

SAGE Process Group  
14 January 2010  
Notes of meeting  
Approved at meeting 16 Feb 2010

Present at the meeting

- David Collier – DC (Golder Associates – GA)
- Stuart Conney - SC (Department of Health – DH)
- Mike Dolan - MD ( Mobile Operators Association - MOA)
- Caroline Hampden-White - CHW (CHILDREN with LEUKAEMIA – CwL) (from item 5)
- Pat Keep – PK (Department of Health – DH) (from item 5)
- Jill Meara - JM (Health Protection Agency - HPA)
- Graham Philips – GP (Radiation Research Trust – RRT)
- John Swanson - JS (National Grid - NG)
- Pete Wilkinson – PW (Golder Associates - GA)

Apologies

Nigel Westaway

Other acronyms:

SF=Science Forum, DWG=Distribution Working Group, PG=Process Group, MG=Main Group

1 The meeting was held at MOA, Russell Square House, Chaired by Mike. Notes were taken by John.

2 Agenda review

Agenda circulated in email from David was agreed.

3 Notes of 6 Jan conference call

Approved.

4 Actions from 6 Jan conference call

DECC and CLG: ongoing (Pat has made approaches). No response yet on whether they coming to Jan MG but Scottish Government are.

5 Overview of programme

We reviewed the programme. As a result of the last two days' meetings there are proposals for:

- an extra DWG meeting for drafting/editing round about 20 March (aiming to have iterated the draft text already and to use this meeting to finalise drafting)
- an extra SF meeting, to carry forward the discussion, perhaps on a single issue and with a different “feel”, rather than for drafting purposes

We discussed how the decisions we need to make about the form of the final SAGE Report interact with the timetable.

We expect that the April MG meeting will have seen a nearly-final form of the Report, definitely including the DWG material plus whatever SF material is decided upon, and will expect to sign it off. The March drafting meeting will become an overall drafting meeting, spending most of the time on the DWG sections but covering the whole Report, and therefore open to all members, but with a special need for DWG members to attend.

We fixed the drafting meeting for 17 March and the MG meeting for 27 April. David will organise.

Action DC

6 Mechanics of the drafting process

We should aim to have gone through as many iterations before the March drafting meeting as possible. This will have thrown up any issues which go beyond purely textual/linguistic and actually need discussing. John will compile a list of such issues as they arise.

Action JS

John will be doing the actual drafting and will do that alone, but we need at least one other person explicitly taking the responsibility of monitoring comments, ensuring issues don't get forgotten, etc. Graham will take the responsibility for checking (with an understanding that Caroline will assist). David will provide the administrative support to ensure that people don't get missed out etc.

Action GP & DC

The document that John will be drafting will be intended to be the draft of the final report from SAGE to Government (rather than attempting to draft separate reports to MG and then from MG to Government). The majority of this will be the DWG material but within a structure that allows for some SF material to be included. The nature and extent of the SF material will be decided by January MG.

DWG had discussed the possibility of external peer review of the work we have done. We recognised this would be difficult on the timescales. IET had been suggested. Paul Bicheno already represents IET at the technical level on SAGE and David would alert him to the possibility of him asking appropriate colleagues or member groups to review the report.

Action DG

## 7 Budget

David reported there was about £50k left, out of the contracted £240k budget. The full budget allowance for the whole two years was £360k. The Funders wanted to leave enough money from this budget to permit whatever activity on "SAGE 3" turned out to be necessary.

DH are supportive of SAGE continuing (they are keen on stakeholder engagement and also on considering social equality as well as financial issues). That does not guarantee that further funding will be forthcoming but is encouraging. It would help them to have specific proposals and to relate these to identified gaps in knowledge.

We need to raise properly and thoroughly the issues around what "SAGE 3" should consist of at the January MG meeting, and then do some work on this between January and April, so that the April MG meeting is in a position to make decisions and move forward without a hiatus. David will build this into the January MG agenda and also feed in the relevant issues that have emerged from SF and DWG.

Action DWG

John will incorporate a section in the draft Report on ideas for things that need addressing in the future and this could also be discussed at the March drafting meeting.

Action JS

## 8 DWG

There had been pleasing progress but John noted that there are a number of underlying issues which we have so far side-stepped in DWG but which have the potential to become major issues (eg cost-benefit, how far we should second-guess what Government might decide, how SAGE 2 relates to SAGE 1). Graham commented that we should generally recommend what we believe we ought to, and we should only modify what we recommend if we have strong reason to believe it would achieve more in the long run.

## 9 SF

We need to report on what we have done in SF to MG. However, in SF (unlike in SAGE 1 and in DWG) we have not really reached any conclusions that are new enough or important enough to justify reporting to the outside world. Therefore, we should expect the section on SF in the SAGE Report to be rather short: to summarise what we have covered, to identify the understanding we have developed of where the main areas of disagreement are, to highlight

the areas where we have identified the need for further discussion to concentrate, but not much by way of conclusions.

