



Council Meeting Minutes

Telecon - Wednesday 18th October 2017

Apologies:

**Julie Brown, María Reyes, Miranda Langendam, Graziella Filippini,
Anne Lyddiatt**

Guests:

Karla Soares-Weiser Deputy Editor-in-Chief

1. Welcome, Apologies and Approval of the Agenda

Welcome by Fergus Macbeth.

- Apologies noted
- The agenda for the meeting was approved. No other items were raised for inclusion in AOB.

2. CRG Transformation Plan

Karla Soares-Weiser joined the call. Karla talked through the Structure and Function Implementation [Plan](#), which was approved by the Governing Board at the Global Evidence Summit (GES) in Cape Town, and is an open access document, setting out the main changes needed and to be in place in order to create the required Networks.

Karla explained the key areas. The creation of 8 Cochrane Review Networks and their thematic areas, which had been compiled from the results and parameters used in the Sustainability Review, and balanced using topics, size and number of reviews the groups produce, protocols and areas of vulnerability in the groups. Thirteen groups were identified as being vulnerable and more direct support is to be given to these. The current 51 groups would become 8 Networks.

The first key action to implement the plan, is the creation of an Editorial Board. This Board will be an advisory group to the Editor-in-Chief, David Tovey, on all areas of review quality. This would replace the current Co-Eds Executive. This Board would be made up of 13 members; consisting of 8 Network Senior Editors, to be recruited and appointed by the end of January 2018, a methodologist, an external member representing the end users and a representative from the Cochrane community with specific expertise in Knowledge Translation. The Board will be chaired by David Tovey, Editor-in-Chief and supported by Karla Soares-Weiser, Deputy Editor-in-Chief. The Board will be in place by the beginning of 2018. They will meet periodically online and are likely to meet face to face each year at the Colloquium.

A Senior Editor will work with one Network only and support the groups within that Network with their strategic decisions. They will receive funding to support their work scaled at one day per week of activity. Senior Editors will spend one day per month for the Editorial Board and are accountable to David Tovey. The methodologist, external member representing the end users and the representative from the Cochrane community with specific expertise in Knowledge Translation would work one day a month to the Editorial Board.

In addition, there will also be part time Associate Editors, accountable to the Senior Editor, dedicated to each of the Networks, who can assist with the triage and screening of reviews, to help establish good reviews and separate them from any problematic ones. Associate Editors may work with one or more Network, as well as the CEU. They will receive funding from the CET for 2.5 days per week, per Network.

The Senior Editor can sign off on a review for the Network, but David Tovey, as Editor-in-Chief, would retain the final sign off for the review. As currently, Co-Eds will continue to do most of the review's sign off. An example of when the Senior Editor should be responsible for signing off is where staff in the groups are also authors on reviews. We

encountered a number of challenges on this area, including keeping an independent process. Screening of reviews will continue in the same way and if a complaint is made and the review was not initially seen by the screening team, as part of the new complaints process, the screening team can then review and provide independent judgement.

Each CRG will have to re-accredit to continue to work as a CRG and the re-accreditation process will occur every 5 years. Each CRG will have to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Cochrane's Editor-in-Chief. A final version of the MoU document is currently being worked on. The UK based groups have a deadline for MoU completion by March 2018 and then it will be rolled out to others. As part of the re-accreditation process, there will need to be proof of leadership, what is expected from the co-ordinating editors and the groups Editorial Board. The CEU will support the groups with their strategic plans on prioritization of reviews, deliverables that the groups can commit to and any gaps the groups identify that they are unable to commit to. The Sustainability Review will continue to be regularly updated when identified issues have been reviewed and resolved with the groups.

A key focus is encouragement to the groups to work together and to seek solutions to any issues identified within their Network. The Council represent all areas of the community, so they can assist with relationship building and management and to help the groups work together.

The Council raised the question that if the CRGs have already had to go through the Sustainability Review process and are now being asked to complete an application process, could they go without an initial application and do the reapplication in 5 years' time, or sooner if circumstances were to change? This could help relieve administrative burden on the groups at this point. Karla advised that the information from the Sustainability Review had been compiled using internal systems and monitoring, not directly from the groups. Discussions with each group only concluded after the Sustainability Review was completed. The key will be the MoU completion for each group and these would be needed as soon as possible. Where appropriate, hosting institutions will also be invited to co-sign the MoU. The MoU template will be adjusted accordingly to fit all situations. It is also planned to start the re-accreditation process with those groups considered more vulnerable to ensure the right support is provided.

The Council asked how the Methods and Fields will interact with the Network? (See the sustainable review production chart of the Implementation Plan). Karla referred to changes to the screening process, tailored training and sharing of good practice across the groups. Information sharing, which should be easier to do across 8 Networks, and meeting the needs of the groups, as each will have a different focus and priorities. One of the priorities is the Knowledge Translation Strategy and the review production. Working together with the KT Strategy to identify models and provide guidance and support but giving the groups freedom to do things their own way. During the first year, implementation of policies will be a key area e.g. rejection policy and groups being aware they can reject reviews, and that there is an appeals and complaints process for this. There are lots of policies and for 2018 the key policies will be the rejection policy, conflict of interest, peer review and update classification. Negotiations have begun on appointment of a Methods Support Unit, which will be directed to the groups. The Unit will begin work at the start of 2019.

