



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Appointment of Non-Executive Directors to the Animal Health & Welfare Board for England

Briefing pack for applicants

Closing Date: 12 Noon, Monday 28 April 2025



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About Defra

Defra Group **leads on the fundamentals**: the food **we eat**, the water **we drink**, the air **we breathe**. It encompasses **food, environment, biosecurity, trade and more**. Defra is a **policy, growth, science, delivery and international** department.

Defra's work is fundamental to delivering the government's five missions – by building economic resilience through better flood defences, protecting against biosecurity risk, climate adaptation and nature-based solutions; creating jobs and attracting investment in our water and waste sectors; working with our sectors, such as food and drink; and ensuring that all missions are rural-proofed.

To achieve these goals, we are committed to appointing high-calibre individuals from diverse backgrounds to the boards of our public bodies. By drawing on a wide range of skills, knowledge, and experiences, we can make our work more effective, resilient, and accountable to the public.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity

The UK government is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring that no one experiences unfair discrimination or harassment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, national origin, colour, sex, gender identity, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, or age.

We actively encourage applications from individuals of all backgrounds and are committed to fostering diversity in public appointments. All appointments are made on merit, following a fair and open competition process regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Disability Commitment

We are dedicated to supporting candidates with disabilities and are proud to hold Disability Confident Leader status. We guarantee an interview for any applicant with a disability whose application meets the minimum criteria for the post.

To ensure an inclusive process, we are committed to making reasonable adjustments where possible for candidates with disabilities. If you require any adjustments to support your application, please refer to the 'How to Apply and Submit Your Application' section below. Further information about the Disability Confident Leader scheme is available via the Disability Confident logo displayed above.

Welcome

Hello and welcome!

I am Pamela Thompson, the Deputy Director for Transforming Farm Animal Health and Welfare in Defra. I'm very pleased that you are considering an application for one of the two roles of non-executive director of the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England and am very much looking forward to working with the successful candidates.

The Board plays a key part in animal health and welfare policy development and delivery in England. This government was elected on a mandate to introduce the most ambitious plans to improve animal welfare in a generation. The government is engaging with key animal welfare stakeholders as part of the development of our overarching approach to animal welfare, resetting the relationship with the EU (e.g. securing a broad-based security pact, and tackling barriers to trade). The 25 Year Farming Roadmap and our Food Strategy mean we are working in partnership with farmers to make farming and food production sustainable and profitable. The Board plays a pivotal role in all of this and as one of its non-executive directors, you will be at the heart of strategic policy development, bringing benefits for generations of farmers and animal keepers to come.



I'm delighted that you're looking to apply and hope to meet you soon.

Best Wishes,

Pamela

About the Animal Health & Welfare Board for England (AHWBE)

The [AHWBE](#) was created in 2011 to provide advice to Defra Ministers on strategic animal health and welfare issues relating to England. Its scope covers the whole range of kept animals including companion animals and aquatic animal health. We are now looking to further strengthen the Board to provide support, advice and constructive challenge to Defra's Ministers and their officials in the development and implementation of animal health and welfare strategy and policy to support UK as an independent nation and to enable the development of post EU-exit strategic policy objectives.

The Board provides leadership, championing the ethos of partnership working between industry, animal keeping sectors and Government. It acts as a focal point for communication and co-ordination across the various sectors of industry, ensuring broad, deep, two-way engagement. This gives stakeholders with an interest in animal health and welfare a route into the heart of decision making on matters affecting them. It has led the work on many policy areas including initiation and development of the Animal Health & Welfare Pathway and reform of the department's contingency plans for managing exotic animal disease outbreaks. You can learn more about the work of the Board in recent times at www.gov.uk

The Board encourages and enables action by all animal keepers at individual and sectoral level to minimise threats to animal and public health and animal welfare, whilst maintaining competitiveness. The Board works collaboratively with teams across the Defra Group to achieve this. It looks at both policy development and its practical application, offering insight into which interventions or initiatives will be most effective in the different sectors. More information can be found in the Terms of Reference for the AHWBE, at Annex A.

We are seeking to appoint two new Non-Executive Directors for the Board through this recruitment exercise.

