

**NHSCR Governance Board  
Function of the Board**

**Background**

1. The NHS Central Register (NHSCR), part of the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS), operates a register of NHS patients in Scotland. A fundamental review of its work was carried out in the latter half of 2003 under the leadership of the SEHD Deputy Chief Medical Officer, on behalf of the NHS.

2. The Review Group's report in February 2004 (copy attached) established that the NHSCR is vital to the smooth running of the NHS in Scotland and proposed no change to its management arrangements. It made a number of detailed recommendations, including:-

“The NHSCR, with its host organisation, should establish governance arrangements that link with representation from key service users and offer strategic advice on its external relations, governance and effective policy developments.”

3. The NHSCR reports to, and is funded by, SEHD. Its key service users are the NHS Boards, NHS National Services Scotland and medical researchers. It has no formal governance mechanism. But there is a formal Privacy Advisory Committee (PAC), with an independent chair and membership, which advises the Medical Adviser to the Registrar General (who works for NHS National Services Scotland) on all applications to use NHSCR data for research purposes. The Privacy Advisory Committee works well and its membership has recently been put on a more formal basis. It is not therefore intended that the new governance arrangements should interfere with the work of the Committee.

**Function of the Board**

4. We propose that the remit of the NHSCR Governance Board should be:-

“To provide strategic advice on the operation, future development and external relations of the NHSCR in support of the NHS in Scotland, medical researchers, and other users. The Privacy Advisory Committee, which provides advice on the protection of patient information held by the NHSCR, will report to the Board.”

5. The following is the current membership:-

Duncan Macniven, Registrar General (Chairman)  
Charlie Knox, SE Health Department  
Fiona Bisset, SE Health Department

Malcolm McWhirter, Director of Public Health, Forth Valley Health Board  
Graeme Laurie, University of Edinburgh  
Rod Muir, NHS National Services Scotland, Medical Adviser to GROS  
Graham Jackson, Head of Vital Events and NHSCR Branch, GROS  
Muriel Douglas, Head of NHSCR, GROS.

Malcolm McWhirter and Graeme Laurie are members of the PAC.

6. In a steady state, meetings no more frequently than 6 monthly should be necessary.

**Recommendation**

7. The Board is invited to comment.

**General Register Office for Scotland  
22 August 2005**