The focus in 2018 will be on structural changes and 2019 will be more around functional and how to make improvements on things such as the peer review process. The Editor-in-Chief, at the request of the Governing Board, is putting together a Content Strategy, for the near future and the long-term future, the types of reviews to be produced. This work has been started. In 2019, it will be linked to the work of the Networks.

It was established that the best way for the CEU and Council to work together on taking the plan forward, would be around communications and being transparent with information to ensure mechanisms are in place to deliver the plan and to meet the expectations of the community. The Council can respond to requests for advice on topics that cut across the whole community. Council members can consult with their groups and produce a paper or advice in response. The Council can assist with open and transparent discussions, to help identify issues and challenges being faced in the community and to find solutions together. An example would be how to improve authors experience in Latin America? What training is needed to speed up the review process and to improve reviews? While Karla has spoken to each of the groups, this would be difficult to do more than once a year, so the Council can be a useful channel and assist in an advisory capacity on a more regular basis.

As the Council only meet every 2 months via teleconference and face to face once a year, they have suggested that Karla can let them know when she needs Council input on any particular issues, as they arise. The Council could then offer a quick response to items by providing feedback from those group representatives on the Council, and if a more formal response is required, the Council can refer items to their communities for input and feedback, which can be done via email discussions and the use of Google Docs, should the requests for assistance not fall in line with Council teleconference meeting timeframes.

The new Editorial Board, advised by and working with Cochrane's new Scientific Committee, will shape and develop strategy and provide oversight of the implementation of the Transformation Programme and the performance of the Cochrane Library. The Council asked about the remit of the Scientific Committee against what the Council can provide help with? Karla confirmed for methodological items, it would be the Scientific Committee. It was agreed that one aspect the Council were well placed to assist with is the implementation of any major methodological changes and how to roll them out.

Fergus gave thanks to Karla for her presentation and time.

ACTION 1: Karla Soares-Weiser to advise the Council when their input is required on any items arising during the Structure and Function Implementation process

3. Review/follow up on minutes and actions from 22 August 2017 teleconference

Fergus went through the list of previous actions, arising from the last Council meeting. The table below outlines those actions which are still ongoing.

Update on Actions carried forward from previous meetings:

1.	CET to ensure that electronic DoI forms for the Council are established. Status: DoI forms not yet established but would be sent to Council members in due course
2.	The operations and membership of the Council is to be reviewed after 18 months. Status: Review due in Oct 2018
3.	The CET to work with the Co-Chairs to establish a communications plan to ensure that information on the activities of the Council, and on how to approach the Council, is easily available to the Cochrane communities. All members to ensure that their communities are informed about the activities of the Council, and that opportunities to consult are made available where appropriate. Status: The Council has its own webpage on the Cochrane Community website, containing the meeting papers, Membership of the Council, the Terms of Reference and it asks the community to submit any issues they would like the Council to discuss at future meetings. CEAD and the Co-Chairs to review active dissemination channels for Council news
4.	The CET and Co-Chairs to consider profile building options for the Council to help confirm its role to the communities. Status: To be explored once the Council's vision is confirmed
5.	Council members to actively canvass their communities and ask what they would like the Council to look at and offer input and feedback on. Status: Ongoing while the Council and its vision is established
6.	The CET to work with the Co-Chairs to establish a process for prioritizing issues referred to the Council. All Council members would be advised of all issues referred, but not every issue would be selected for detailed consideration. Status: No issues have been referred to the Council yet, so no prioritization has been required to date
7.	The Author representatives to work with the CET to establish a communications plan for authors, who are not represented by an Executive and do not have formal communication channels in place (such as the Digests disseminated to Cochrane Groups). Status: Maria Reyes and Julie Brown use the Cochrane Community website and the mailing lists. Maria and Julie to follow up with Nancy Owens at CEAD to establish the best form of author communications
8.	ME and Field representatives to try to estimate the scale of the problem of orphaned reviews outside the scope of any CRG.

	Status: Ongoing due to leave period since the last meeting
9.	CET to circulate Governing Board agendas and papers for future meetings, directly to the Council, as soon as these are available. Status: There is a teleconference in December. The next face to face meeting of the Governing Board will be in Lisbon in March 2018

There were no comments on the minutes from the last meeting, so these are approved.

Miranda Cumpston advised that the Knowledge Translation working groups, being co-ordinated by Sylvia de Haan, would be holding their first meetings from the end of October. Celeste, Lotty and Julie have volunteered, but more volunteers from the Council would be welcome and expressions of interest should be sent to Sylvia as soon as possible.

