Cochrane Cancer Network
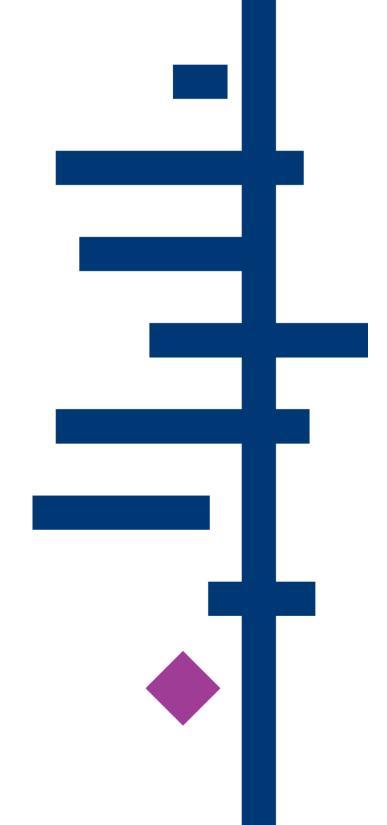
Strategic Workplan
2018-2020

**Trusted evidence.
Informed decisions.
Better health.**

Contents

1 Introduction

Cochrane Review Networks have been formed to help overcome the challenges that Cochrane faces in review production, ensuring that high quality reviews are produced through timely editorial publication processes and guided by prioritisation of topics of interest to stakeholders. This strategic plan outlines planned activities of the Cochrane Cancer Network to support the work of Cochrane Review Groups that produce reviews related to cancer. These activities are planned for the period of two years covering September 2018 through August 2020.

1.1 Background on Cochrane Cancer Network

The Cochrane Cancer Network constitutes seven Cochrane Review Groups (CRGs).

Group	Scope
Breast Cancer	Prevention, early detection, treatments, follow-up care and supportive practices for women diagnosed with breast cancer.
Childhood Cancer	Interventions and diagnosis for cancer in children and young adults with respect to prevention, treatment, diagnosis, supportive care, psychosocial care, palliative and terminal care, nursing care and late effects of treatment.
Colorectal Cancer	Interventions relating to colorectal disease, appendiceal disease small bowel disease, surgical aspects of inflammatory bowel diseases, peritoneal diseases and abdominal hernia diseases.
Gynaecological, Neuro-oncology and Orphan Cancer	Providing reliable evidence required to make important decisions on issues concerning Gynaecological cancers, Neuro-oncology and related topics.
Haematological Malignancies	Diagnosis and treatment of adults with haemato-oncological diseases, including leukaemia and lymphoma as well as non-oncological haematological diseases such as aplastic anaemia.
Lung Cancer	Diagnosis and treatment of lung cancer and pleural mesothelioma.
Urology	Health care interventions and diagnostic accuracy for prostatic diseases, male sexual dysfunction, urology-related renal topics and urologic cancers.

The Network structure provides an opportunity to further strengthen the scientific and clinical impact of the reviews published by the groups. The Network Strategic Plan complements the strategic plan for each individual review group headed by its Coordinating Editor.

Each of the CRGs have had the opportunity to discuss their ideas and expectations of the CRG transformations through Network teleconference and via email with the Senior Editor and Associate Editor. A survey was circulated to gain insight into expectations and needs of each CRG to inform the Network strategic plan and understand existing prioritization processes of review topics within each CRG. Key messages included that:

- All 7 CRGs stated that a key expectation from the Senior Editor/Associate Editor and Cochrane central executive was enhanced collaboration and communication.

- The highest rated desired achievements across the Network were collaborative projects and enhanced collaboration and communication.

- Three out of seven CRGs have implemented a prioritization process for their review topics.

1.2 Network leadership and support

The Cochrane Cancer Network is led by a Senior Editor, Nicole Skoetz. In her role as Senior Editor, Nicole will take primary responsibility in relation to strategic and operational activities to ensure the Objectives and Activities as outlined within this plan are addressed. She will serve as a member of the Editorial Board and contribute to developing the strategy and monitoring of the Cochrane Library. She will also liaise between the Network and the Editor in Chief, the Cochrane Executive Team, and Centres in relation to training, technology, knowledge translation, and innovations in Cochrane reviews. She will have opportunity to draw on support from the Methods Support Unit.

