

**Open Government
Status: Fully Open**

ACDP/79/P6

**Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens
The HPA Zoonosis Network**

Issue:

1. The HPA has developed a Zoonosis Network as part of responsibilities for review of arrangements for public health action on zoonoses. Of particular interest to ACDP is the development of a Human Animal Infections Risk Surveillance Group as part of this network.
 2. Dilys Morgan from the Health Protection Agency (HPA) will provide further information on the remit of this Group.
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Human Animal Infections and Risk Surveillance Group



Human-Animal Infections and Risk Surveillance Group



Multiagency group which meets every month and acts as a forum to identify and discuss infections with potential for interspecies transfer (particularly zoonotic infections).



Human-Animal infections and risk surveillance group



- **Health Protection Agency**
- **Defra,**
- **Veterinary Laboratories Agency**
- **Department of Health**
- **Chair of National Expert Panel on New and Emerging Infections (NEPNEI)**
- **Welsh Assembly Government,**
- **Food Standards Agency**

Human-Animal Infections and Risk Surveillance Group



1 Hazard Identification

Identify and review potentially zoonotic incidents

- ▶ **Acute cluster or outbreaks**
- ▶ **Increasing trends of known infections/ syndromes**
- ▶ **New infections or undiagnosed syndromes**

In UK or internationally

Human-Animal Infections and Risk Surveillance Group



2 Risk assessment

If potentially zoonotic incident/ trend →

- ▶ Negligible potential risk to public health
- ▶ As above but will be monitored
- ▶ More info needed to assess the incident
- ▶ Formal risk assessment

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3 Risk management

Reduce risk by :

- ▶ Identifying
- ▶ Selecting
- ▶ Advising or
- ▶ Implementing

measures that would reduce risk, either by using expertise within group or network contacts

Human-Animal Infections and Risk Surveillance Group



4 Risk communication

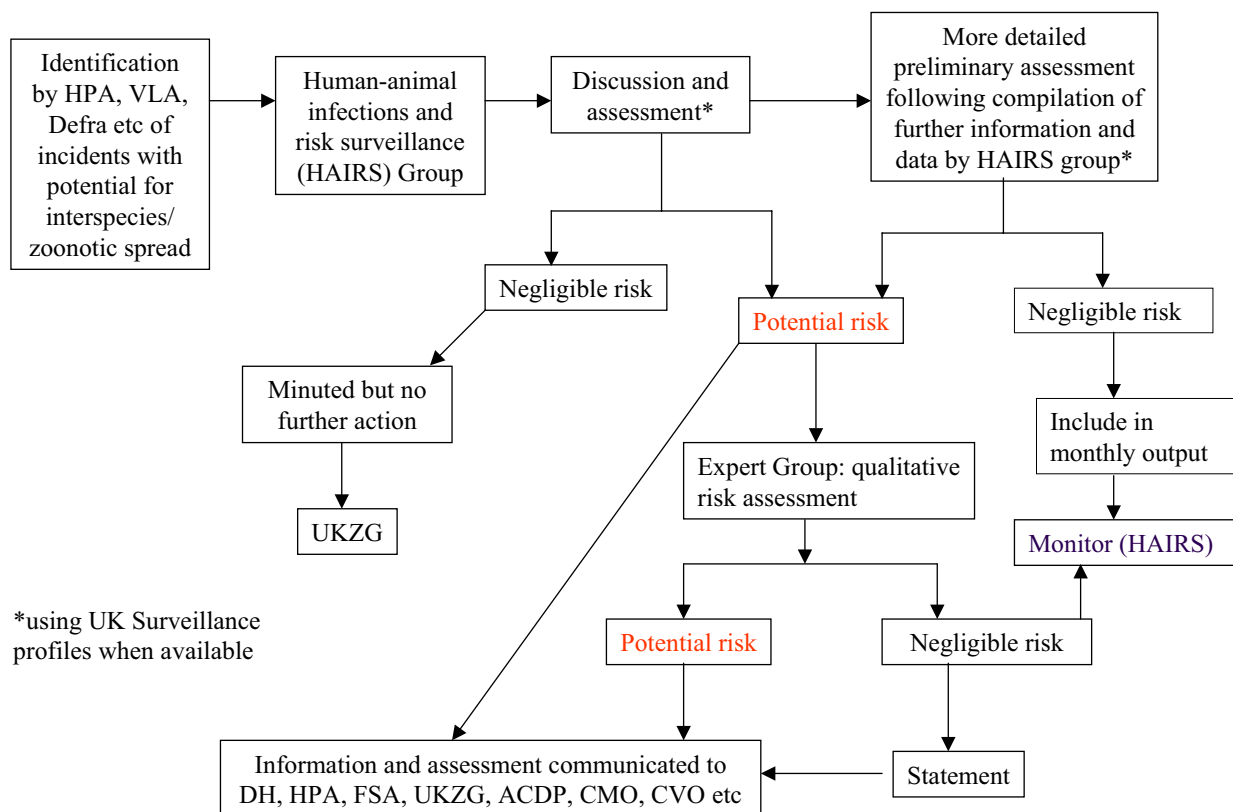
▶ **Monthly Infectious Disease Surveillance and Monitoring System: Summary of notable events of PH significance**