We reflected that SF had danced around the central issue of why different people and different review groups reach different views on the same body of evidence. This issue of “why” would be probably the main issue that we needed to highlight in the Report. There are two aspects to this: what the science says, and what should be done about it.

Jill has already started preparing slides to report SF to MG and will be iterating this with Caroline. After January MG there is then an expectation that Jill and Caroline will turn this into written text for John to incorporate into the draft Report. David will assist by working through the meeting notes to make sure things don't get lost.  
Action JM/CHW & DC

John raised the issue of an allegation Roger had made at the last SF meeting about National Grid. We agreed that David would write to Roger asking either that he produced the evidence or agreed that the allegation was incorrect.  
Action JS/DC

We discussed the idea of the joint research proposal. This had actually evolved into two ideas: the original idea from Tony Barker of a study that we all agreed in advance to regard as definitive, and a broader idea of a study that we developed jointly, with the benefit of working together to learn from each other and to improve the quality, but without the specific commitment to regarding it as definitive. Tony is, we think, prepared to present his bare idea to MG.

SF had shown enthusiasm for an extra SF meeting, to discuss the joint research proposal but also to tackle one or more of the many issues we had barely touched on in SF so far. We agreed that this extra SF meeting should be seen as a bit of a fresh start – a bridge to “SAGE 3”, even if we don't know exactly what “SAGE 3” will look like yet – and to this end should be specifically advertised as open to all SAGE members, not just the core SF group, and (in the light of the positive experience at DWG this week) should be run more from our internal resources rather than facilitated by Golder as the previous SF meetings have been.

This meeting would be tentatively Friday 12 March.

Graham asked how we would deal with electric fields. We don't want the issue to be definitively dismissed just because we haven't chosen to address it so far; the decisions we have made so far not to address electric fields were in DWG and were on the basis that distribution does not produce electric-field exposure, rather than on the science of electric fields.

#### 10 Main Group

The majority of MG attendees will have been involved in one or other (or both) of SF and DWG and this will affect the “feel” and style of the meeting. We have a better sense than previously of what might come up at the meeting and it may be that less facilitation, possibly even with a Chair, is appropriate.

The meeting needs to feel focussed and directed so as to have a sense of being productive. Many decisions need to be made but participants need to feel empowered by doing actual work as well. Structure, thought out in advance, and related to the objectives, is essential.

Mike is the obvious candidate if we want an element of Chairing. He is willing to do this as long as this is acceptable to participants. Accordingly David will let MG members know of the proposal for Mike to assume a Chairing role in advance so that either objection or support can be assessed in advance.  
Action DC

The draft agenda has been circulated and discussed already.

The breakfast meeting for funders plus, if possible, DCLG and DECC, will go ahead.

The meeting room at Etc seats 35 which should be adequate.

We will radically shorten the session on "SAGE 2 programme" and make this one of the updates at the start of the meeting. This will flag up both the commitment of the funders to SAGE 3 and the envisaged content of the Report and make clear that both of these will be addressed later in the meeting.

The first substantive session would be the Government response to SAGE 1. This should be not just a factual report on the Government response or a griping session about it but something more constructive: "Government response and way forward/lesson learned". It should produce a discussion on how policy is made. We think it is best to start with Alasdair's presentation, then call on the Government representatives to respond rather than to make a freestanding presentation.

At the end of each of the DWG and SF sessions we will check that people are happy with the proposed content in the Report, thereby covering off the Report without devoting a whole session to it.

When we come to "SAGE 3" the Funders should stand up together so as to convey the message that we are united in wanting there to be an ongoing process.

There could be a two-stage process: first to establish just what it is we are trying to achieve with "SAGE 3" and why people want it to happen, then secondly, what are the specific things "SAGE 3" might do to deliver that.

The first stage would be the 5 minutes before lunch. Tentatively, everyone would be asked to write on a post-it (or more than one) something SAGE has delivered for them that they want to see carry on.

After lunch should be the Funders' statement, an analysis in plenary of the post-its, then leading into a discussion, in groups (which should be allocated in advance, eg by coloured dots on name badges, so as to ensure a spread of views), based on questions prepared in advance or some other structure, of what subjects, more specifically, "SAGE 3" might focus on or what outputs it might deliver. David will sort out the logistics of break-out groups.

The conclusion will be a statement – probably by DH - that the Funders and/or PG will take the learning from these sessions and work out a proposal that can be the basis for further discussion and resolution at the April MG meeting.

#### 11 AOB

Membership: We identified that "SAGE 3" would need to think further about membership but that this was a very thorny issue and there should be great wariness at excluding anybody. The sense that should emerge after January MG of the main focus of the ongoing process will help clarify who is appropriately involved.

#### 12 Next meetings

Tuesday 16 February 930, the last meeting to be chaired by Mike.

Monday 22 March 230pm at DH. We will start by rotating the Chair and see how this goes; Caroline will Chair this one.