The Associate Editor, Sarah Hodgkinson, will serve in an operational role to support Review Groups as relates to the objectives and activities as outlined within. These tasks include identifying quality issues in reviews, providing editorial support, identifying and supporting implementation of mechanisms to ensure high quality review standards and editorial processes, and fostering communication within the Network and between the Network and other Cochrane groups.

Additional support for the production of priority reviews within the Network will be provided by The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Network Support Fellows. Support might take a variety of forms, such as helping with prioritization activities, training, or identification of stakeholders to aid dissemination of reviews.

1.3 Governance and management

The Senior Editor is accountable to the Editor in Chief of the Cochrane Library, while the Associate Editor is accountable to the Senior Editor. Review Groups are accountable to the Editor in Chief via the Senior Editor. Senior Editors, with the Editor in Chief, are responsible for ensuring that each Review Group has a five-year accreditation process and any accountabilities of Review Groups to funding agencies are met. Parent institutions of Network leadership personnel hold no governance position in relation to Network activity.

2 Objectives and Workplan

2.1 Preamble

Five main objectives have been identified to guide the work of the Cancer Network in supporting the member Cochrane Review Groups (CRGs):

1. Supporting review production and capacity
2. Evaluating Network scope and prioritisation of topics
3. Fostering collaboration within the Network and with the wider Cochrane community
4. Supporting knowledge translation to increase the impact of Cochrane reviews
5. Ensuring accountability and sustainability of the Network

Activities outlined below represent the key items that the Network will focus on.

2.1.1 Objective 1. Support Review Production and Capacity

The focus of this objective is to put processes and activities in place to ensure the development of high quality reviews in a timely manner, consistent and improved editorial processes, and to identify capacity-building needs and opportunities to accomplish those tasks.		
Identified tasks to address	Planned approach(es)	Implementation plan and other considerations
Identify differences in editorial processes	Mapping editorial processes and information gathering: • to compare editorial procedures across groups. • to share good practice. • to identify areas where support or learning is required. Screening of reviews by Associate Editor to include information gathering of: • good practice examples • areas for improvement • common errors.	Contact all Network CRGs and ask to share existing quality standards/checklists used. Additional information gathering as appropriate (via email or shared google documents/calls or face to face). Collate information gathered to guide shared learning and dissemination of guidance. Screening of reviews will continue as previously agreed with individual review groups.
Promoting and sharing good practice in reviews to maintain high quality	Voluntary editorial working group to share knowledge and expertise. Focussed sessions with one topic per	Every other month or quarterly editorial working group – frequency to be decided.

5

	meeting: • to disseminate new guidance. • for CRGs to share good practise and lessons learnt. • to discuss potential collaborative projects e.g. methods for narrative synthesis, ROBINS-I. • share experience of complex reviews (NMA/prognostic DTA etc). • identifying potential mentorship across reviews. These sessions could also lead to a series of FAQs.	Topics to be suggested by CRGs or via the information gathering exercise "differences in editorial processes" task above. Circulate to CRGs the list of topics and dates (ensure times vary to allow attendance at least once a year for those in southern hemisphere). Determine whether outreach to relevant Methods Group is needed. Record session and circulate notes. Revisit and evaluate the frequency and format of the group after 3 meetings.
Support CRG editorial teams with individual reviews	Individual CRG teleconferences to: • identify examples of good practice. • discuss challenges and proposed solutions. • discuss individual reviews or feedback to authors. • to provide specific methodological support e.g. statistical support.	Frequency to be determined in collaboration with CRG (or join existing CRG editorial meetings). Record the sessions and make them available to the CRG afterwards if desired. Ensure Senior Editor and Associate Editor respond to queries and provide support, e.g. early screening of reviews. Refer as appropriate to support from methods groups, central statistical support or complex review unit.
Disseminating guidance and promoting new methods	Ensure circulation of new methods to the Network (via Network email lists). Support learning and development for complex review e.g. training for authors and CRG staff in critiquing prognostic review methods and	Associate Editor to circulate new guidance via Network email lists. Liaise with prognostic implementation group regarding guidance and training development e.g. protocols. Engage with relevant methods

	complex/qualitative methods. To be achieved though working group webinars/shared learning/mentorship. To develop capacity for: • routine publication of complex reviews, focussing on prognostic methods. • living systematic reviews for topics where new trials are expected. • alternative review formats.	groups, including rapid review, prognostic methods group and piloting different review formats once available (e.g. as developed by Sarah Rosenberg). Encourage sharing of knowledge from those with experience of living systematic reviews across the Network.
Building capacity for complex reviews and sharing knowledge and experience.	Explore ways to identify and map titles, protocols and reviews of complex methods in the cancer Network (e.g. prognostic, diagnostic, network meta-analysis, living systematic reviews). Explore methods to communicate existing knowledge and expertise in complex methods across the Network, including a database, emails or webinars.	Consider use of emails generated from workflows to alert the Network when complex reviews are published.

