



Home Office

# National DNA Database Ethics Group

## Appointment of members

### Information pack for applicants

Reference: HOSRS4

The closing date for the receipt of applications is **Friday 22 November, 2013**

This information pack is available in hard copy from:

NDNAD Ethics Group Recruitment  
Home Office Science Secretariat  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Seacole Building  
2, Marsham Street  
LONDON  
SW1P 4DF  
Tel: 020 7035 3049  
Email: [HOSRSRecruitment@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:HOSRSRecruitment@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)



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# National DNA Database Ethics Group

On 25 July 2007, Meg Hillier MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Home Office tabled a Written Ministerial Statement announcing the setting up of The National DNA Database Ethics Group as an Advisory Non-Departmental Public Body. The purpose of the Ethics Group is to advise Ministers on ethical issues concerning the National DNA Database (NDNAD) and related matters.

The decisions, and decision-making, of the National DNA Database (NDNAD) Strategy Board are under increasing public scrutiny. It is clear from internal Board discussion and external parties such as the Human Genetics Commission and the House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee that consideration of ethical issues as they affect the nature of NDNAD business is essential.

The criminal justice legislation makes it clear that the police operational activity and research using '*DNA samples held by the supplier laboratories, and information derived from these samples held by the Custodian, police and supplier laboratories*' can only be carried out for very specific purposes relating to the prevention, detection or prosecution of crime.

## Role

The Ethics Group provides independent ethical advice and information to the National DNA Database Strategy Board and Home Office Ministers and where appropriate and relevant to:

- Reviewing the appropriateness of policy and practice.
- Maintaining high ethical standards in decision making.
- Protecting the safety of the public in providing and storing DNA samples and profiles.
- Protecting the safety of law enforcement and courts stakeholders in the use of DNA-based information.

It is at the discretion of the NDNAD Strategy Board whether to act on the advice provided.

The Ethics Group serves to enhance confidence and trust in the NDNAD Governance and oversight, in order to assure the public that our government and police service is held to standards that place the public interest above their private interests and act in an honest and transparent manner.

The Ethics Group takes a focused and procedural approach to supporting the NDNAD Strategy Board, addressing clearly specified issues. It receives requests to review decisions and policies of the Board and research requests received by the Board. It produces advice and recommendations as to acceptance, rejection or amendment to the issues and positions debated by the NDNAD Strategy Board.

The key principles applying to the consideration and decision making in relation to ethical matters in the development of NDNAD policy and decisions on its operation use include, but are not limited to:

- complying with legislative provisions for police use of DNA under Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act and subsequent amendments;
- meeting Data Protection Principles;
- complying with European Convention Human Rights (Article 8, on the right to respect for private and family life, in particular);

- applying 'proportionality' in meeting police investigative requirements and wider Criminal Justice System aims;
- maintaining the integrity of the NDNAD;
- not prejudicing the delivery of operational services and management information from the NDNAD, as currently agreed by the Board
- maintaining public confidence in the NDNAD;
- maintaining confidentiality of, and control of, access to DNA samples to the same standards as apply to medical ethical guidelines.

If any of the principles cannot be satisfied, the Board should be advised to reject the proposal.

### **The nature of the work**

As a member of the National DNA Database Ethics Group, you will work with the chair and other members as a team in:

- providing advice and support to the chair
- ensuring effective governance of the group
- building and maintaining positive and effective working relationships with stakeholders
- representing the views of the group to others
- undertaking other duties requested by chair
- contributing to the overall strategic direction of the ethics group through clear strategic and creative thinking

### **Further information**

Further information about the work of the NDNADEG and the composition of the Group can be found on the Home Office website <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/national-dna-database-ethics-group>

## **The role of members**

The post holder will be expected:

- To attend meetings of the Committee. These will number four each year with additional working group and ad hoc meetings being arranged as necessary.
- To act corporately with other members of the Committee to ensure that it fulfils its responsibilities by providing Ministers with impartial, balanced, objective advice on issues relating to the National DNA Database

A member has responsibility for:

- acting in the public interest;
- attending and contributing at Ethics Group meetings and discussions;
- developing the evidence base of subjects being considered and formulating advice;
- examining and challenging, if necessary, the assumptions on which advice is formulated;
- ensuring that the Ethics Group has the opportunity to consider: the available evidence on a given issue; contrary views; and, where appropriate the concerns and values of stakeholders before a decision is taken;

- sharing in the general responsibility to consider the wider context in which their expertise is employed;
- acting with a presumption of openness; and
- ensuring that they act in accordance with the Code of Practice for Science Advisory Committees and act in accordance with the Seven Principles of Public Life - the Nolan Principles.