Role description and person specification

Non-Executive Directors on the AHWBE will:

- Provide strategic direction and advice from the AHWBE to Defra Ministers on the health & welfare of kept animals.
- Provide support to the Chair and other Non-Executive Board members and ensure Defra priorities are properly understood by industry stakeholders.
- Assist and provide constructive challenge to Defra officials in the development of animal health & welfare policy.
- Be able to take a strategic view in their decision-making, whilst acting with impartiality in providing evidence-based advice and guidance.
- Champion the potential for co-design in developing existing and new policy and communication e.g. through specific task and finish groups.
- Have strong existing industry networks and to be able to expand these as needed.

- Maintain and build links with industry, sector council groups and Defra Policy Teams.

Essential criteria

Applicants will need to show evidence of their experience and skills in the following areas, in their “statement of suitability”:

Skills

- Strong strategic thinkers, able to bring expertise / experience to bear, in order to robustly investigate complex issues.
- Contributes objectively and impartially on issues at a national scale and brings constructive critical challenge where needed.
- Uses data, information and evidence to drive decision making, seeking out more evidence as needed and situating all analysis within specific political, financial and strategic frameworks.
- Sensitive to people and situations, working with total confidentiality (when applicable), yet constructively listening/challenging others in order to identify and deliver shared outcomes.
- Proactive in building and maintaining effective working relationships with Ministers, public officials, private sector and third sector organisations.
- Able to communicate confidently and effectively with a variety of people, balancing conflicting interests and negotiating/persuading to achieve consensus.

In order to demonstrate this confidence and trust, **candidates are requested to provide at least two supporting statements.**

The successful candidates will be expected to abide by the Nolan principles of public service (attached at [Annex B](#)) and undergo relevant security checks.

Time commitment and term of office

Period of appointment

It is expected that Non-Executive Directors will be appointed from 1 July 2025 and will serve for up to three years (expected end date: 31 April 2028). There is the possibility of reappointment for a further term, subject to satisfactory performance appraisal and business need.

Time Input

It is anticipated that successful candidates will devote **approximately 30 days a year** to the work of the Board. The AHWBE will meet at least on a quarterly basis (using a mix of online collaboration tools and face to face meetings) and remuneration will be on a pro-rata basis accordingly

Remuneration and expenses

The role will be fee-based and non-pensionable. There will be a remuneration equivalent to **£300 per day**, to cover time spent on the role. Reasonable travel and subsistence expenses will also be covered in line with current Defra policy. Details will be set out in a contract.

The recruitment process

The closing date for applications is **Monday 28 April 2025**. We expect to have shortlisted candidates for interview by **5 May 2025**, with panel interviews taking place during the weeks commencing **19 May 2025**.

The Assessment Panel will consist of a Senior Defra Official, the Chair of the Animal Health & Welfare Board for England, a member of the Transforming Farm Animal Health & Welfare policy team and an independent panel member. Applications will be assessed against the essential criteria in deciding whom to invite for interview.

Further details about the format of interviews will be provided to candidates in advance and are expected to be virtual.

A final decision on appointments will be made by Defra Ministers.

How to apply

In order to apply you will need to visit <https://apply-for-public-appointment.service.gov.uk/roles> and either [create an account](#) or [sign in](#).

Once you are logged into your account, click on 'apply for this role' and follow the on-screen instructions. To apply, all candidates are required to provide:

- a Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- a supporting statement or no more than 1,000 words, setting out how you meet the essential criteria – make sure you refer to the contents of this document and provide specific examples
- equality information
- information relating to any outside interests or reputational issues

We will ask you to check and confirm your personal details to ensure your application is accurate.

You will also have the opportunity to make a reasonable adjustment request or apply under the disability confident scheme before you submit your application.

The Advisory Assessment Panel reserves the right to only consider applications that contain all of the elements listed above, and that arrive before the published deadline for applications.

For an informal discussion about the role please contact ahwbeseecretariat@defra.gov.uk

If you have any questions about the appointments process, please email the Public Appointments Team at publicappts@defra.gov.uk

Completed applications should be submitted by 12 noon, Monday 28 April 2025.

Conflicts of Interest/Due diligence

If you have any interests that might be relevant to the work of the AHWBE, and which could lead to a real or perceived conflict of interest if you were to be appointed, please provide details in your application. If you have queries about this and would like to discuss further, please contact the [Public Appointments Team](#).

Given the nature of public appointments, it is important that those appointed as members of public bodies maintain the confidence of Parliament and the public. If there are any issues in your personal or professional history that could, if you were appointed, be misconstrued, cause embarrassment, or cause public confidence in the appointment to be jeopardised, it is important that you bring them to the attention of the Advisory Assessment Panel and provide details of the

issue(s) in your application. In considering whether you wish to declare any issues, you should also reflect on any public statements you have made, including through social media.

