



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

## DWP Methods Advisory Group Vacancy Advertisement

*DWP wishes to invite applications from experts to join its Methods Advisory Group. This group supports the Chief Scientific Adviser in ensuring DWP utilises cutting-edge scientific, technical and analytical approaches to provide robust evidence to support decisions.*

Location:	Geographically inclusive – some travel to DWP hub locations required
Number of Vacancies:	Up to 8
Remuneration:	Reasonable travel and subsistence costs
Time Requirements:	3-6 days per year
Length of Appointment:	3 years
<b>Closing Date:</b>	<b>28 May 2025</b>
Interviews:	Early June 2025

### Background

DWP is the UK's largest public service department, responsible for the design and delivery of the welfare system, and for addressing social policy challenges ranging from tackling family conflict to supporting the ageing population. DWP is responsible for delivering the state pension, working age benefits, disability and sickness benefits to 22 million citizens; and the Department's broader policy remit affects the lives of everyone in the country. DWP is directly responsible for both the design and the frontline delivery of its policies and services.

DWP's Methods Advisory Group (MAG) supports the Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) in providing cross-cutting, expert advice to ministers and senior officials across the Department's wide policy and operational remit. **The objective of the MAG is to ensure DWP utilises cutting-edge scientific, technical and analytical approaches to provide robust evidence to support decisions.**

DWP are looking to refresh its MAG membership by recruiting up to 8 new MAG members from academia and non-profit organisations with a research, science or analytical focus. New members will join existing members of the group. The Group is **transdisciplinary** and able to generate **innovative and creative ideas and solutions**. Membership reflects the need for qualitative methods and humanities alongside quantitative disciplines such as data science, statistics and economics. The scope encompasses organisational and management sciences alongside historical, geographical and socio-political perspectives. The Group supports the Department's internal economists, social researchers, statisticians, operational researchers, behavioural scientists, psychologists, data scientists and digital specialists.

## Person Specification

Members must at all times observe the highest standards of impartiality, integrity and objectivity in relation to the advice they provide.

### Essential:

- Proven leadership at national level in their specific fields
- Ability to operate at the interface between disciplines
- Excellent communication skills with the ability to develop and influence senior networks across government and with relevant stakeholders
- Personal and political sensitivity when working with colleagues, government and external parties

### We welcome applications from experts across a broad range of fields, including (but not limited to):

Anthropology	Management and organisational design
Behavioural science	Operational research
Data science	Political science
Decision Science	Psychology
Economics	Social policy
Geography	Sociology
Health and medicine	Statistics
History	
Law	

Applicants should have good links with other professionals in their specialised field and related areas. **Experience of multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary working to tackle strategic challenges is essential**, as is experience of delivering research/ activities with impact.

Applicants must be strong team players with effective communication, negotiation, judgement and influencing skills combined with strong analytical and problem-solving skills. Additionally, they must have the ability to weigh issues outside their own specialist areas and to appreciate the impact that their decisions may have on different stakeholders.

We are open to candidates from a wide range of backgrounds. The government seeks to achieve balance in the Group's membership profile in terms of gender, ethnic mix and disability alongside the wider criteria for membership.

## **Key Information**

### **Time commitment**

The DWP MAG holds 2-3 full-day meetings per year. These are usually in DWP's London headquarters but may occasionally take place at an alternative DWP hub such as Sheffield, Leeds or Newcastle. Between formal meetings, MAG members and their broad networks could be called upon for advice on a more ad-hoc basis by the CSA and colleagues across the Department. The overall time commitment will depend on the extent of members' participation in groups and advisory responsibilities between plenary meetings, but a minimum commitment is expected to be 3-6 days per year.

### **Conflicts of interest**

In line with established best practice for scientific advisory councils, the members of MAG are required to declare as part of their application any relevant personal or non-personal interests. These are published in the MAG's register of interests and are regularly updated.

### **Fees and expenses**

These positions are not salaried. Members may claim reasonable travel and other expenses.

### **Other information**

DWP is committed to providing equal opportunities for all, irrespective of race, age, disability, gender, marital status, religion, sexual orientation, transgender and working patterns, and to the principle of public appointments on merit with independent assessments, openness and transparency of process.

