**Annual statement from the Medical Research Council on Research Integrity and Scientific Misconduct for the period 1 April 2016 - 31 March 2017**

i) Summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues

Following the Symposium *Reproducibility and reliability of biomedical research; improving research practice[[1]](#footnote-1)* sponsored jointly by the MRC, BBSRC, the Wellcome Trust and the Academy of Medical Sciences, the MRC has worked to implement ways to improve the rigour and reliability of research, including modifications to the peer review process for grant applications to give greater consideration to experimental design and statistical aspects, and strengthening requirements for training in statistics and experimental design in PhD programmes. Research misconduct is not thought to be a major contributor to problems with reproducibility, but many actions to raise awareness of the problem and promote good practice are also relevant to research integrity.

ii) Assurances that the processes employers have in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, robust and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation.

The MRC’s ‘Scientific misconduct policy and procedure’ was updated in November 2014. Two allegations have been handled satisfactorily following the updated procedure.

iii) High-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct/Statistics

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Number of full investigations that were underway during the year | 0 |
| Of these the number that started during the year | 0 |
| Number of investigations completed during the year: i) upheld ii)not upheld | 0 |
| 0 |
| Number of allegations that did not proceed to a full investigation[[2]](#footnote-2)[[3]](#footnote-3) | 1 |

As an indicator of scale, the average number of MRC full-time equivalent employees during 2016/17 was1719[[4]](#footnote-4).

[However, of course this does not represent a true denominator as it includes many staff unlikely ever to be in a position to commit research misconduct].

1. https://acmedsci.ac.uk/viewFile/56314e40aac61.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A screening panel concluded that there was no evidence of misconduct. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. In addition, one admission of misconduct by a former PhD student at an MRC establishment has been referred to the HEI for review in accordance with their policy. The publication has been retracted. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. This does not include locally employed staff in the MRC Units in The Gambia and Uganda [↑](#footnote-ref-4)