

Principles for the Treatment of Independent Scientific Advice

The *Modernising Government* White Paper of 1999 stated that “policy decisions should be based on sound evidence”. Large numbers of academic researchers and other experts give the Government the benefit of their expertise, usually without payment, through the work of scientific advisory bodies.

Independent advisers have responsibilities defined by the Government Office for Science *Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees*, as well as the Terms of Reference and Codes for individual committees.

The following ***Statement of Principles for the Treatment of Independent Scientific Advice*** would enhance confidence in the scientific advisory system and help Government to secure essential advice.

1. Academic Freedom

- Becoming a member of an independent advisory committee does not reduce the freedom of an adviser to communicate publicly, whether via scholarly publication and conferences, through the general media or to parliament, subject to the restrictions in existing Codes of Practice, notably:
 - respecting confidentiality,
 - not claiming to speak for the Government, and
 - making clear whether they are communicating on behalf of their committees

2. Independence of Operation

- Independent scientific advisory bodies are protected from political and other interference in their work
- In the context of independent scientific advice, disagreement with Government policy and the public articulation and discussion of relevant evidence and issues by members of advisory committees can not be grounds for criticism or dismissal
- Advisory committees need the service of an independent press office

3. Proper Consideration of Advice

- Reports from committees will usually be published and will not normally be criticised or rejected prior to publication
- If the Government is minded to reject a recommendation, the relevant scientific advisory committee will normally be invited to comment privately before a final decision is made
- It is recognised that some policy decisions are contingent on factors other than the scientific evidence, but when expert scientific advice is rejected the reasons should be described explicitly and publicly
- The advice of expert committees does not cease to be valid merely because it is rejected or not reflected in policy

We ask the Government to affirm its support for these principles.

THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE HAVE ENDORSED THE PRINCIPLES SET OUT ABOVE INDIVIDUALLY, NOT ON BEHALF OF THEIR INSTITUTIONS OR COMMITTEES:

Name	Scientific advisory experience has included:
Professor Jon Ayres FRCP FFOM	Chair, Committee on Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP) Chair, Advisory Committee on Pesticides (ACP)
Professor Sheila M. Bird MA PhD CStat FFPH MRC Biostatistics Unit Institute of Public Health University of Cambridge	Member of Scientific Pandemic Influenza Advisory Committee Inaugural chair of Home Office's Surveys, Design and Statistics Subcommittee and member of Home Office's Scientific Advisory Committee (2004-2009) Member of Medicines Commission (1991-1995) First Statistician Member of Appraisal Committee for the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (1999-2005) Member of Ad Hoc TSE/BSE Sub-Group of EC Scientific Steering Committee (1999 - 2003) Member of Scientific Committee for European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) (2001-2005) Member of Arrestees Survey Scientific Advisory Group (2003 – 2006) Member of Government Chief Scientist's Review Panel on use of science by Home Office (2007) Member of Medical Research Council /Department Health Research Advisory Group on TSEs (1998-2004) Member of Research Council/Department of Health Steering Group for Studies of the prevalence of detectable PrP ^{SC} (1999- 2004).
Professor Janet Bainbridge	Chair of the Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (1997- 2003) Chair of the GM Organisms (contained use) Advisory Committee Formerly Vice President Government and Europe of the Centre for Process Innovation (CPI). Chair of the HSE Committee Scientific Advisory Committee on Genetic Modification (2003 -) Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (1997 - 2003) Member of ACRE (Advisory Committee on Releases into the Environment) Member of the MHRA Borderline substances review group Former Senior Specialist Advisor (Government and Europe) OneNorthEast Regional Development Agency

<p>Professor Colin Blakemore FMedSci FRCP (Hon) FIBiol (Hon) FRS</p>	<p>Chair of the Food Standards Agency's General Advisory Committee on Science Chair of the Health Protection Agency's Electromagnetic Fields Discussion Group Commissioner of the UK Drug Policy Commission</p>
<p>Prof Alan R Boobis OBE PhD FSB CBIol FBTS Dept of Experimental Medicine and Toxicology Division of Investigative Science Imperial College London</p>	<p>Member of UK Advisory Committee on Pesticides (1997-2002) Deputy chairman (2000-2002) Chairman of Medical and Toxicology Panel (2000-2002) Member of the Veterinary Residues Committee (2001-2004) Member of the European Food Safety Authority Scientific Panel on Plant Health, Plant Protection Products and their Residues (PPR) (2003-2009); vice-chair from 2006-2009 Member of European Food Safety Authority Scientific Committee Working group on the Benchmark Dose (2006-2009) Member of European Food Safety Authority Scientific Committee Working Group on Risk-Benefit Assessment (2007-date) Member of the European Food Safety Authority Scientific Panel on Contaminants in the Food Chain (CONTAM) (2009-) Member of WHO Expert Advisory Panel on Food Safety (1997-) Member of the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (1999-); Chair/vice-chair (2003-2007) Member of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (Residues of Veterinary Drugs) (1997-) Member of HPA Board Sub-Committee for Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards (2005-) Member of Committee on Carcinogenicity (2003-) Member of Committee on Toxicity (2003-); vice-chair from 2008</p>
<p>Professor David Coggon FMedSci Occupational and Environmental Health MRC Environmental Epidemiology Unit Southampton University and Southampton General Hospital</p>	<p>Chair of the Depleted Uranium Oversight Board (Ministry of Defence) (2001-2007). Chair of the UK government's Advisory Committee on Pesticides (2000-05). Member of the Advisory Group on Non-Ionising Radiation (Health Protection Agency). Member of the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council Member of the Expert Panel on Air Quality</p>