## Required expertise

We are currently seeking candidates with experience in ethical issues for seven posts on the NDNADEG.

We welcome applicants with experience in fields related to the group's work, such as diversity issues, human rights law, policy development, psychology and medicine.

### Qualities and experience required

In addition to the expertise detailed above, as a member of the Group, you must be able to demonstrate that you:

- Contribute in a pro-active, constructive and well balanced way to the work of the Ethics Group.
- Have integrity, with experience and a working knowledge of ethical issues
- Are aware of the current legislation relevant to ethical issues, for example, that relating to human rights, and race, age and gender discrimination
- Are more than "one dimensional" in your contribution and approach to the issues to be considered by the group
- Are committed to working in partnership with a wide variety of stakeholders, at all levels, that contribute to the successful delivery of an organisation's outcomes
- Have a proven track record of success in working within highly sensitive and political environments and for delivering measurable results

## Remuneration

Members are not entitled to receive any remuneration but can claim travel and subsistence expenses.

## Time commitment

The National DNA Database Ethics Group meets at least quarterly, although some additional work may be required between meetings.

## Tenure

Successful candidates will be appointed initially for a period of up to three years. Committee members may be appointed for a further term of up to three years subject to continuously good performance over the period of the first appointment.

A member may resign at any time by notice in writing to the Home Secretary. The Home Secretary may terminate the appointment under certain conditions, which will be notified to the successful candidates on appointment.

It should be noted that this post is a public appointment, not a job. Therefore, such appointments are not normally subject to the provisions of employment law.

## Diversity and Equality of Opportunity

The appointment will be governed by the principles of public appointment based on merit with independent assessment and transparency of process. Candidates may come from a wide range of background and experience, although the successful candidate will need to demonstrate that they meet all the essential criteria for the post. The Home Office is keen to see applications from groups currently under represented, including women, people from minority ethnic communities and disabled people.

## Interview Access Scheme

We guarantee to interview anyone with a disability whose application meets the minimum criteria for the post. By 'minimum criteria' we mean that you must provide us with evidence in your application which demonstrates that you generally meet the level of competence required for each criteria defined as "essential".. We are committed to appointing and supporting disabled people.

### **What do we mean by disability?**

The Disability Discrimination Act, 1995 defined a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and adverse long-term effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

### **How do I apply?**

If you want to apply under the Interview Access Scheme simply complete the declaration in the application form. We will try to provide access, equipment or other practical support to ensure that if you have a disability you can compete on equal terms with non-disabled people.

## How to Apply

All applicants must submit to [HOSRSRecruitment@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:HOSRSRecruitment@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk):

- Covering letter
- Up to date curriculum vitae
- Completed Application and Diversity Monitoring Form

### **Covering letter**

Your covering letter should provide evidence of your skills and experience against the essential selection criteria set out below. Please be clear about the scale and significance of your role/achievement. The evidence you provide against the selection criteria will be used by the selection panel to determine your suitability for the role.

- Experience and working knowledge of ethical issues
- Able to contribute in a proactive, constructive and well balanced way to the work of the Ethics Group
- Aware of the current legislation relevant to ethical issues, for example that relating to human rights, and race, age and gender discrimination
- More than “one dimensional” in your contribution and approach to the issues to be considered by the group
- Committed to working in partnership with a wide variety of stakeholders, at all levels, that contribute to successful delivery of an organisation’s outcomes
- A proven track record of success in working within highly sensitive and political environments and for delivering measurable results.

