

Steering Group Meeting Minutes
27 August 2010
ESRC Genomics Forum, Edinburgh

Attendance

Present:

Kenneth Boyd (Chair, Steering Group)
Neva Haites (Chair, Health Policy Sub-Group)
Sarah Cunningham-Burley (Chair, Research Sub-Group)
Steve Sturdy (Gengage Grant Holder)

Apologies:

Mary Porteous
Vikki Entwistle
Gerry Graham
Jack Jackson (Chair, Education Sub-Group)

In attendance:

Kathryn Hunter (Gengage Network Officer)
James Kelly (Gengage Network Secretary)

1. Welcome and introductions

KB began the meeting by thanking those who were in attendance for coming and conveying apologies for committee members unable to attend.

KB also welcomed James Kelly (Gengage Network Secretary) to the meeting.

2. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting of 22 February 2010 were accepted.

KH gave a brief report on the Second Gengage conference, which was very well attended and received, and advised Steering Group members that the Conference report is now available on the Gengage website. KB congratulated the organising committee for a very good conference. KH noted that the only negative was that information about the conference, which was sent to general school administrative postal and email addresses, did not appear to have reached teachers in a timely manner, or at all. KB suggested that more effective ways of reaching teachers should be explored, including the possibility of setting up an informal sub-group to disseminate information to teachers.

ACTION: The possibility of setting up a dissemination sub-group to be included as an item for discussion on the next Education sub-group Meeting Agenda

3. Update on Sub-Group Activities

3.1 Health Policy Sub-Group

NH gave an update from the Health Policy Sub-group meeting held on 12 August 2010 at the ESRC Genomics Forum. She noted that a number of topics were proposed for the future work of the Sub-group, including brain banking and brain donation for research, as well as other tissue or organ donation generally. NH, SS and KH are to have further discussions and will develop a work plan for the Policy Sub-group to consider.

The next meeting of the Health Policy Sub-group will be in October (date TBC).

3.2 Education Sub-Group

In the absence of JJ, SS and KH gave a brief report of the activities of the Education Sub-group, in particular the Second Gengage Conference, on which the Education Sub-group took the lead. SS noted that teachers were impressed by the excellent resources provided at the conference and suggested that we should consider offering similar events in other locations in order to maintain the momentum. The Steering Group agreed that this possibility should be explored.

The next meeting of the Education Sub-group will be on 27 October 2010.

ACTION: Future events, building on the success of the Conference, to be included as an Agenda item for discussion at the next Education Sub-group meeting.

3.3 Research Sub-Group

SCB reported that the possibility of undertaking some public engagement work in collaboration with the HGC, as discussed at previous Steering Group meetings, is looking unlikely, as the HGC's work programme is currently on hold. There is some question as to whether public engagement work around (common) complex diseases will go ahead and whether it will be resourced.

A meeting of the Research Sub-group will be organised shortly to discuss the way forward in light of these developments.

ACTION: KH to liaise with SCB to set up a meeting of the Sub-group

4. Update on Staffing

KH introduced JK, who took up the position of Gengage Network Secretary in June 2010. JK gave a brief report on activities he has undertaken since he started, including enhancements to the website, updating the contacts database and assisting with the eBulletin and Newsletter. Following the earlier discussion about reaching teachers, NH noted that universities often have lists of teachers they contact regarding upcoming events etc. NH suggested that JK contact the appropriate staff member at Edinburgh and Aberdeen universities to see if it would be possible to forward information about Gengage resources and activities, which might be of interest to teachers, for dissemination on their distribution lists.

SS reported on the recent interviews for the position of Gengage Network Officer. There had been a good field and a candidate had been offered the position to start 13 Sept 2010. This would give the new officer a week hand-over time with KH, who is leaving to take up a Lectureship at Northumbria University.

KH said that she had thoroughly enjoyed working for Gengage and was sorry to be leaving. KB thanked KH for her service as Gengage Network Officer and wished her well in her new position.

5. Annual Reports

The Annual Reports from 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 were formally approved.

ACTION: SS to submit the Annual Reports.

6. Review Panel

The Review Panel, which had been deferred until after the Conference, will now proceed with the new Network Officer when she takes up post. Potential members of the panel have already been identified.

7. Work Plans and KPIs

There was a general discussion about Gengage's overall strategy for the remainder of the year, which encompassed items 7 and 8 on the Agenda.

SS commented that there is a need to consolidate Gengage's network and identity. There should be a focused series of events to bring the network together and secure new funding. He suggested that Gengage hold 4 or 5 events (the last one being the Third Annual Conference) similar to the Brain Bank event on different topics addressing issues around research and governance.

Steering Group members made a number of suggestions about potential topics for stand-alone events or events that could be held in collaboration with other groups or organisations. These included:

- Cord blood banking for research purposes
- Brain banking
- Pre implantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD)
- Over the counter genetic tests (paternity testing and/or OTC testing generally)
- Pharmaceuticals and side-effects

A number of potential collaborators were identified and included the HGC, Genetic Alliance UK, NICE, the Nuffield Council, SHIP, and the Dundee Medical School.

ACTION: SS to draft a paper for further discussion.

The Steering Group agreed that the KPIs should be maintained.

8. Sustainability and Collaborations (see above)

9. Infrastructure

SS noted that this is something Gengage will look to develop.

10. Dates for future meetings

Next meeting: January (date TBC)

ACTION: KH/JK to set up Doodle poll to canvass dates.