As part of our due diligence checks we will consider anything in the public domain related to your conduct or professional capacity. This will include us undertaking searches of previous public statements and social media, blogs or any other publicly available information. This information may be made available to the Advisory Assessment Panel and they may wish to explore issues with you should you be invited to interview. The information may also be shared with ministers and Cabinet Office.

Annex A – Animal Health and Welfare Board for England

Role

The Board is a principal source of departmental advice to Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) ministers on all strategic health and welfare matters relating to all kept animals in England.

The Board's role is to set the strategic policy framework as the basis for day-to-day advice to ministers and for day-to-day operational actions. It operates within the broader departmental framework

Board responsibilities

- Advising on the strategic policy in terms of Animal Health & Welfare and providing expertise where appropriate in the development of key policies.
- Assessment of the risk of threats from animal disease and how to manage these.
- The implementation of policy, commissioning its delivery and ensuring value for money by the relevant Defra agencies and other delivery organisations.
- The effectiveness and proportionality of the regulatory framework.
- Reviewing the 'Contingency Plan for Exotic Notifiable Diseases of Animals in England' as part of the consultation to include:
 - Scope of the plan
 - Response framework
 - Dependencies on delivery resources.
- relationship management with other Defra animal health & welfare bodies.

The board will focus on strategic, longer term and cross-cutting matters with a potentially high impact on animal keepers and where communications with and input from the various sectors are key to success.

Membership

The Board is made up of both senior Defra officials and 'external' (non-Defra) members, with not less than 10 and not more than 14 members. The chair is an external member. The Defra officials on the board will be the SROs in Defra with responsibility for the relevant programmes and budgets relating to animal health and welfare policy and its delivery. The Chief Veterinary Officer (CVO) (in their role as CVO for England) and the Chief Executive of APHA will be executive members. External board members will serve in an individual capacity as non-executive members rather than as formal representatives of particular sectors or organisations. Their key roles will be:

- to contribute actively and constructively to the deliberations and work of the board
- to reach agreed and soundly based views and decisions with due regard to value for money
- to build good working relations with other members of the board, and with officials
- to ensure the effective working of the board

- to take a 'portfolio', namely lead responsibility for effective engagement and communication with a sector (or sectors) of the livestock industry and/or animal keepers, and/or other interested groups
- to represent the Board, communicating its work, views and decisions to stakeholders and to the general public

External members will be individuals who have the confidence, trust, and support of major stakeholder interests and experience and knowledge of animal-keeping. Collectively, they will bring knowledge and experience of the relevant businesses, customers and wider interests in animal health and welfare, be able to articulate the views and concerns of those groups and interests to the board and the minister, and report back to those groups on the work, the thinking and the agreed view of the board.

The independent chair and other external members will be appointed by the Minister for fixed terms and will operate under the terms of an agreed contract. The appointments process will be transparent and open, and the appointments will be publicly advertised. Members' interests will be published, and any potential conflicts of interest will be dealt with in the appropriate way. External members will serve in a personal capacity rather than as formal representatives of sectors or organisations.

All external members will be remunerated. The AHWBE will be served by a Secretariat within Defra.

Governance and reporting lines

The Chair and other external Board members are appointed by Ministers for a three-year fixed term (with the option of reappointment subject to performance and business needs). The appointment process is transparent and open and is publicly advertised.

Meetings and Ways of Working

The Board meets quarterly, with meetings between non-Executive directors, policy and delivery officials held in the intervening months. A newsletter will be published after each meeting of the Board. The lead responsible Minister also meets regularly with the Board Chair.

Animal health and welfare policy and its delivery is a devolved matter. The Board will consider UK and international issues and will formulate a view on the 'England' position. The board will be informed of views in other parts of the UK to aid its work.

Animal health and welfare policy and delivery affects, and needs to take account of, other departmental interests (notably the Department of Health and Social Care and the Food Standards Agency in relation to public health and food safety). Current liaison arrangements remain at Defra official level. Relevant information and advice resulting from that liaison will be provided to the Board, when appropriate. Advice from other departments will be treated with whatever confidentiality restrictions they request. Board papers will remain confidential and external members will be required to abide by confidentiality requirements.

Annex B – The seven principles of public life

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.



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