

# Human Tissue Authority

## Board Meeting Conducted in Public

---

<b>Date:</b>	29 June 2023
<b>Paper reference:</b>	HTA 14/23
<b>Agenda item:</b>	8
<b>Author:</b>	Tom Billins
<b>Protective marking:</b>	OFFICIAL

---

## Establishing the HTA Insight Network

### Purpose of paper

1. To inform the Board of the Executive's plans to establish an Insight Network to support and strengthen the HTA's Horizon Scanning capability.

### Action required

2. The Board is invited to comment on the Executive's plans to establish an Insight Network.

### Background

3. In recent years the Life Sciences sector has grown, with innovation and the pace of change identifying emerging technologies and generating new products.
4. In May 2023, the Government Chief Scientific Advisor published the ['Pro-innovation Regulation of Technologies Review'](#). The review seeks to further support the growth and innovation of new technologies and ensure that regulation in this area is seen as an enabler of research and innovation.
5. To be an efficient and effective regulator the HTA needs to keep pace with change. It must also proactively anticipate and prepare for future changes. To do this, the HTA needs to further develop its Horizon Scanning activities and capabilities. The Horizon Scanning function is currently being revised and strengthened to ensure it is sufficiently forward looking to identify and respond to innovation and the pace of product development.

6. To ensure the Horizon Scanning function is proactively considering and responding to all relevant issues and future breakthroughs affecting HTA-regulated sectors, the Executive plans to form an Insight Network.
7. The Insight Network aims to bring together industry experts, professionals in life sciences and leaders in other relevant sectors, to capture and debate:
  - their vision for the future
  - the technologies and practices being developed, and
  - the changes that may be realistically delivered.

It is envisaged that the Insight Network will support the Executive to consider scientific, clinical, ethical and / or legal implications associated with issues and breakthroughs identified via Horizon Scanning. This will equip the Executive with the necessary information to decide where further exploration or joint working is required.

8. This paper sets out how the Insight Network will work to strengthen the HTA's Horizon Scanning capability. It has been informed by the practices of similar activities in other settings and by incorporating learning from other organisations in the health and care regulatory environment – including those that use similar networks to varying degrees to support and enhance their Horizon Scanning function.

## **The purpose and governance of the Insight Network**

### ***Purpose***

9. The purpose of the Insight Network is to provide the HTA with a unique perspective on the future of life sciences by helping to identify research, changes in practice and emerging technologies, which may alter how HTA-regulated activities are delivered in the future. The group will also play a vital role in proactively identifying potential opportunities that may be explored further or used to inform future strategy and policy.
10. The establishment of the Insight Network aims to bring together a small number of different specialists who cover areas within the scope of the HTA's regulation, are advocates of growth and innovation in life sciences, and who can act as professional connections with industry innovators. The network will help with identifying new and emerging priorities, scientific and clinical breakthroughs, and future technologies and products. It will also help to identify how the regulation of these areas may need to change to maintain quality standards, and continue to be responsive and relevant to the needs of the sectors.

11. The value of the Insight Network will be in the diversity of its membership and the sharing of professional and technical views. The network will provide virtual and in person forums to:

- identify any additional areas of consideration for the Executive (through a bi-annual summary report produced after network meetings)
- assist in the prioritisation of issues raised through the Horizon Scanning process, based on timelines for impact, the level of risk, and the likely impact on the research or commercial market (drawing on their own experiences to make these judgements)
- provide a view on items raised – from a regulatory and industry perspective – based on their expertise and knowledge, and
- highlight any issues that may impact or have implications for other regulators or organisations (such as the potential for regulatory overlap and information sharing to minimise duplication in data submissions).

12. It is anticipated that the scope and purpose of the Insight Network will help to strengthen the HTA's Horizon Scanning capabilities and strategic planning. The Policy and Development team will be able to draw on conversations with network members and the network's bi-annual summary reports to strengthen the insights gained from the Horizon Scanning process. This will also enable better informed prioritisation and greater clarity on areas to explore and act upon. Ultimately, the network will allow the HTA better to support and promote innovation, new technologies and new products in its sectors and life sciences overall.

13. Given its role is to provide insights to help navigate and support Horizon Scanning at the HTA, the Insight Network will not have any decision-making powers.

### **Governance**

14. The Insight Network will come together no more than twice a year; timed to coincide with strategic and business planning for the coming year(s). There will also be ongoing opportunity for the sharing of information with the Executive by individual members, as necessary. This will help the HTA to assure itself on its strategic direction of travel, its maintained credibility as a responsive regulator and to inform HTA strategy and annual business planning. Network members will also support the HTA in ensuring it is responsive to emerging practice and technologies through its regulatory model, engagement with stakeholders and management of potential risks. This frequency is seen in other organisations who generally meet 1-2 times a year with their designated network.

15. Members of the Insight Network will report their insights to the Executive. Meetings will be co-ordinated and supported by the Policy and Development team and chaired by the Director of Data, Technology and Development. This will ensure that those leading on Horizon Scanning among the Executive are able to inform and advise the Senior Management Team (SMT). In turn, SMT will consider how the HTA strategically approaches regulatory change and adapts to support innovation and the adoption of new technologies. Updates will also be provided to the Board by the Executive on an annual basis as part of an annual report on Horizon Scanning.
16. While the Insight Network is an informal group without decision-making powers, members of the network will need to abide by terms set by the HTA. Members will receive reimbursement for travel and subsistence. Further remuneration may be limited although this is being explored further.

### **Membership**

17. The network will be a diverse group that brings different perspectives together, allowing for rounded views on different subjects. The value of membership will be in the contribution made to ensuring that the HTA can meet the challenges presented by changes in technology, science and clinical practice.
18. To sufficiently support the Executive, the Insight Network should have a core set of members that span HTA-regulated sectors and a sample of the various professions within them (e.g., scientists, clinicians, ethicists, etc.). The membership may also seek to reflect representation of other professional and non-professional groups. The HTA seeks to demonstrate equality, diversity, and inclusion in how it operates, and this will be the ambition in composing the Insight Network.
19. Given the breadth of expertise required, it is envisaged that the Insight Network will comprise of around 12 members. Its size ensures that all members will be able to partake in discussions. This size is also consistent with similar groups and networks that support Horizon Scanning in other organisations.
20. As Horizon Scanning will identify new technologies and innovations in clinical practice, the Insight Network should allow for new members with the relevant expertise to be called upon (and subgroups established, where necessary). It is envisaged that core members of the Insight Network will be able to draw on their own networks to help identify these additional 'co-opted' members.
21. To ensure it is fit for function, the Policy and Development team will review the effectiveness of the Insight Network as part of the Horizon Scanning function once it has been in place for a year.

## Next steps

22. The Executive, taking into account comments from the Board, will continue to incorporate the Insight Network into the updated Horizon Scanning function and recruit members.
23. A paper will be presented to the Board on the revised Horizon Scanning function later in the year.