

## **AGENDA ITEM 4**

### **Emerging Science and Bioethics Advisory Committee**

#### **Cover paper by the Secretariat**

#### **Scope and Working Practices**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. This cover note to ESBAC's draft Scope and Working Practices, ESBAC 01(04)(02) is to introduce the background and development of this document and to summarise the questions being asked to Members.
2. ESBAC's draft Scope and Working Practices are intentionally comprehensive to ensure a common understanding of the ways of working of this new Committee, for Members as well as for the wider public as these will be published on the DH hosted website.
3. The document describes the role of ESBAC including terms of reference, and Code of Practice. It outlines the Committee's ways of working, reporting lines and its membership and leaves key questions open for discussion for Members to shape ESBAC. These questions are summarised below.
4. The draft Scope and Working Practices was drafted in line with the Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees and with the Government Policy on Standards in public life, openness and accountability. As such, Members may wish to read the recent letter from the Government Chief Scientific Advisor to the Chief Scientific Advisers and DH's response from Dame Sally.

### **Questions to Members**

#### **5. Role**

Q. Is the above criteria sufficiently clear and yet broad enough for ESBAC to be guided and yet retain flexibility in the selection criteria for topics?

## **6. Terms of Reference**

- Q. Do Members have any comments on ESBAC's scope of work?
- Q. Would Members find it helpful to spell out, in this CoP, the organisations which are also actively engaged in bioethics, as above, to clarify remit?
- If yes, are there any other issues or areas that should be added or removed?
- Q. Do Members agree that the bodies listed in paragraph 6, may form a joint working group with ESBAC where common or overlapping issues?

## **COMMITTEE ORGANISATION**

### **ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

## **7. Representatives and Observers**

- Q. Who should ESBAC's Observers be?
- Q. Should ESBAC hold open meetings? What format should such meetings have? i) a one off workshop, ii) a yearly event, a stakeholder only event, or iii) be agenda-led, iv) any other suggestion?
- Q. Should ESBAC have an open call for topics on its website?

## **WORKING PRACTICES**

## **8. Requesting and Reporting advice**

- Q. Are the reporting arrangements sufficiently clear? Are there any comments Members wish to make?
- Q. In the interest of transparency, openness and accessibility, would it be appropriate to develop and include a section on the framework or criteria by which ESBAC will decide whether issues will fall within its remit? This is further explored in paper ESBAC 01(05)(01).

## 9. Relationships with other Committees

Q. Do Members wish to formalise any working relationship with any other Committee? If so, which Committee should ESBAC approach?

Q. Are there any organisations ESBAC should seek to involve at this stage?

## 10. Records of Meetings

Q. Are Members content to comment and finalise minutes of ESBAC's meetings electronically out of Committee?

Minutes will reflect comments and will not name individuals.

## 11. Working Groups and Partnerships

Q. Are there any Working Groups that ESBAC should start considering setting up at this stage?

Q. Should ESBAC have a Horizon Scanning Working Group or any other formal arrangement?

If yes, please comment on the membership and remit.

Q. In addition to Working Groups, can Members suggest possible partnerships or collaborations and what these might look like?

### Papers for discussion

**ESBAC 01(04)(01)** Cover paper by the Secretariat (this paper)

**ESBAC 01(04)(02)** Draft Scope and Working Practices

### Papers for information

**ESBAC 01(04)(03)** Letter from the GCSA

**ESBAC 01(04)(04)** CMO response to GCSA