Please note that these positions do not offer employment.

## Application and recruitment procedure

Please submit your application by email to:  
**evidence.strategyteam@dwp.gov.uk**

Applications should consist of:

- **A full CV** (including nationality, education and professional qualifications, key publications, career history, and relevant achievements and responsibilities)
- **A covering letter** demonstrating evidence of your ability to meet the criteria for this role – please provide specific examples to demonstrate how you meet each of the criteria.
- **Completed Political Activity form.** Whether you are politically active in any way will not be a factor in the consideration of your application. The completion of this form enables the monitoring of political activity of candidates for a public appointment as far as it is already in the public domain. Neither activity nor affiliation is a criterion for appointment (except where statute dictates specific representation). If you are successful, the information provided will be published with the announcement of your appointment.
- **Completed declaration of interest form.** Prior to interview, applicants are required to declare any relevant personal or non-personal interests. This form must be completed before interview can proceed. Types of interest are described in the MAG Draft Code of Practice.
- **Diversity and inclusion questionnaire (optional).** This form is confidential, will be kept separately from your application and is for monitoring purposes only. We are asking for this information to help us meet our equality duties and to ensure that we understand the impact of our recruitment practices in relation to the protected characteristics. By monitoring and analysing this information we can understand then act to ensure our practices promote equality and remove any practices that could lead to unlawful discrimination.
- If you have a disability and would like us to provide any particular assistance for your interview and, if appointed, your performance in post, please indicate this on the diversity and inclusion questionnaire or let the secretariat know.

### How we will handle your application

Each application will be acknowledged by email. Your application will be assessed against the criteria laid out in the advertisement. We will let you know by email whether you have been shortlisted for interview. This email invitation to interview will be sent out at least 2 weeks before the interviews will be held.

Applications will be reviewed by the DWP CSA and MAG secretariat, who will agree the final short list. A panel led by the DWP CSA will interview candidates.

An invitation letter from the DWP CSA will then be sent to the selected candidates.

Once all candidates have been assessed, the panel will make recommendations for appointments for those judged to demonstrate the closest match with the published criteria. The Chief Scientific Adviser will consider the panel recommendations and make the final decision on appointments. When agreement is reached, offers will be made by email. Candidates are requested to accept, in writing (by email), their appointment to the MAG.

### **Appointment Panel**

Chair: Catherine Hutchinson, DWP Chief Scientific Adviser and Chief Analyst

External: an existing MAG member

A representative from DWP analytical, research, science or digital functions

### **Key Contact**

For further information and any queries please email

[Giovanni.Angioni@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:Giovanni.Angioni@dwp.gov.uk) or [Lara.Oh@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:Lara.Oh@dwp.gov.uk)

### **ANNEXES**

- A. Declaration of Interests guidance
- B. Declaration of Interests form for submission with application
- C. Political Activity questionnaire for submission with application
- D. Diversity & inclusion questionnaire for submission with application (optional)
- E. MAG Draft Terms of Reference

## **Annex A**

### **Guidance: Declaration and Register of Interests for DWP MAG Members**

#### **General Information**

MAG members (including the Chair) must declare any interests which may be relevant and material to the work which they will be undertaking whilst serving on DWP's MAG.

Interests which should be regarded as "relevant and material" can include:

1. Directorships, including non-executive directorships held in private companies or PLCs (with the exception of those of dormant companies).
2. Ownership or part-ownership of private companies, businesses or consultancies likely or possibly seeking to do business with the DWP.
3. Majority or controlling shareholdings in organisations likely or possibly seeking to do business with the DWP.
4. Any connection with a voluntary or other body contracting for DWP services.
5. Any professional or personal connection or involvement with DWP employees.

#### **Conflict of Interest – What does it mean?**

*"Any personal interest which may affect or be seen to affect impartiality in any matter relevant to duties"*

This expressly includes any family or friends who may benefit or be seen benefit personally, financially or professionally from your position within the DWP MAG. Knowingly participating in any process that constitutes a conflict of interest is a form of Fraud.

If members have any doubt about the relevance of an interest, this should be discussed with the MAG Secretariat.

