

Meeting date: 16th May 2006

**MINUTES OF THE 49th MEETING OF THE HSE
COMMITTEE ON ANALYTICAL REQUIREMENTS
HELD AT HSL, BUXTON ON 16TH MAY 2006**

1. Present

Chairman	Dr J A Groves	HSE, HSL	
	G Bebbington	Casella / Bureau Veritas	
	Mr O Butler	HSE, HSL	
	Dr B Crook	HSE, HSL	
	Ms K Jones	HSE, HSL	
	Dr K J Saunders	Keris Ltd	
	Dr D Simpson	RSC	
	M Terrington	Astra Zeneca	
	Mr B Tylee	HSE, HSL	
	Ms W Smith	UKAS	
	Mr M D Wright	HSE, HSL	
	Secretary	Mr A T Simpson	HSE, HSL

Apologies for absence were received for Mr R Bettinson, Dr A P Bianchi, Dr J Cocker, T Joyner, Dr P Walsh, Dr G Wilcox and Ms E Woolfenden

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 27th October 2005 were accepted with no alterations.

3. UKAS's Policy on QA Scheme Participation

ISO/IEC 17025 requires laboratories to have quality control procedures, which may include participation in a proficiency testing scheme. Furthermore, in UKAS document TPS 47 'UKAS Policy on Participation in Proficiency Testing' (available on the UKAS website, www.ukas.com) it states that 'It is UKAS policy that all accredited testing laboratories shall participate in proficiency testing programs / interlaboratory comparisons where such schemes are available and relevant to their scope of accreditation.' Use of an accredited scheme is recommended where one exists. QA scheme participation is always examined by UKAS during a visit, and the outcome could be a non-conformity subject to subsequent follow up action. TPS 47 is two years old now and may be due a review.

UKAS is proactive in contacting labs following results from RICE due to the legislative nature the scheme.

Laboratories may refer to the European Proficiency Testing Information System (EPTIS) for availability of PT schemes (www.eptis.bam.de). Some schemes may not be wholly suitable due to inappropriate analyte levels (e.g. environmental schemes for occupational measurements).

There is a lower uptake in the WASP scheme of samples in more realistic matrices compared to equivalent but easier 'cleaner' matrices.

Similar schemes exist for microbiological samples e.g. legionella and endotoxin. Biological sample analysis has schemes for drugs of abuse, blood lead and a range of other organic and inorganic analytes, however very few publish their results.

Chemical manufacturers may not be able to find a suitable scheme, and apart from possibly environmental samples would follow GLP/GMP practices for quality issues.

The number of laboratories not accredited or in PT schemes is unknown. There was disagreement over how much influence these initiatives have on performance.

UKAS intends to raise awareness of quality (accreditation schemes etc) for customers purchasing analytical services. Local authorities are generally well informed customers, apart from sometimes in matters concerning asbestos where price can become an issue. There are no initiatives on sampling for occupational hygiene measurements, but 'sampling' is a key word on the UKAS website.

The RSC was not able to insist its members participate in such schemes because of their wide range of interests. Not all public analysts are accredited.

UKAS was asked to keep the committee informed of its actions.

4. Quality (Document CAR 49/2)

It is hoped to incorporate an assessment of performance for organic vapour sampling into the WASP participants' conference this autumn. There would be a fee to cover costs, and an expected uptake of around ten participants. It is intended to publish the anonymised results following evaluation of the event.

Blind proficiency testing for asbestos has now been introduced into the AIMS scheme as an annual special round. So far 18 laboratories have signed up. The results will be reported next year. It was pointed out that some laboratories don't do commercial samples, so could not participate. Other similar schemes exist for blood lead in the US, and a one off exercise is planned for airborne isocyanate in the UK.

5. Biological Monitoring (Document CAR 49/3)

At present there are a number of HSL Biological Monitoring Methods in support of both health based and control based Biological Monitoring Guidance Values. These are available on the HSL website (www.hsl.gov.uk/capabilities/bm_guidance/), and are referenced in EH40. Biological monitoring can also be used in skin penetration or PPE efficacy investigations. The methods were not considered to be as rigorous as MDHSs, and were written to be non-prescriptive, allowing individual laboratories to develop their own methods. They do however contain performance criteria that should be met. It was felt that biological methods should not be considered for publication in the MDHS series.

It was pointed out that the MDHS series is becoming less prescriptive with the advent of the generic methods produced.

It was said that NHS labs could use biological monitoring methods for metals, and that there were five or six laboratories which use the methods for organic compounds.

6. Microbiological Methods (Document CAR 49/4)

European committee CEN TC137 WG5 workplace atmospheres- biological agents has produced three CEN standards: BS EN 13098:2001 Workplace atmospheres – guidelines for measurement of airborne micro-organisms and endotoxin, BS EN14031:2003 Workplace atmospheres – determination of airborne endotoxins, and BS EN 14583:2004 Workplace atmospheres – volumetric bioaerosol sampling devices – requirements and test methods. There are also some industry methods, most notably from the Composting Association. However there is no single definitive method for measuring airborne biological agents.

Such methods help to identify risk zones, but there are no exposure standards. A traffic light type system helps identify where appropriate levels of control / PPE / good practice should be adopted.

There are a number of relevant areas for occupational hygiene measurements, including metalworking fluids and fish processing, however MDHSs are not necessarily where analysts would look for suitable methods.

Methods for microbiological agents would need to be specific rather than generic.

Subtilisin is a bacterially derived product which was originally proposed to receive a MEL before some time later being given a WEL (the replacement exposure limit). It is one of the more hazardous substances in the EH40 list, but does not have an MDHS method. Previously all compounds with MELs were considered as candidates for being the subject of an MDHS method. The criteria for publishing methods as MDHSs needs to be refined, and should be on the agenda at the next meeting.

7. MDHS Method Activity (Document CAR 49/5)

The revised solder fume method is currently with HSE's Communication Directorate.

Written comments were received before the meeting on the new MDHS on ICP-AES.

Efforts have been made since the last meeting to migrate MDHS methods, old and new, to the HSL website; a reply from Communications Directorate is awaited.

8. Standards Committees (Document CAR 49/6)

CEN is not required to develop specific methods but rather performance requirements e.g. EN 482.

It is influenced by the chemical agents directive, legislation on the workplace and ambient air, and their impact on trade.

It was suggested that document CAR 49/6 and its annexes should be put on the website separately and kept up to date.

9. Any Other Business

Members were happy for their names and company names to appear in the minutes, and for them to be published on the HSL website, however contact details should be omitted.

The chair advised the committee that HSL was in the middle of undergoing restructuring, and it was possible that in future the chairmanship may pass to someone else in HSL.

10. Actions

Update the committee on current UKAS initiatives (Rob Bettinson).

Report on the sampling and blind proficiency testing exercise (Barry Tylee).

Report on the blind isocyanate analysis work (Owen Butler)

A paper should be prepared on the criteria for publishing methods as MDHSs for the next meeting (Andrew Simpson)

Information on CEN and ISO activity should be placed on the website (Mike Wright)

Actions carried forward

Approach HSE about migration of MDHSs to the HSL website. (John Groves)

Place older MDHSs onto the HSL website (John Groves)

Explore the options for raising quality in the occupational hygiene measurement sector (John Groves)

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is planned to be in October 2006 at a date yet to be agreed.