



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

# **Equalities, Ethics and Communities**

## **Terms of reference**

**April 2025  
V3.00**

## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. The UKHSA Advisory Board has established an Equalities, Ethics and Communities Committee of the Advisory Board to fulfil its functions. The Equalities, Ethics and Communities Committee will assist the UKHSA Advisory Board by giving advice on UKHSA's ambition to reduce health inequalities and engage with communities. It will also be a source of advice for ethical decision making in the field of health security.

## **2. Constitution**

- 2.1 The Committee is a mandatory requirement as set out in paragraph 5.16 of the UKHSA Framework Document signed by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Terms of Reference of the UKHSA Advisory Board.
- 2.2 The Equalities, Ethics and Communities Committee is an advisory committee with no executive powers; it is not the duty of the Equalities, Ethics and Communities Committee to carry out any function that properly belongs to the Executive.

## **3 Collaboration**

- 3.1 The Equalities, Ethics and Communities Committee will work closely with other fora in UKHSA including the:
  - a) the People and Culture Committee recognising the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion in our workforce
  - b) the Health Equity Board and inclusion networks

## **4. Membership**

- 4.1 The Equalities, Ethics and Communities Committee shall be chaired by a non-executive member appointed by Ministers to the UKHSA Advisory Board, selected and appointed by the UKHSA Chair to the role of Committee Chair.
- 4.2 The members of the Equalities, Ethics and Communities Committee are:
  - non-executive Chair
  - non-executive member
  - 2 x Associate non-executive member
  - Chief Medical Adviser
  - Director of Health Equity and Clinical Governance
  - Director of Policy and Strategy
  - Director, Health Protection in Regions
  - Director, Analysis and Intelligence Assessment
  - Deputy Director, Culture, Talent and Capability

- 4.4 The Equalities, Ethics and Communities Committee shall review its membership at least every 2 years.
- 4.5 Members of the group are expected to attend all meetings (or send apologies when unavoidably absent) wherever possible. However, on approval of the Chair they may authorise an appropriate colleague to represent them.
- 4.6 The Equalities, Ethics and Communities Committee may invite individuals with particular expertise, knowledge or experience to provide input on a specific topic or agenda item. There will be a particular focus on inclusion of lived experience.
- 4.7 The Equalities, Ethics and Communities Committee will be required to consider the impact of UKHSA's activities on the diverse communities it serves. To achieve this, the Chair will consider how the Committee membership and attendance reflects the diversity of those communities.

## **5. Reporting**

- 5.1 The Chair of the Committee will provide a verbal update at the following Advisory Board on discussion of the quarterly meeting.
- 5.2 The minutes of each meeting will be shared with the Advisory Board once confirmed by the Committee.
- 5.3 The Advisory Board and Executive Committee will have right of access to everything seen or produced by the Equalities, Ethics and Communities Committee.

## **6. Remit and responsibilities**

- 6.1 The Equalities, Ethics and Communities Committee will assist the UKHSA Advisory Board in providing advice, support and challenge to the organisation, focusing on:
  - a) development and implementation of the Health Equity Strategy, including its approach to community engagement, research and evaluation priorities
  - b) new developments in addressing health inequalities across the health system, including wider policy considerations
  - c) reviewing the organisation's actions related to its statutory duty to protect the nation's health, and reduce inequalities linked to its core role of protecting against emergency threats

- d) advising the ethical basis for internal programme activities and decision-making, including emergency response and pandemic planning; the Equalities, Ethics and Communities Committee may seek additional expert advice to support its advice on ethical issues that arise during meetings
- e) advising UKHSA's contribution to equitable health outcomes through delivery of UKHSA's strategic objectives
- f) advising how the organisation considers and addresses the needs of different communities to meet its core role of protecting against health threats

## **7. Meetings**

- 7.1 The Equalities, Ethics and Communities Committee will meet at least 4 times a year. The Chair may convene additional meetings, as they deem necessary.
- 7.2 Equalities, Ethics and Communities Committee meetings will not be held in public but agreed minutes from meetings will be put on the agenda for public sessions of the UKHSA Advisory Board and published on UKHSA's website with Advisory Board papers (subject to any redactions in line with exemptions under the Freedom of Information Act 2000).
- 7.3 Unless otherwise agreed, notice of each meeting confirming the venue, time and date together with an agenda of items to be discussed, shall be forwarded to each member of the Committee no later than 7 days before the date of the meeting.

## **8. Quorum**

- 8.1 A minimum of 4 members of the Equalities, Ethics and Communities Committee will be present for the meeting to be deemed quorate, at least 2 of which must be non-executive members.
- 8.2 Where a meeting is not quorate under paragraph 8.1 within one half hour from the time appointed for the meeting, or becomes inquorate during the course of the meeting, the Equalities, Ethics and Communities Committee members present may determine:
  - a) to adjourn to such time, date and place as they determine or
  - b) to continue and confirm any decision at the next quorate meeting

## **9. Secretariat**

- 9.1 The Equalities, Ethics and Communities Committee will be the Board Secretary of their nominee in the Corporate Governance team.

- 9.2 The Secretary will keep a formal record of all agendas, papers and minutes produced in the course of its business. This will be kept by the Corporate Governance team.
- 9.3 The minutes shall include:
- a) the names of:
    - i. every member present at the meeting
    - ii. any other person present and
    - iii. any apologies tendered by an absent member
  - b) the withdrawal from a meeting or part of a meeting of any member on account of a conflict of interest
  - c) any declaration of interest
  - d) key points of discussion, recommendations and actions

## **10. Approval and Review**

- 10.1 The Equalities, Ethics and Communities Committee shall conduct a review of its own effectiveness after one year from its first meeting.
- 10.2 The terms of reference of the Committee shall be approved by the UKHSA Advisory Board, and be reviewed at least every 2 years.

Date agreed by UKHSA Equalities, Ethics and Communities Committee: 8 April 2025  
Review date: 8 April 2027

Chair of UKHSA Equalities, Ethics and Communities Committee: Graham Hart