**Annex B: DECLARATION OF INTERESTS FORM FOR DWP MAG MEMBERS**

<b>NAME</b> (please print)	
<b>TITLE</b>	

I wish to declare the following relevant 'interests' – You must include all personal, professional and academic interests; professional and personal affiliations; declare involvement in international development initiatives or organisations relevant to DWP – including initiatives that you are involved with in your home organisation; involvement with private sector parties relevant to DWP.

<b>CURRENT INTERESTS</b>	<b>DATE INTEREST COMMENCED</b>
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

I confirm that the above interests are still current and have added dates where appropriate.

<b>NEW INTERESTS TO BE ADDED</b>	<b>DATE INTEREST COMMENCED</b>
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

**Please complete even if a nil return is indicated.**

**I understand that the above information will be recorded in a formal Register of Interest held by DWP. It is your responsibility to declare all relevant interests. If you are unsure whether an interest should be declared, you can discuss this confidentially with the Secretariat.**

**I confirm my disclosure is complete, accurate and true.**

<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

Please return Declaration of Interest form to **evidence.strategyteam@dwp.gov.uk**

## Annex C: POLITICAL ACTIVITY QUESTIONNAIRE

All applicants should complete the question below.

This question is asked as it enables the monitoring of political activity of candidates in so far as it is already in the public domain. Neither activity nor affiliation is a criterion for appointment (except where statute dictates specific representation).

Please indicate which of the following activities you have undertaken during the past **five years** by ticking the appropriate box in the table opposite and by providing details of your involvement in the box below. Name the party or body for which you have been active. If you have been, or are, an independent, or have sought or obtained office as a representative of a particular interest group, you should state this. You should tick all relevant categories.

<b>A</b>	Obtained office as a Local Council or MP, MEP etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Stood as a candidate for one of the above offices	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Spoken on behalf of a party or candidate	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>B</b>	Acted as a political agent	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Held office such as Chair, Treasurer, or Secretary of a local branch of a party	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Canvassed on behalf of a party or helped at elections	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Undertaken any other political activity which you consider relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>C</b>	Made a recordable donation to a political party <sup>1</sup>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>D</b>	None of the above activities apply	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Details of involvement:

### Name of party for which activity undertaken:

<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

<sup>1</sup> The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 requires the Electoral Commission to publish a register of recordable donations (donations from any individual totalling more than £5,000 in any calendar year, or more than £1,000 if made to a subsidiary accounting unit such as a constituency association, local branch, women's or youth organisation). These provisions became effective from 16<sup>th</sup> February 2001.



## Annex D: Diversity and Inclusion Questionnaire (Optional)

**Do you consider yourself to be disabled?**

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Your gender**

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Are you married or in a civil partnership?**

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Your age group**

16-24	<input type="checkbox"/>
25-34	<input type="checkbox"/>
35-44	<input type="checkbox"/>
45-54	<input type="checkbox"/>
55-64	<input type="checkbox"/>
65+	<input type="checkbox"/>

**How would you describe your national identity?**

English	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welsh	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scottish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Northern Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Your ethnic group?**

White	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian/Asian British	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other ethnic group	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Your ethnicity?**

English	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welsh	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scottish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Northern Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other white background	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Your sexual orientation?**

Heterosexual/straight	
Gay man	
Gay woman/lesbian	
Bisexual	
Other	
Prefer not to say	

**Your religion or belief?**

No religion	
Buddhist	
Christian	
Hindu	
Jewish	
Muslim	
Sikh	
Other religion	
Prefer not to say	

**Additional Requirements**

**Will you require a reasonable adjustment during the selection stages?  
For instance, you may require wheelchair access at interview.**

Yes	
No	

**Further requirements**

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**Annex E****DRAFT****Terms of Reference for DWP Methods Advisory Group (MAG)****Agreed DD-MM-YY****1. Aims of MAG**

- i. To support the Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) in providing cross-cutting, independent scientific advice to Ministers and senior officials;
- ii. To assist the CSA in advising on how DWP best utilises cutting-edge scientific, technical and analytical approaches to provide robust evidence to support decisions and Departmental objectives.