	<p>Standards Member of the Stewart Committee on Mobile Phone Technology, Member of three monograph committees for the evaluation of industrial chemicals at the International Agency for Research on Cancer.</p>
Sir David Cox FRS	Former President, Royal Statistical Society
<p>Professor Peter Farmer Department of Cancer Studies and Molecular Medicine University of Leicester</p>	<p>Chair of Committee on Mutagenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COM) Member of Committee on Carcinogenicity (COC) Member of General Advisory Committee on Science (GACS)</p>
<p>Diana Garnham Chief Executive The Science Council</p>	Chair DBIS Science and Society Science for Careers Expert Group
Professor Azra Ghani	Member of Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (2007-)
<p>Professor Peter Green FRS Professor of Statistics University of Bristol</p>	Former President, Royal Statistical Society
<p>Professor Andrew P. Grieve BSc MSc PhD Division of Health & Social Care Research Department of Public Health Sciences King's College</p>	<p>Member of UK Food Standards Agency Working party on Variation and Uncertainty in Toxicology Working Party (2004 - 2005) Member of Commission on Human Medicines Ad Hoc Expert Group on Bioequivalence (2007 -) Member of Commission on Human Medicines Expert Advisory Group on Clinical Trials (2007 -) Member of Commission on Human Medicines Ad Hoc Expert Group Antibiotics in pre-term labour (2008-2008)</p>
<p>Professor David Hand President Royal Statistical Society</p>	
<p>Professor Rosemary Hails MBE Section Head, Centre for Ecology & Hydrology</p>	<p>Member of the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment Member for the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Environment Working group Chair, Natural Capital Initiative Section Head, Centre for Ecology & Hydrology Supernumerary fellow at St Anne's College Oxford. Senior research associate at the Zoology Department, Oxford University. Visiting Professor at Oxford Brookes University.</p>

	Associate editor for the Journal of Applied Ecology
Professor Sir Gabriel Horn FRS Emeritus Professor, Department of Zoology, Cambridge	Chairman, Working Party Report to Department of Health, <i>Brain science, addiction and drugs</i> Acad Medical Science (2008) Chairman, Working Party Report to DEFRA, <i>Review of the origin of BSE</i> (2001) Chairman, Cambridge University Government Programme (1997-2007)
Professor Will Irving Professor of Virology, Department of Microbiology, University of Nottingham	Advisory Group on Hepatitis Member (1998-2005) Deputy Chair (2006-08) Chair (2009-) Member of the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens (2003-) Co-opted Member of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs Hepatitis C Prevention Working Group (2007-09) Chair of the Trent Cohort Study of Patients infected with Hepatitis C Virus
Professor Alan Jackson Professor of Human Nutrition, School of Medicine, University of Southampton	Chair, Scientific Advisory Committee, Food Standards Agency / Dept of Health (2000-present) Member, Committee on Medical Aspects of Food & Nutrition Policy (COMA), Dept of Health (1991-2000) Chairman, Working Expert Group on diet & Cancer to COMA, Dept of Health (1993 – 1998) Member, Working expert Group on the Nutritional Status of the Population, and Folic Acid Subgroup to COMA, Dept of Health 1995 - present
Lord Krebs Kt FRS FMed Sci Principal Jesus College Oxford	Chairman of the UK Food Standards Agency (2000-2005) Member and Chair of sub-group for UK Climate Change Committee Chairman of the Royal Society's Science Policy Advisory Group Chairman, UK Science and Technology Honours Committee Chair, enquiry by the Science and Technology Select Committee into Nanotechnology and Food (2009)
Professor Duncan Maskell Head, Department of Veterinary Medicine, University of Cambridge	Member, Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Marks and Spencer Professor of Farm Animal Health, Food Science and Food Safety
Lord May OM AC Kt FRS	Former President of The Royal Society (2000-

Joint Professorship Oxford University and Imperial College, London	2005) Former Chief Scientific Adviser to the UK Government Head of the UK Office of Science and Technology (1995-2000) Member of the UK Government's Climate Change Committee
Professor David H. Phillips Institute of Cancer Research The Royal Marsden	Chair, Committee on Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment Member of Committee on Mutagenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment Member of General Advisory Committee on Science
Professor Michael Pilling Chair, Air Quality Expert Group 2001-2009	Chair, Air Quality Expert Group (2001-2009), an advisory body answering to Defra
Professor Chris Pollock CBE Director of the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research Aberystwyth University	Chair of the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment (ACRE) (1999-) Chief Scientific Advisor to the Department of the First Minister of Wales (Welsh Assembly Government) Chair of the independent Scientific Steering Committee for the programme of farm-scale evaluations of GM crops Chair, Defra Research Priorities Group for Sustainable Farming and Food
Professor Chris Rapley Director Science Museum	
Professor David Read FRS	Formerly Vice President The Royal Society. Chair of Forestry Commission Advisory Board on Forest Research
Lord Rees of Ludlow President Royal Society	
Sir Martin Taylor FRS	
Dame Jean Thomas DBE FRS Master St. Catharine's College Cambridge	Past Member, Scientific Advisory Committee of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund Past Member, Scientific Advisory Committee of The Lister Institute for Preventative Medicine