

Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity Officials Advisory Group (OAG)

Terms of Reference

Summary

Professor Ian Boyd, Defra's Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA), has convened a Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity¹ Expert Taskforce to support Defra's response to tree and plant disease outbreaks. The Taskforce will draw on and review evidence to provide recommendations to identify risks to the UK from tree pests and pathogens and on the steps necessary to prepare for and deal with outbreaks.

An Officials Advisory Group (OAG) comprising experts from Defra and the Defra Network will support the Taskforce. The OAG will help to ensure complementary actions to work already underway for the Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity Action Plan.

Aims of the OAG:

- To raise awareness of the Taskforce of planned and current activities on the ground.
- To provide expert advice to the Taskforce where required.
- To review recommendations from the Taskforce to consider their feasibility and how they complement existing activities.
- To develop operational plans to support policy implementation of the Secretary of State's response to the Taskforce recommendations.

Governance:

The OAG provides an advisory role to the expert Taskforce and as such will not make an independent report or meet separately. The Taskforce will draw on the OAG advice to revise recommendations and in their work towards a new Tree and Plant Health Strategy.

¹The Taskforce will focus on tree health and related Biosecurity in Great Britain. This includes trees in woodlands, forests and in the wider environment, including amenity, fruit, and urban trees. Woody shrubs associated with trees and green spaces, are relevant as either a pathway of introduction/spread of serious pest and pathogen threats, or where they act as sources of infection or infestation of trees (LWEC, 2011). Available at [Securing Tree Health in a Changing Environment](#).

Officials Advisory Group members

Dr Chris Cheffings	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
Dr Joan Webber	Forest Research
Tony Kirkham	Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew
Nigel Gibbens	Defra
Wilma Harper	Forestry Commission
Martin Ward	Food and Environment Research Agency
Roger Coppock	Forestry Commission
Dr John Morgan	Forestry Commission
Julie Hitchcock	Defra
Ian Mitchell	Defra
Prof. Peter Freer-Smith	Forest Research
Hugh Clayden	Forestry Commission Scotland
Prof. Hugh Evans	Forestry Research in Wales
Dr David Slawson	Food and Environment Research Agency

NOTE – Invaluable advice was also provided towards the end of the Taskforce’s deliberations by Sharon Mole – Interim Deputy Director, National Customs Operations, Border Force.