2.1.2 Objective 2. Evaluate Network scope and prioritisation of topics

The focus of this objective is two-fold: (1) for Networks to evaluate scope, coverage, and potential gaps of the Network as a whole and (2) to specify what high priority questions/themes will be undertaken to produce reviews that cross-cut CRGs (including CRGs outside of Network) and are completed in a short time period, with support from the Fast Track Service and the time of the Network Support Fellows.		
Identified tasks to address	Planned approach(es)	Implementation plan and other considerations
Establish Network scope and identify areas of overlap or gaps in coverage	Information gathering across groups to map existing coverage. Identify gaps within the	Identified as low priority at Edinburgh Colloquium (to be revisited in 2019). Collaborative project with

	cancer Network and overlap across other Networks.	support from Senior Editor, Associate Editor and Network Support Fellow. Discussion across Network, potential topic for an editorial working group meeting. Support opportunities for cross CRG projects/reviews.
Support CRGs to develop priority setting processes for new and updates of reviews.	Consult with all CRGs and request any documentation they have on their own prioritisation process. Review and support implementation of the 'Cochrane Guidance on Priority Setting' document. Gather information from stakeholders e.g. existing UK NHS and global priorities Support development of specific guidance for the Network (if required), which may include: • Good practise examples • Options for 'mandatory' and 'desirable' processes.	A survey has been conducted and results circulated to the Network (completed). Collaboration across groups, with potential for those with established processes to take the lead. Consider having a Network theme for prioritisation e.g. cancer care in the elderly. Support from the Network Fellow (particularly for groups with no established prioritisation process). Collaboration with stakeholders (e.g. guideline developers/ WHO essential medicines list / James Lind Alliance / UICC) to ensure priorities are aligned with UK NHS and/or global priorities. Consider use of metrics and surveillance of new trials to inform update prioritisation processes.
Assist CRGs in publishing individual high priority reviews.	CRGs will be requested to identify their top priority reviews and highlight whether they require additional support or if the reviews are as candidates for the Fast-Track Service. Use Fast Track service and NIHR Network to support and accelerate publication of high impact and high priority reviews across the Network.	Senior Editor, Associate Editor and Network Support Fellow will provide support and guidance, when necessary to help CRGs complete reviews that are high priority. Candidate reviews will be completed as managed by the author team and CRG. Fast-Track team will offer editorial support to the relevant CRG e.g. range from

		managing the editorial process centrally, to early screening, or managing the peer review process.

2.1.3   Objective 3. Foster collaboration with Network and wider Cochrane community

The focus of this objective is implement regular communication with CRGs to ensure group cohesion and to address, in a timely fashion, the needs and priorities of member CRGs. Connection with the wider Cochrane community is also needed.

Identified tasks to address	Planned approach(es)	Implementation plan and other considerations
Establish viable structure and communication routines.	Two email lists for internal communication between editors in the Network have been set up. Individual CRG calls with Senior and Associate editor, as required, to discuss any specific issues or individual reviews. Quarterly Network Newsletter (format and content to be agreed). A bi-annual face-to-face meeting at the Colloquium and the Governance Meeting. Every other month or quarterly Editorial Working group (as described in objective 1: voluntary attendance with a single topic for discussion).	Associate Editor to circulate notes of meetings. Evaluation and revision of communication practices at face-to-face meetings. Opportunity for sharing knowledge, expertise and lessons learned (through email/newsletter, calls or working groups).
Collaborative learning across groups and other Networks	Explore opportunities for shared learning and cross cutting reviews across groups e.g. cancer screening across solid malignancies. Explore use of forums/ message board/ virtual platform/ social media for sharing experiences, including a repository of good practices, guidance and examples. Support collaboration with fields or CRGs outside of Network e.g. pain, palliative	Senior Editor, Associate Editor and Network Support Fellow to request, collate and consider feedback on how to improve collaboration across the Network. Consider approaches used by other Networks.

	and supportive care. Acknowledge existing collaborations and meeting e.g. close working of groups around Oxford and meeting for MEs and ISs.	

