

# Scientific Horizon Scanning at the HFEA

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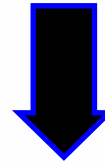
# Background to scientific horizon scanning

- An early warning system that identifies new scientific and clinical developments that may impact on the field of assisted reproduction or embryo research
- Area of science and medicine regulated by the HFEA is fast-paced and can be controversial
- Allows the HFEA to consider the legal, ethical and scientific implications of any new technique
- Ensures HFEA, stakeholders and public are informed and prepared for future developments
- Carried out through a rigorous and systematic appraisal of scientific research being conducted both within and outside the UK

# The horizon scanning process

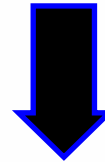
## **Identification of issues that could impact on assisted reproduction or embryo research**

Issues identified from journal articles, conferences or suggestions from experts. Common themes and issues can then be identified.



## **Gathering further information on identified issues**

Information gathered internally with input from experts as required

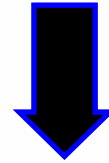


# Horizon Scanning Panel

The HFEA brought together an international panel of experts to advise on scientific horizon scanning issues.

- Virtual group that communicates predominantly via email
- Sent questions from Policy team 3-4 times a year
- Annual meeting to discuss current and future issues

# The horizon scanning process



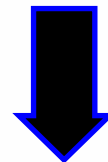
## Prioritisation

Issues prioritised and fed into the business planning process

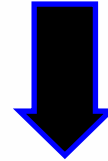
Issues are prioritised using a systematic approach that looks at whether:

- the technique is transferable to humans for research or treatment
- the diffusion of the technique is likely to be rapid
- there will be public interest or concern
- there will be ethical or legal considerations
- the technique is within the remit of the HFEA

The prioritised issues are then fed into the business planning and agenda scheduling to be considered by SCAG in the following year.

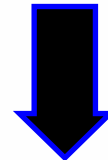


# The horizon scanning process



## **Consideration by committees**

Issues considered further by sub-committees of the HFEA. This may require further work e.g. research and/or policy review



## **Output (Authority position, new policy)**

Issues discussed by Authority (or a sub-committee of the Authority) and a decision taken on the output e.g. policy review for some issues. The output will depend on the work required for the issue in question

# Horizon scanning: outputs

- Information gathered about timescale and safety of techniques
- HFEA position in event of licence applications
- Information passed on to HFEA research licence committees
- Stakeholders briefed about state of research
- Able to monitor future developments

# Horizon scanning report

All issues that have been identified during the horizon scanning process, along with any outputs from issues considered in that year, are presented in the annual horizon scanning report.

- Launched at the HFEA's annual horizon scanning panel meeting at the European Society for Human Reproduction and Embryology (ESHRE) conference in July each year
- Circulated widely, including to key stakeholders in the research field and the Department of Health. Posted on the HFEA website
- HFEA is intending to produce a lay version of the horizon scanning report to inform the wider public