▶ **Informing within Agencies**

▶ **Informing other Agencies**

▶ **Write up and communicate any qualitative risk assessments**

Process of risk assessment by Human-Animal Infections and Risk Surveillance Group



Examples of Incidents/infections considered by group:



“Dead Heifer” polioencephalomyelitis in sheep and cattle → Expert Group

Polioencephalomyelitis in weaner pigs – dealt with in group*

Tularemia in hamsters in Canada – dealt with within group*

Streptococcus halichoeri in seals – disease profile produced and note in CDR

*** After getting more information**



Arrangements for Zoonoses in HPA



Outlines: Current situation



- UK Zoonoses Group 😊
- [PHLS] HPA AC Zoo 😐🕒
- Nat Expert Panel on New and Emerging Infections 😊

Weaknesses



- **Difficulty sustaining cross-disciplinary focus on unique status of zoonoses at national level**
- **Surveillance of infection in animals is “usually determined by economic impact..... rather than its potential to damage human health”**
- **Variable strength and utility of local liaison groups**
- **Poor communication between local and national gps on public health side**
- **Lack of identifiable cross-disciplinary scientific centre that can provide leadership & coordination + scientific support for UKZG + other committees**

A way forward



- **Retain name “zoonoses”**
- **Core responsibility for public protection**
- **HPA needs to identify where overall responsibility for leadership and coordination of HPA public health zoonoses functions should reside.**
- **Network approach**

Functions and outputs of network include: [1]



- **Surveillance**
- **Horizon scanning**
- **Rapid qualitative risk assessment**
- **Instigating field investigations**
- **Zoonoses web pages**
- **Fostering links with experts in vet/med/scientific fields**

Functions and outputs: [2]



- **Coordinating links between local zoonoses liaison groups and between local and national groups**
- **Contributing to UK's annual Zoonoses Report**
- **Dissemination of information, acting as contact pt for PH control of zoonoses in the HPA**
- **Scientific support for UKZG and other committees**

Development of Zoonotic Network



- **A formal network of reference labs and other zoonotic centres such as VLA, Defra, Vet schools etc should be set up.**
- **Coordinated and meetings convened by zoonoses team at HPA Centre for Infections**
- **Local X-agency liaison groups should be convened and supported by HPA Local and Regional Services [but linked to coordinating centre]**
- **Network approach would allow other centres eg NPWS Wales, NW Zoonoses group to continue to contribute or lead national programmes as appropriate**

Progress:



HAIRS group working fulfilling many of the functions and outputs

First steering group meeting held in December 2004

Remit for the Steering Group developed

MOUs/ TOR for network members being developed

Recognised need coordination of local zoonoses liaison groups and between local and national groups.