2.1.4 Objective 4. Support knowledge translation to increase the impact of reviews

The focus of this objective is to outline a plan to increase the profile, use, and impact of Cochrane reviews produced by Networks by determining integrated knowledge translation and dissemination activities and ensuring access in appropriate formats for key stakeholders.

Identified tasks to address	Planned approach(es)	Implementation plan and other considerations
Actively engage stakeholders to raise the profile of Cochrane reviews	Identify stakeholders across the Network.	Support from the Network Fellow to gather information and collate a list of stakeholders. Discuss the list with CRGs and ask for additional suggestions to further develop the list relevant to the Network.
Increase the profile, use, and impact of Cochrane reviews	Engage with the KT department to: • Share resources from KT Strategy group. • Discuss current dissemination processes • Explore future opportunities. Share documentation and good practise examples for review dissemination both within the Network and across Networks. Request feedback from CRGs on how to improve process and associated documents. Support co-publication of Cochrane Corners in cancer journals like JAMA Oncology or JNCI. Explore other similar opportunities for co-publication of short formats.	Senior Editor and Associate Editor to provide support for dissemination of high priority and high impact reviews. Network Support Fellow to support co-publications and work on exemplars for each journal. Consider collaboration with fields where appropriate. Discuss innovative methods for review dissemination and share ideas across the Network.

	Consider links with Wikipedia.	

2.1.5 Objective 5. Ensure accountability and sustainability of the Network

The focus of this objective is to outline information related to accountability to Cochrane and funders over the next two years and determinations of sustainability for future consideration.

Identified tasks to address	Planned approach(es)	Implementation plan and other considerations
Monitoring and activity reports to Cochrane.	Use Cochrane template.	Request information from CRGs to input into report. Timelines to be agreed. Consider monitoring and reporting requirements from local funders and avoid duplication of requests to minimise burden.
Mechanism to facilitate long term funding.	Formal and informal discussions. Support group's commitments to funders as needed. Support environmental scan to identify funding opportunities.	Senior Editor to circulate relevant funding opportunities to CRGs from the received via the Cochrane Development Committee. Ask CRGs for input regarding websites to screen for funding opportunities. Consider current (to 2020) versus future opportunities (beyond 2020). Provide letters of support for funding opportunities as requested by CRGs.
Develop CRG accreditation process; ensure CRGs sign Collaboration Agreement.	Liaise with CET for development.	As informed by CET.
Support succession plans.	CRGs to share existing guidance for succession planning. Work with CRGs to forecast editorial team changes (retirements, etc.) and assist in transitions where appropriate.	Senior and Associate Editors to summarise existing plans and share with the Network as appropriate.
Develop workplan for Network Support Fellow	To be developed in conjunction with the line manager. To consider skills of the Network Support Fellow	Network Support Fellow to be based with Cochrane Gynaecological, Neuro-oncology and Orphan Cancers.

	once recruited and how best they can support the priorities of the Network. Consider use of metrics to justify continued funding of post to the NIHR.	

3 Output Tracking

3.1 Preamble

This section summarises the activities undertaken for the period of September 2018 through August 2020.

3.1.1 Objective 1. Support Review Production and Capacity

Activity	Purpose	Anticipated outputs	Year 1/2: Actuals	Qualitative evaluation of activities: Senior & Associate Editors / CRGs
Map editorial processes and compare editorial procedures across groups. Establish an Editorial Working Group and conduct focussed sessions. Screening of reviews by Associate Editor.	To identify differences in editorial processes. Identify areas where support or learning is required. Promoting and sharing good practice in reviews to maintain high quality.	A summary of differences and good practices as a basis for formulation of editorial standards for the network. Establish an Editorial Working Group: (3 – 6 per year). Shared document of frequently asked questions. Screening reports (approx. 1 per week).		
Conduct individual CRG teleconferences	Support CRG editorial teams with individual reviews.	Teleconferences to be held on request with Senior Editor and Associate Editor for specific review issues.		
Editorial working group (invite methods groups e.g. prognostic methods group, rapid review group, Sarah	Share learning and good practices of complex reviews e.g. prognostic reviews, rapid or living	A summary of existing CRG review resources, including exemplars.		

