

Trials and Tribulations

The Newsletter for NIHR Trial Managers' Network
February 2011

Welcome to the first issue of the new NIHR Trial Managers' Network Newsletters. This first issue features details of the new format of the NIHR TMN and the systems that we will be developing with you over the next three years.

There has been a little delay whilst finance and new staff have been sourced but we are now relaunching the service to give you a professional networking environment for all Trial Managers to feel engaged and supported.



We are pleased to introduce the recently appointed NIHR TMN Co-ordinator Svet Mihaylov. He will be known to some of you from his work maintaining the Network during the transitional period.



Louise Liddle is our new TMN administrator. She has been a Trial Manager in the past so has a hands-on insight into the complexities of the role.



National Institute for
Health Research

Trial Managers Network

As you are already aware from the email update last year, the TMN is now hosted by Leeds CTRU and is fully funded by the NIHR Evaluation, Trial and Studies Coordinating Centre (NETSCC) and therefore by the English Department of Health.

The UKTMN name has changed to reflect the new funding arrangements and it is now rebranded as the NIHR Trial Managers Network (NIHR TMN).

There are several important outcomes resulting from this rebranding that are noted below:

- New NIHR TMN logo
- New 3 year programme plan
- New membership system (see page 2)
- The dedicated TMN JISMAIL list name has changed from UKTMN@JISMAIL.AC.UK to NIHRTMN@JISMAIL.AC.UK
- A new NIHR TMN general email account nihrtmn@leeds.ac.uk

NIHR TMN Programme Plan 2010–2013

- Development of new NIHR TMN membership system
- Sourcing and dissemination of new developments/governance information of relevance to Trial Managers
- Establishment of improved e-mail discussion groups/problem solving groups
- Delivery of the NIHR TMN Annual Meeting
- Updating of the NIHR TMN 'introductory pack'
- Updating of NIHR TMN 'Guide to Efficient Trial Management'
- Awareness raising to include promotion and recognition of trial management to funders and Clinical Research Networks
- Undertaking an annual NIHR TMN members' evaluation survey
- Production of bi-monthly NIHR TMN newsletters
- Further development of NIHR TMN infrastructure
- Further development and maintenance of NIHR TMN website

Organisation and governance of NIHR TMN

In line with the new business case, the UKTMN Steering Committee has been dissolved and replaced by the NIHR TMN Oversight Group. We would like to take this opportunity to warmly thank former members of the UKTMN Steering Committee Janet Derbyshire, Ursula Bowler, Barbara Farrell, Irene Kennedy, Alison McDonald, Sara Kenyon, John Norrie, Chris Speed, Jean Sullivan, and Sue Tebbs for their hard work and input over the years. It is to the credit of the Steering Committee that future funding for the Network has been secured. We remain hopeful there will be opportunities for working together in the future and inputting into the continued success of the Network.

NIHR TMN Oversight Group (OSG)

The newly established NIHR TMN Oversight Group will replace the former Steering Committee. Its remit is to provide independent oversight of the NIHR TMN including expert comment, advice and direction on strategic developments for the NIHR TMN and on the delivery of the NIHR TMN objectives.



We are pleased to introduce and welcome the newly elected independent chair of the OSG Professor Deborah Ashby (pictured) who is currently holding the Chair in Medical Statistics and Clinical Trials at Imperial College.

Other members of the OSG include Cindy Cooper, Director of Sheffield Clinical Trials Research Unit (CTRU), Liz Tremain, Senior Programme Manager NETSCC, Athene Lane, Associate Director Bristol Randomised Trials Collaboration and representatives from the NIHR Trial Management Group (see below).

NIHR TMN Management Group (TMG)

A newly formed TMG will take on day-to-day responsibility for the management of the NIHR TMN and ensure appropriate activities are undertaken to meet the agreed objectives of the NIHR TMN. This group will be chaired by Professor Jane Nixon from Leeds CTRU. Members include Vicky Napp, Svet Mihaylov and Louise Liddle.

Changes in eligibility criteria for NIHR TMN membership

Under the former UKTMN, membership has been open to anyone who manages a UK publicly-funded trial including devolved nations and charity funded studies. Based on the old system, current membership amounts to more than 350 members.

As a result of the new funding arrangements, we are currently developing a new membership system for NIHR TMN with 'full' and 'associate' membership option.

Full members

New NIHR TMN eligibility criteria dictate that automatic and free of charge membership (and access to new resources) will be granted for all Trial Managers of NIHR funded studies defined as any study with NIHR funding for which the research activity may be coordinated either within England or one of the Devolved Nations, or may have a Chief Investigator either within England or one of the Devolved Nations).

Trial Managers of the so called MRC legacy studies defined as pre 2007/2008 MRC funded, large scale multicentre RCTs, are also eligible for free membership. These will be referred to as 'full' members.

Associate members

Trial Managers working on studies within the NIHR Portfolio but not funded by the NIHR (e.g. charity, industry, devolved nations) as well as devolved nations Trial Managers responsible for studies solely within their national portfolios will be eligible to join the Network as 'associate' members. This will be subject to payment of £75 annual fee per member for 2011/2012.

We are allowing a 3-month transition period before the new systems kicks in. During this period you will be contacted by email and asked to complete online the new NIHR TMN registration form which will help us determine your eligibility and update our new database.

Benefits of being a NIHR TMN member

Both 'full' and 'associate' members will be entitled to:

Access the members' area of the NIHR TMN website (and therefore access to the 'Guide to Efficient Trial Management', newsletters, the members' discussion forum, 'Frequently Asked Questions' and any other resources developed by the TMN)

An opportunity to attend the NIHR TMN Annual Meeting. We are planning a date in autumn 2011 for the first NIHR TMN Annual Meeting and it will be great to meet people in person at that event. It should provide an ideal opportunity for networking and ideas. We are planning to invite key speakers and run a number of developmental workshops. More information will follow shortly, so watch this space.

Access to our dedicated JISCMail list with opportunities to post queries to the TMN members and receive updates on regulatory developments, training course announcements and job vacancies.

Access to NIHR TMN Yammer, a corporate facebook-style product. We aim to implement a Yammer forum as a more informal way of sharing good practice, useful hints and tips, interesting articles, networking etc.

JISCM@il



Trial Manager Network Evaluation Survey

We are currently putting together a new Trial Manager Network Evaluation Survey which we will be asking you to complete online in the coming weeks.

Please take a few moments to complete this online questionnaire. Only through your feedback can we gather useful information about your past experience with the Trial Managers Network, identify any issues that you may have at present and find out whether or not the Network is meeting your needs.

Within the boundaries of the agreed NIHR TMN Programme Plan 2010–2013, your answers will inform the future delivery of the NIHR TMN in terms of providing the facilitation and support that best suits your needs as a member of TMN.

NIHR TMN Calendar

First NIHR TMN Oversight Group Meeting

May 2011, London

NIHR TMN Annual Meeting

September/October 2011, London

Date and venue tbc – Watch this space!

Send us your feedback

We do hope that you will find the first issue of the NIHR TMN Newsletter useful and interesting. Please do send us your feedback and suggestions for improvements. We look forward to hearing from you with any information that you would like to share with your fellow Trial Managers through this newsletter. It will be circulated via the JISCMail list on a bi-monthly basis.

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