

## Position of HTA following Review of Arms-Length Bodies

**Dr Shaun Griffin**

The Department of Health (DH) are undertaking a review of the Human Tissue Authority's (HTA) functions, which runs until 28<sup>th</sup> September 2012. Dr Shaun Griffin discussed the three options presented in the Arms-Length Bodies review consultation. "The key priority for the HTA is to ensure that human tissue and organs continue to be used safely and ethically, and with proper consent, during and after any transfer of HTA functions. This will ensure continued public and professional confidence". Any transfer of function is not likely to take place before 2015.

The first option presented is to transfer the HTA's functions to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and abolish the HTA and the Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority (HFEA), which is the government's preference. This option could lead to concerns about accountability.

The second option proposes to separate the HTA's functions and move them to different organisations. This option could lead to a more costly, complex and bureaucratic regulation, without delivering any public benefit.

The third option is to retain the HTA's (and HFEA) functions, but deliver further efficiencies. This is the HTA's preferred option, as they propose it will reduce the risks associated with the use of human tissue and help protect public confidence.

If the HTA's functions are transferred, they will seek assurances that their functions will be carried out effectively, efficiently, that the transfer will provide genuine benefits in terms of cost savings and accountability, and that the expertise developed will be preserved.

The HTA has made efficiencies of 27% in the last 2 years. As a result of this, license fees reduced in the research sector by 30 % in 2011/12 and a further 14% in 2012/13. The Stakeholders are overwhelmingly in favour of keeping the HTA's functions and making further efficiencies.

What do we think?

- Reducing quango's etc without considering end user
- Low public confidence, but growing. Can be nurtured, or destroyed
- If not option 3, there will dissolution of effectiveness
- Confederation of Cancer Biobanks is due to respond

ICPV will respond (individual and organisational responses) supporting the HTA in the consultation.

**James Ashton**

**ICPV, Sept 2012**