4. Review of Global Evidence Summit, Cape Town

Fergus referred to the notes he and Miranda Cumpston have produced, following the informal meeting of the Council at the Global Evidence Summit in Cape Town. It was established from the meeting in Cape Town, that the majority of Council members attend the colloquiums in their other roles, but the Council don't officially have a formal face to face meeting at the Colloquiums. Council members have asked for a more structured 'informal' meeting of the Council at the colloquiums and whether this meeting could be factored into the planning process for Edinburgh.

5. Clarifying the requirements in skills and experience for new author teams to support equitable decision making and clear expectations

The paper produced by Julie Brown, and discussed at the last meeting, has received additional comments from Miranda and Erik. This paper will therefore be further developed incorporating these comments.

ACTION 2: Julie and Fergus to further develop the 'Skills and Experience for new author teams' paper and circulate to the Council

6. Review the frequency of Council meetings

The Council agreed to retain the current pattern of their teleconferences, every 2 months for 90mins, until the next face to face meeting in Lisbon, March 2018, where it will be reviewed again.

ACTION 3: Elaine to finalise the date currently on hold in diaries for the February 2018 teleconference

7. Topics for future discussion

It was discussed how the CRG transformation process will affect authors and their concerns under the new CRG Networks. Author experience under the Structure & Function Implementation Plan, with a quick rejection process for reviews, might improve response rates and help speed up the process, but it may not necessarily enhance the author experience. As we are now in a transformation process it is hoped the author experience would improve under the Implementation Plan as the CRGS would have more resources and support from Senior Editors, available to authors in their Networks. It was agreed that the Council can help capture the issues and problems and suggest good practice, but it was whether the timing was right given the CRG process and that procedural changes are about to take place.

ACTION 4: Jordi and Miranda Cumpston to discuss author experience further, to identify anything the Council could follow up on

As some of the items the Council are currently looking at will change and be picked up in the Structure & Function Implementation process, they have agreed it is a 'wait and see' situation, particularly on items such as the author experience/rejection process, and Methods Groups and methodologists' collaboration across the community.

Fergus has spoken to Angela Webster about the Conflicts of Interest policy. The Council are well placed and would be willing to help with any work on the rephrasing of the policy, if asked to assist and do so by the Governing Board, to make it clearer and to perhaps include experience of dealing with particular cases with have not been straightforward.

Miranda advised that in connection with this the Council had not yet done a Declarations of Interest, as there is no standard form as yet. The policies are being worked on, so there is no action for the Council at this time.

8. Any Other Business

Fergus advised the Council that he was speaking to Mark Wilson on 19th October to share his 'Vision for the Council' paper, and to seek thoughts on how Mark sees the best way for the Council to work and the 3-way relationship between the central teams, Governing Board and Council. Fergus would also be speaking on 19th October to Jo Anthony, the Acting Head of Comms, to discuss profile building and helping to raise awareness of the Council and its role. Fergus said he would refer back to the Council after both meetings and with a redrafted version of his vision paper.

ACTION 5: Fergus to provide feedback to the Council, following his meetings with Jo Anthony and Mark Wilson on Thursday 19th October

ACTION 6: Fergus to use the Cape Town meeting notes and feedback from the meetings with Jo Anthony and Mark Wilson, to further develop his paper on the Vision of the Council and its working methods. The revised paper will then be circulated to the Council for comments

Erik has suggested changes to the structure of the template for all future Council papers. It was agreed that this would be brought back to the next Council meeting for further discussion.

ACTION 7: Elaine to add 'Structure of future Council papers' to the agenda for the December meeting

ACTION 8: Council Members to consider the proposed structure of the future Council papers ready for discussion at the next meeting

Miranda Cumpston advised that the meetings schedule for Lisbon was still fluid, so the date for the Council meeting has not yet been finalised. This would be communicated to the Council once confirmed.

Miranda also advised that she would be leaving Cochrane by the end of this year and therefore won't be attending Lisbon. A new CET support for the Council would be identified in due course.

---MEETING END---

Summary of Actions requested during this teleconference

Agenda Item	Action
2	1. Karla Soares-Weiser to advise the Council when their input is required on any items arising during the Structure and Function Implementation process
5	2. Julie and Fergus to further develop the 'Skills and Experience for new author teams' paper and circulate to the Council
6	3. Elaine to finalise the date currently on hold in diaries for the February 2018 teleconference (Done)
7	4. Jordi and Miranda Cumpston to discuss author experience further, to identify anything the Council could follow up on
8	5. Fergus to provide feedback to the Council, following his meetings with Jo Anthony and Mark Wilson on Thursday 19th October (Done)

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| 8. | 6. Fergus to use the Cape Town meeting notes and feedback from the meetings with Jo Anthony and Mark Wilson, to further develop his paper on the Vision of the Council and its working methods. The revised paper will then be circulated to the Council for comments (Done) |
| 8 | 7. Elaine to add 'Structure of future Council papers' to the agenda for the December meeting (Done) |
| 8 | 8. Council members to consider the proposed structure of the future Council papers ready for discussion at the next meeting |
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