Professor Michael Barry, Director of the National Centre for Pharmacoeconomics joins the inaugural Heads of Agency Group

Prof. Michael Barry joined other European Health Technology Assessment (HTA) agencies for the inaugural meeting of the Heads of Agency Group (HAG) on 29th September 2021. This extends the collaborative work of the NCPE to allow high level strategic exchange and discussion. The HAG will have particular importance for the preparation and adoption of the upcoming European HTA Regulation and advising policy makers on issues related to HTA and in particular HTA cooperation (https://www.eunethta.eu/european-hta-agencies-launch-the-heads-of-agencies-group-hag/).

The inauguration of the HAG follows the signing of a contract between the European Health and Digital Executive Agency and the EUnetHTA21 Consortium which will extend the work of the EUnetHTA Joint Actions. The NCPE are one of 13 European agencies leading this work within EUnetHTA21. EUnetHTA21 will run for a 24 month period, working in preparation for the implementation of the HTA Regulation (https://www.eunethta.eu/eunethta-21/).

Dr. Roisin Adams, Head of HTA Strategy and External Engagement at the NCPE "The NCPE have worked closely with our partners in EUnetHTA over EU Joint Actions 2 and 3. We will continue this work with EUnetHTA21 to prepare member states and Ireland for the future HTA Regulation. This work complements the strong partnerships that NCPE already has within the Beneluxa Consortium and the International Horizon Scanning Initiative".

Background

Health Technology Assessment is a multidisciplinary process that uses explicit methods to determine the value of a health technology at different points in its lifecycle. The purpose is to inform decision-making in order to promote an equitable, efficient and high-quality health system.

Collaborative work on the EUnetHTA project has been ongoing since 2006, with a view to enhance HTA capacity and strengthen the role of HTA in health care policy in EU member states. Since then, it has grown into a European-wide project developing a framework for joint HTA for Europe, including shared methodologies, joint scientific advice, and joint clinical assessment reports. The NCPE has been an active member of the EUnetHTA group since 2012, contributing to guideline development and the production of joint assessment reports on pharmaceutical products.

Since 2018 the European Commission has been working with EU countries on the development of a HTA Regulation to facilitate long-term HTA cooperation, reduce

duplication of work for national HTA bodies, and promote consistency in the use of HTA across Europe. The Regulation is expected to come in to force on a phased basis, commencing at the end of 2023. The four main elements covered by the HTA Regulation are (a) joint clinical assessments for new medicines; (b) joint scientific advisory consultations; (c) joint horizon scanning; (d) voluntary collaboration in other areas. The NCPE anticipates an active role in the production of joint assessments in the future and are planning for its implementation.