## Application and Diversity Monitoring Form

If you are unable to submit the monitoring form electronically, please contact NDNAD Ethics Group Recruitment on 020 7035 3049 who will be able to provide a copy of the form in a suitable format.

All applications will be acknowledged by email (or, if requested, by another manner). Your documentation must be received by the appointments team by no later than **Friday 22 November 2013**

## Additional information

The Application and Diversity Monitoring Form also requests some additional information. Please also tell us if you have:

- ever been convicted of any offence (other than minor motoring offences) which are not spent in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974;
- any charges outstanding;
- become bankrupt over the past ten years;
- been dismissed from any office or employment over the past ten years and the reasons for this; and
- ever been disqualified from acting as a company director or in the conduct of a Company ever been a director, partner or manager of a company which has gone into liquidation.

## Conflict of Interests

There is a requirement to declare in the application form any actual, or potential, conflict of interest you may have in being appointed as a member of the Committee.

*What is a conflict of interest?*

Public Appointments require the highest standards of propriety, involving impartiality, integrity and objectivity, in relation to the stewardship of public funds and the oversight and management of all related activities. This means that any private, voluntary, charitable or political interest which might be material and relevant to the work of the body concerned should be declared. It is important, therefore, that you consider your circumstances when applying for a public appointment and identify any potential conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived.

## Standards in Public Life and Code of Conduct

The appointee will be expected at all times to act in good faith and observe the highest standards of impartiality, integrity and objectivity in relation to the conduct of the Committee's business.

The successful candidate will be required to subscribe to the *Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies*. The code can be accessed at [http://resources.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/code-of-conduct\\_tcm6-38901.pdf](http://resources.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/code-of-conduct_tcm6-38901.pdf)

## Confidentiality/Security Clearance Check

There may be occasion when the post-holder will be required to have sight of papers marked restricted or confidential. There is, therefore, a requirement that the successful candidate will be required to undergo a Home Office security clearance check.

## Appointment process

The appointment process will adhere to Commissioner for Public Appointments Code of Practice. The Code of Practice can be accessed at: <http://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Code-of-Practice-20121.pdf>

Applications will be assessed by the selection panel. The Panel will consider those candidates who best demonstrate that they meet the stipulated criteria as set out in this information pack.

The selection panel will inform Home Office Ministers of the shortlist before candidates are informed of the outcome. All candidates will be informed of the outcome of the sift stage by email before interviews are conducted.

Interviews are currently scheduled to take place on 14, 17, 21, 28 and 30 January 2014

Following interview, the selection panel will recommend to the Secretary of State the candidates they believe best meet the criteria for the role. In considering that advice, the Secretary of State or delegated Minister will make the final decision on the appointment.

The post-holder will be accountable (in the first instance) to the Home Office Chief Scientific Adviser.

Should you be unsuccessful, at any stage, you will be notified by the appointments team.

## Role of Commissioner for Public Appointments

In line with Ministerial appointments, the Commissioner for Public Appointments regulates and monitors appointments to public bodies to ensure that procedures are fair and open.



# Complaints procedure

The Home Office conducts all public appointments in accordance with the principles set out by the Commissioner for Public Appointments in the Code of Practice.

Although every effort is made to ensure that high standards are maintained, we recognise that things can sometimes go wrong. If you have a complaint relating to a Public Appointment process run by the Home Office, you should follow the steps below. Complaints need to be made in writing and should be addressed to:

Home Office  
Public Body Team  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Peel  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

Quoting reference; **HOSRS4**.

The process for addressing a complaint is broken down into three stages:

## **Stage 1**

Your complaint will be passed to the team that conducted the appointment campaign for response. You should expect a written reply within 15 working days of the letter being received by the department.

## **Stage 2**

If the response provided at stage 1 does not satisfactorily address your complaint, you should again write to the Public Body Team. The department will then make arrangements for it to be reviewed by an independent senior official.

## **Stage 3**

If you are still dissatisfied, you can ask the Commissioner for Public Appointments to investigate your complaint. The process for doing this is set out at

<http://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/what-we-do/complaints-and-investigations/>

You should only contact the Commissioner once the Home Office process has been exhausted.

## THE COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE 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.