Rosenberg to present pilot once available) Associate Editor to circulate new guidance documents when available.	systematic reviews. To develop capacity for potential collaborative projects. To develop capacity for routine publication of complex reviews, focussing on prognostic method or different review formats. Disseminating guidance and promoting new methods.	Meeting notes and recordings from editorial working groups. Shared document for details of CRG expertise in complex reviews and good practice examples. All Network emails to disseminate guidance and new methods.		
Gather existing experience of complex methods across the Cancer Network (e.g. prognostic, diagnostic, network meta-analysis, living systematic reviews. Identify whether regular email alerts are possible containing new titles, protocols, reviews from the cancer network	To develop capacity for routine publication of complex reviews, focussing on prognostic method or different review formats. To gain an overview of experience of complex reviews within the network and share knowledge and expertise.	A shared document of CRG expertise in complex reviews and good practice examples.		

3.1.2 Objective 2. Evaluate Network scope and prioritization of topics

Activity	Purpose	Anticipated outputs	Year 1/2: Actuals	Qualitative evaluation of activities: Senior & Associate Editors / CRGs
Information gathering across groups to map existing coverage	Establish Network scope and identify areas of overlap or gaps in	Map of Network scope with identification of gaps and overlap.		

(content). Identify gaps within the cancer Network and overlap across other Networks.	coverage.			
Consult with all CRGs and request any documentation they have on their own prioritisation process. Review and support implementation of the 'Cochrane Guidance on Priority Setting' document. Collaboration with stakeholders (e.g. guideline developers/ WHO essential medicines list / James Lind Alliance / UICC) to ensure priorities are aligned with UK NHS and/or global priorities.	Assist in CRG priority setting. To support identification and prioritization of review topics for the cancer Network.	Summary of existing processes and share best practice examples. Summary of stakeholder priorities relevant to the cancer Network.		
Ask CRGs to identify their top priority reviews and determine any additional support required or if the reviews are as candidates for the Fast-Track Service.	Assist CRGs in publishing individual high priority reviews.	Identify candidate for Fast-Track service. Perform early review screening.		

3.1.3   Objective 3. Foster collaboration with Network and wider Cochrane community

Activity	Purpose	Anticipated outputs	Year 1/2: Actuals	Qualitative evaluation of activities: Senior & Associate Editors / CRGs
Create a communication plan, including email lists, face-to-face meetings and explore channels for direct communication across CRGs.	Ensure efficient communication across the Network and wider Cochrane community (e.g other Networks, fields).	Up-to-date email lists for internal communication in the Network. Two face meetings at the Colloquium and the Governance Meeting (with agenda and post meeting notes). Establish a mechanism for lateral communication across the Network.		

3.1.4   Objective 4. Support knowledge translation to increase the impact of reviews

Activity	Purpose	Anticipated outputs	Year 1/2: Actuals	Qualitative evaluation of activities: Senior & Associate Editors / CRGs
Develop a knowledge translation plan. Identify and actively involve stakeholders.	To increase awareness, use and impact of Network reviews.	Identification of current processes and a summary of good practice guidance for dissemination of reviews. List of stakeholders relevant for the Network.		
Share resources from KT Strategy group.	To increase awareness, use and impact of Network reviews.	KT strategies disseminated.		

3.1.5 Objective 5. Ensure accountability and sustainability of the Network

Activity	Purpose	Anticipated outputs	Year 1/2: Actuals	Qualitative evaluation of activities: Senior & Associate Editors / CRGs
Accountability and sustainability monitoring	To ensure long term viability of Network and its CRGs.	Monitoring and activity reports to Cochrane.		
Identify existing guidance for succession planning in individual CRGs Assist in transitions where appropriate	To ensure long term viability of Network and its CRGs.	Overview of succession planning. Overview of current situations in CRGs and forecast of editorial team changes.		
Develop workplan in conjunction with the line manager for Network Support Fellow.	To ensure long term viability of Network and its CRGs.	Workplan for Network Support Fellow.		
Develop CRG accreditation process; ensure CRGs sign Collaboration Agreement.	To provide information on CRG sustainability (availability of resources and leadership to deliver high quality reviews).	Signed Collaboration Agreements between CRGs, Editor-in-Chief and host institutions.		
Environmental scan for funding opportunities. Support group's commitment to funders as needed	To create awareness of relevant funding opportunities for CRG activities and facilitate long term funding.	Compiled list of relevant funding opportunities. Letters of support for funding opportunities as requested by CRGs.		