Training Working Group: status report

Prepared by Steve McDonald on behalf of the Training Working Group

22nd February 2010

**Purpose of paper**

To provide an update on the activities of the Training Working Group (TWG), to preview the training meeting to be held in April 2010, and to summarise the status of other training initiatives within the Collaboration. No decision is required by the Steering Group.

**Urgency**

Low.

**Access**

Open.

**Background**

The TWG has extended its remit to take on responsibility for implementing the recommendation from the Strategic Review around formalising training as an additional purpose of the Collaboration. As well as continuing with several projects related to author training, the TWG is drafting proposals to consolidate all training and support activities within the Collaboration. These proposals will be further discussed at a meeting in Oxford in April 2010 and will result in a workplan to include various options for structuring and resourcing ‘Cochrane Training’ that will be submitted to the Steering Group for consideration in Denver.

**Proposals and Discussion**

The following summarises the activities of the TWG since October 2009, preparations for the April meeting and details other relevant training initiatives within the Collaboration.

1. Equipping authors with the technical skills and competencies to prepare reviews is only one component of a much broader training agenda. Numerous reports and surveys have highlighted the key need for training to support review production, especially for editorial teams. **Cochrane Training** will cover all aspects of training related to the *preparation, production and publication* of all types of Cochrane reviews, including the functional and organisational skills required to carry out particular support roles. The Steering Group has approved funding for a meeting of the TWG and others in April 2010 to devise a comprehensive training strategy for the Collaboration.
2. In preparation for the April meeting, the TWG is conducting a **training needs assessment** based around the different roles or constituencies involved in preparing Cochrane reviews (i.e. authors, editors, Managing Editors, etc.). The needs assessment will define competencies and skills and map these to existing training and support materials to identify gaps. Information from recent Collaboration surveys, reports and audits will inform the assessments, including consideration of the needs of people from non-English speaking backgrounds.
3. As part of the Opportunities Fund project to develop **core training materials**, sections of the Handbook relevant to authors at an introductory level have been mapped to existing training materials and additional materials provided by the Methods Groups. A version of the materials will be ready in April. Other issues to be discussed and finalised at the April meeting include: integrating the materials within the new training site on cochrane.org; agreeing on policies of contributorship and copyright; possible translation of the materials into languages other than English; integration of DTA reviews training; future developments.
4. Following broad support from Managing Editors and Centre Staff, **training notes** are now being added to Person Records in Archie. The note records the type, date and location of the Cochrane workshop or course attended, plus the entity that provided the training. The training notes are searchable and will provide an archive of an individual’s training history.
5. The **UK Online Training Resources** were launched in 2009 and are currently only available to Cochrane authors based in the UK. The UK Cochrane Centre is in the process of transferring these materials to an online learning platform that is compatible with cochrane.org so that the materials can be made available to Cochrane authors worldwide. There are plans to develop 8-10 new modules.
6. The TWG liaises closely with the **Methods Application and Review Standards (MARS)** Working Groupand the **Methods Exec** to ensure training initiatives are co-ordinated and not duplicated. MARS has begun to identify a small suite reviews at the update stage that can be developed as exemplar reviews. In addition, good examples of specific components or sections of protocols and reviews will be identified to illustrate a broader range of issues. These activities plus proposals to establish methods networks within CRGs will inform the proposals for Cochrane Training.
7. Several groups within the Collaboration provide structured training and support (e.g. Managing Editor induction and mentoring programme, Copy Edit Support and IMS Support). These activities will ultimately be integrated in the comprehensive training strategy. The Cochrane Editorial Unit is looking at the feasibility of providing additional support for summary of findings tables. Representatives from all these groups will be at the April training meeting.
8. Training will be on the agenda at several other meetings taking place in the lead-up to the April meeting. These include: discussion at the Centre Director’s meeting in Auckland of regional support issues, Cardiff course for Cochrane statisticians, meeting in Cardiff to evaluate the risk of bias tool, joint meeting of Co-ordinating Editors’ Board and the Methods Application and Review Standards (MARS) Group in Rome.

**Summary of recommendations**

There are no recommendations.

**Decision required**

None.