessment of transportation
- A system is in place to ensure that traceability of relevant material is maintained during transport
- Records of transportation and delivery
- Records are kept of any agreements with recipients of relevant material
- Records are kept of any agreements with courier or transport companies

PFE5 Equipment is appropriate for use, maintained, quality assured, validated and where appropriate monitored

- Records of calibration, validation and maintenance, including any agreements with maintenance companies
- Users have access to instructions for equipment and receive training in use and maintenance where appropriate
- Staff aware of how to report an equipment problem
- Contingency plan for equipment failure

Disposal Standards

D1 There is a clear and sensitive policy for disposing of human organs and tissue

- Documented disposal policy
- Policy is made available to the public
- Compliance with health and safety recommendations

D2 The reason for disposal and the methods used are carefully documented

- Standard operating procedures (SOPs) for tracking the disposal of relevant material detail the method and reason for disposal
- Where applicable, disposal arrangements reflect specified wishes

Appendix 2: Classification of the level of shortfall

Where the HTA determines that a licensing standard is not met, the improvements required will be stated and the level of the shortfall will be classified as 'Critical', 'Major' or 'Minor'. Where the HTA is not presented with evidence that an establishment meets the requirements of an expected standard, it works on the premise that a lack of evidence indicates a shortfall.

The action an establishment will be required to make following the identification of a shortfall is based on the HTA's assessment of risk of harm and/or a breach of the HT Act or associated Directions.

1. Critical shortfall:

A shortfall which poses a significant risk to human safety and/or dignity or is a breach of the Human Tissue Act 2004 (HT Act) or associated Directions

or

A combination of several major shortfalls, none of which is critical on its own, but which together could constitute a critical shortfall and should be explained and reported as such.

A critical shortfall may result in one or more of the following:

- (1) A notice of proposal being issued to revoke the licence
- (2) Some or all of the licensable activity at the establishment ceasing with immediate effect until a corrective action plan is developed, agreed by the HTA and implemented.
- (3) A notice of suspension of licensable activities
- (4) Additional conditions being proposed
- (5) Directions being issued requiring specific action to be taken straightaway

2. Major shortfall:

A non-critical shortfall that:

- poses a risk to human safety and/or dignity, or
- indicates a failure to carry out satisfactory procedures, or
- indicates a breach of the relevant CoPs, the HT Act and other relevant professional and statutory guidelines, or
- has the potential to become a critical shortfall unless addressed

or

A combination of several minor shortfalls, none of which is major on its own, but which, together, could constitute a major shortfall and should be explained and reported as such.

In response to a major shortfall, an establishment is expected to implement corrective and preventative actions within 1-2 months of the issue of the final inspection report. Major shortfalls pose a higher level of risk and therefore a shorter deadline is given, compared to minor shortfalls, to ensure the level of risk is reduced in an appropriate timeframe.

3. Minor shortfall:

A shortfall which cannot be classified as either critical or major, but which indicates a departure from expected standards.

This category of shortfall requires the development of a corrective action plan, the results of which will usually be assessed by the HTA either by desk based or site visit.

In response to a minor shortfall, an establishment is expected to implement corrective and preventative actions within 3-4 months of the issue of the final inspection report.

Follow up actions

A template corrective and preventative action plan will be sent as a separate Word document with both the draft and final inspection report. You must complete this template and return it to the HTA within 14 days of the issue of the final report.

Based on the level of the shortfall, the HTA will consider the most suitable type of follow-up of the completion of the corrective and preventative action plan. This may include a combination of

- a follow-up site-visit inspection
- a request for information that shows completion of actions
- monitoring of the action plan completion
- follow up at next desk-based or site-visit inspection.

After an assessment of your proposed action plan you will be notified of the follow-up approach the HTA will take.