



**Paper for discussion: Further considerations for a SACN
communications strategy**

Agenda Item: 2

Please see attached paper for discussion.

SACN Communication/publication strategy

CURRENT SITUATION

1. Currently, when published, SACN reports are posted on the SACN website. They are also printed in hard copy and remain available for purchase from the Stationary Office.
2. Some reports are publicised with an FSA press release but this is done on an ad hoc basis.
3. Standard practice for DH is that when a report is published they are made available on the DH web page and a copy is sent to Ministers, CMOs and other relevant officials. It is also standard practice to put out a press release alongside each report.

ISSUES

4. *COMMUNICATION STRATEGY* – Members have expressed concern that there is no formal guidance for a process to establish what goes into the public domain and when, or to decide/judge which media is the most appropriate for dissemination i.e. radio, internet, press releases.
5. *PUBLICATION STRATEGY* – In addition, there is a need for a standardised approach for publicising SACN reports, with formal dissemination mechanisms so that they are cited as authoritative documents and experts and other interested parties, who might not be actively following SACN's activities, are alerted to them.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY CONSIDERATIONS

SACN STAKEHOLDERS

6. There is a need to consider who SACN's key stakeholders are and to establish networks to alert them, thus ensuring the correct people are being notified.
7. Key stakeholders may include academics, health professionals, contract holders, health journalists, WHO, industry representatives, NGOs and National Government.

FSA COMS strategy and handling of SACN reports in the Agency

8. The FSA COMS strategy is high level and does not give guidance about handling of specific issues, as this is decided on a case by case basis.
9. SACN requested clarity about whether SACN reports automatically go to the FSA Board. This is done on a case by case basis determined by FSA officials.

SACN WEBSITE

10. The SACN website is currently being re-designed and will include one main mailing list feature, which will enable further dissemination of information.
11. The mailing list option will be available so that subscribers can be notified when a report has been published and papers are posted on the SACN site. Subscribers will also have the option to specify and receive information on their area of interest.

PUBLICATIONS STRATEGY CONSIDERATIONS

ISBN numbers and hard copy reports

13. All SACN reports published through The Stationery Office are issued with an ISBN number. Annual reports are published by the Agency and therefore do not have an ISBN number.
14. There is an aim to move away from publishing hard copies of reports and to focus on web based publications. This may raise issues to do with accessibility. It should be noted however, that there is a legal obligation for the Agency to produce hard copies of the annual report.

Open access

15. Open access (OA) is immediate and unrestricted online access to digital scholarly material, primarily peer-reviewed research articles in journals (see Annex 1 for further detail) and is a potential forum for publishing SACN reports.

Web based publishing site

16. Another option is to place SACN reports on to a web based publishing site which will enable them to be cited as other routine scientific publications, for example UKPMC (see Annex 2 for further detail).

NEXT STEPS

SACN members are asked to consider each of the following possible next steps:

- Who are SACN's key stakeholders.?
- For the Secretariat to have further engagement with FSA COMS colleagues (forward plan of any forthcoming SACN reports and COMS representatives to attend meetings, as necessary, to advise on handling. COMS to feedback after an activity, e.g. hits on website etc.).
- Promotion of SACN on a rolling basis to all interested parties (possible yearly article in academic publications).
- For the Secretariat to further discuss with SAC [DN need to put in full as SACN members probably wont have heard of this) working group about whether there is any potential to have a cross FSA-Committee COMS strategy.
- Would publishing of SACN reports via Open Access or other web based publishing sites be appropriate?
- Do types of report (full risk assessment and position statements) need separate consideration?

- The possibility of dissemination information via the Nutrition Society.

Annex 1

Open Access

1. The first major international statement on open access was the Budapest Open Access Initiative in February 2002. This provided a definition of open access, and has a growing list of signatories. Two further statements followed: the Bethesda Statement on Open Access Publishing in June 2003 and the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities in October 2003¹.
2. An open access publication is one that meets the following two conditions²:
 - The author(s) and copyright holder(s) grant(s) to all users a free, irrevocable, worldwide, perpetual (for the lifetime of the applicable copyright) right of access to, and a licence to copy, use, distribute, perform and display the work publicly and to make and distribute derivative works in any digital medium for any reasonable purpose, subject to proper attribution of authorship, as well as the right to make small numbers of printed copies for their personal use.
 - A complete version of the work and all supplemental materials, including a copy of the permission as stated above, in a suitable standard electronic format is deposited immediately upon initial publication in at least one online repository that is supported by an academic institution, scholarly society, government agency, or other well-established organisation that seeks to enable open access, unrestricted distribution, interoperability, and long-term archiving.

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_access

² MRC Website 2007 -

<http://www.mrc.ac.uk/PolicyGuidance/EthicsAndGovernance/OpenAccessPublishingandArchiving/DefinitionofOpenAccessPublishing/index.htm>

Annex 2UKPMC

1. One such site is the UK PubMed Central (UKPMC), which is a developing UK biomedical digital repository, which includes copies of peer-reviewed papers and reports and other scientific material that are freely available to anyone who has access to the internet. UKPMC is based on PubMed Central (PMC) and the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) free digital archive of biomedical and life sciences journal literature.
2. NIH has nominated for its scientists and grant holders to deposit copies of their publications within 12 months of publication. MRC and other UK agencies have similarly recently established UKPMC as the repository for copies of their scientists and grant holders papers, to be deposited within 6 months of publication.
3. UKPMC is part of a network of PMC International (PMCI) repositories. PMCI is a collaborative effort between the US National Library of Medicine (NLM), the publishers whose journal content makes up the PMC archive, and organisations in other countries that share NLM's interest in archiving life sciences literature.
4. UKPMC is fully searchable and will provide context-sensitive links to other online sources, such as gene and chemical compound databases. Currently all documents in UKPMC are linked to databases hosted by the National Centre for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) at the US National Institutes of Health (NIH). There are plans to provide additional links to resources hosted in the UK and Europe which are of interest to the UK biomedical research community.
5. In addition to mirroring PMC, UKPMC also provides a manuscript submission system (UKMSS) to enable researchers, funded by the UKPMC Funders Group, to deposit articles that have been accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. As of January 2007, this system holds details of around 15,000 grants awarded to over 8000 researchers.