



# Minutes

**Title of meeting** Home Office Science Advisory Council - 30<sup>th</sup> October  
**Date** 30 October 2024  
**Time** 13:00-16:00  
**Venue** 2MS / Microsoft Teams

## Attendees

### HOSAC Members

Professor Brooke Rogers (Co-chair)  
Professor Guy Nason (Co-chair)  
Professor Tushna Vandrevalla  
Professor Mark Watson-Gandy  
Professor Dave Delpy  
Professor Gabriella Spinelli  
Professor Paul Grasby  
Professor Brian Bell  
Professor David Main  
Ollie Whitehouse  
Professor Stuart Boyd  
Professor Helen Margetts  
Professor Shane Johnson  
Professor Owen Bowden-Jones

### Home Office Officials

Professor Jennifer Rubin  
Jason Dewhurst

### ESRC policy fellows

Keri Wong  
Eon Kim  
Helen Wells

## Apologies

Professor David C Lane  
Professor Lucina Hackman  
Professor Tamsin Mather  
Professor Tom Kirchmaier

### **Item 1: Welcome from HOSAC Co-Chair**

- 1.1 Brooke welcomed attendees to the meeting and noted the attendance of Policy Fellows from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) seconded to the Home Office.
- 1.2 Brooke provided an update on recent HOSAC activity and looked ahead to the next few months, for what is expected to be a busy period.
- 1.3 Guy mentioned the HOSAC recruitment was launched shortly before the meeting and summarised the areas the council hoped to strengthen.  
**ACTION 1 – HOSAC members to share the recruitment link with their networks.**

### **Item 2: Welcome and update from CSA**

- 2.1 Jennifer welcomed all members and provided an update on the Home Office's safer streets mission.
- 2.2 Jennifer went on to mention wider Home Office updates, including the:
  - Submission to Home Office ministers explaining HOSAC and its role.
  - Recent meeting with Lord Hanson, the minister responsible for Science, Innovation and Technology.
  - Ongoing discussions around Artificial Intelligence regulation.
- 2.3 Helen mentioned recent findings around AI and offered support on this area where helpful.  
**ACTION 2 – Jennifer and Helen to have a meeting in November to discuss recent findings, and for Helen to bring December/January findings to the January HOSAC meeting.**

### **Item 3: News Round**

- 3.1 Brooke summarised recent news regarding HOSAC, including the increased secretariat resource to the council.

### **Item 4: HOSAC Update: HOSAC involvement in US Bilat**

- 4.1 Jason summarised a broad set of science and analytical questions in the space of protective security that are relevant for discussion in the Home Office's bilats with US counterparts.
- 4.2 Jason explained a desire for HOSAC expertise to be built into these engagements, perhaps in the form of a virtual workshop with US counterparts in the first instance with more substantial involvement going forward.
- 4.3 Brooke summarised the enthusiasm of HOSAC members for this idea.  
**ACTION 3 – Jason to pull together a paper for HOSAC members on plans around their involvement in the Home Office/US bilats.**

### **Item 5: HOSAC Spotlight – ESRC Policy Fellows**

5.1 Keri, Helen, and Eon presented on their backgrounds and their work in the Home Office (see attached slides for further information).

5.2 General reflections on the fellowship scheme were positive, particularly around mentorship, and training from UKRI.

5.3 Brooke asked HOSAC members to keep the fellows and their projects in mind during their conversations across the Department.

**ACTION 4 – Secretariat to explore the possibility of future ESRC policy fellow cohorts being involved in HOSAC via the board meetings.**

### **Item 6: HOSAC Hosts Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) – Synthetic Opioids**

6.1 Members heard that the ACMD was a statutory independent scientific advisory committee established under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and comprised a range of experts, including psychopharmacologists, social scientists, and clinicians.

6.2 The ACMD's main areas of focus for recommendations included treatment and recovery, technical changes to legislation, emerging substances, and drug prevention. ACMD advice relevant to synthetic opioids included: on vulnerable populations, prevention, supply of naloxone, as well as advice on fentanyl and nitazenes. Ongoing risks included proliferation of increasingly potent opioids, increasing number of detections and infiltration of the heroin market, most use was unintentional and estimates for drug harms were unclear owing to inconsistent monitoring.

6.3 Owen emphasised that the ACMD was a resource to HOSAC relating to the latest evidence on emerging drug harms and can support HOSAC with drug specific work.

6.4 Shane asked about whether nitazenes would be picked up in drug driving tests.

**ACTION 5 – Shane to follow up with Owen on synthetic opioids after the meeting.**

### **Item 7: Associate member updates**

7.1 The Chair of the Animals in Science Committee (ASC), David, provided an overview of key activity since the last HOSAC meeting.

7.2 The Chair of the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC), Brian, provided an overview of key activity since the last HOSAC meeting.

7.3 The Co-Chair of Age Estimation Science Advisory Committee (AESAC), Stuart, provided an overview of key activity since the last HOSAC meeting.

7.4 The Chair of the Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group (BFEG), Mark, provided an overview of key activity since the last HOSAC meeting.

**Item 8: HOSAC Member Spotlight – Guy Nason**

8.1 Guy summarised his roles at various organisations:

- Chair in Statistics at Imperial College London.
- Founding co-director of Imperial X.
- Director of the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) Network Stochastic Processes and Time Series (NeST) Programme Grant.

8.2 Guy explained his work with Network Time Series and the benefits they could bring to the Home Office.

**Item 9: HOSAC Brainstorm – CSA oversight of R&D spend:**

9.1 Jennifer explained that as the Home Office Chief Scientific Adviser, she will have oversight of research and development (R&D) spend in the Department, following an internal change process.

**ACTION 6 – HOSAC members to send thoughts on the proposed definition of R&D to the Secretariat.**

9.2 Discussion of the process and how it can be completed most effectively.

**ACTION 7 – Secretariat to set up another meeting for a continued discussion about this process and how HOSAC can be best involved.**

**Item 10: Thanks and Close**

10.1 Brooke and Guy thanked all for attending and looked forward to the next HOSAC meeting, scheduled for late January.

**Summary of Actions**

- 1. HOSAC members to share the recruitment link with their networks.**
- 2. Jennifer and Helen to have a meeting in November to discuss recent findings, and for Helen to bring December/January findings to the January HOSAC meeting.**
- 3. Jason to pull together a paper for HOSAC members on plans around their involvement in the Home Office/US bilats.**
- 4. Secretariat to explore the possibility of future ESRC policy fellow cohorts being involved in HOSAC via the board meetings.**
- 5. Shane to follow up with Owen on synthetic opioids after the meeting.**
- 6. HOSAC members to send thoughts on the proposed definition of R&D to the Secretariat.**

7. **Secretariat to set up another meeting for a continued discussion about this process and how HOSAC can be best involved.**