**2. MAG Objectives**

The MAG will:

- i. Help ensure DWP's internal scientific and evidence-generating activities draw upon innovative and cutting-edge methods and approaches. Help to stretch and strengthen internal capability across scientific, analytical and technical functions.
- ii. Help ensure DWP decisions are informed by the best available externally generated scientific evidence, and thereby help the Department to address its '**known unknowns**'.
- iii. Participate in horizon-scanning to help identify emerging challenges and opportunities. Help DWP to identify its '**unknown unknowns**'; and assist in the development of innovative scientific options for responding.
- iv. Provide direct links to specialist expertise available in the research community that DWP could benefit from, and actively foster working relationships between external experts and officials.
- v. Provide strategic advice on DWP's relationship with the wider UK and international research and science base and infrastructure.

**3. MAG Appointment and Process for Filling Expertise Gaps**

The process of appointing MAG members will be:

- i. Open advertisement for experts
- ii. Seeking expert nominations for the identified thematic areas from the learned academies, professional institutions and societies, using the criteria below:
  - Independently minded and intellectually neutral
  - Expertise, skills and experience

- Seniority and reputation
  - Familiarity with government processes and key policies
  - Promotion of fair and independent process
- iii. CVs and covering letters from candidates will be sent to the DWP CSA, who will agree the final short list. A panel led by the DWP CSA will interview candidates. An invitation letter from the DWP CSA will then be sent to the selected candidates.

#### **4. MAG Membership Rotation**

- i. Membership rotation is an important mechanism to ensure that MAG is able to appropriately support DWP in using the best methods, approaches and evidence to support Departmental Objectives.
- ii. Members will be rotated using criteria below. The CSA and scientific secretariat will consider rotation of the current and future membership. Secretariat will discuss with MAG members details of rotation.
- iii. The DWP CSA will have the final decision on MAG membership.
- iv. The criteria for making decisions on membership rotation include:
- Members have served for 3 consecutive years
  - Members are no longer able to continue with MAG commitments
  - Changing priorities in expertise needed from members
  - Overlapping areas of disciplinary expertise
  - Group balance, including gender, geography, discipline
- v. The DWP CSA and Secretariat will regularly review the balance of skills, expertise, experience and balance of the MAG - in light of both current and anticipated future departmental needs and priorities.
- vi. The DWP CSA and Secretariat will actively plan for MAG succession with the membership's input.

#### **5. Responsibilities of the MAG Chair and Secretariat**

- i. The DWP CSA will act as MAG Chairperson.
- ii. The MAG Secretariat will assemble, analyse and record conclusions of meetings; the records of the meetings will include a summary of the key MAG discussions and the Chair's summary.
- iii. MAG minutes will be ratified by the MAG and recorded unattributably. If a MAG member wishes to have a comment made attributably, this can be undertaken.
- iv. The MAG Secretariat will provide impartial independent support to the MAG members and arrange appropriate briefings.
- v. The MAG Secretariat will agree the agenda of meetings with the DWP CSA.

## 6. Responsibilities of the MAG Members

- i. Members are expected to abide by the seven principles of public life (Nolan Principles).  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life>
- ii. MAG members and the Chair should take note of the GCSA's *Guidelines on the Use of Science and Engineering Advice in Policy Making* and the GCSA's *Principles of Scientific Advice to Government* (details below).  
  
<http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/goscience/docs/g/10-669-gcsa-guidelines-scientific-engineering-advice-policy-making.pdf>  
  
<http://www.bis.gov.uk/go-science/principles-of-scientific-advice-to-government>
- iii. These papers will help the MAG to understand how science advice is taken up departmental officials. Any issues should be discussed with the MAG Secretariat.
- iv. Members should ensure they understand why they are being appointed to the MAG and in what capacity.
- v. All members should share in the general responsibility to consider the wider context in which their expertise is deployed.
- vi. Members should confirm before accepting an invitation to serve on the MAG that they are clear about the period of the appointment and that they can fulfil the commitment required in terms of appointment, meeting attendance, MAG business and preparation for meetings.
- vii. All members are responsible for ensuring the independence, objectivity and impartiality of the MAG; individuals appointed to the MAG have the duty to act in the public interest.
- viii. Any changes to the role/function of individual members on the MAG must be agreed with the DWP CSA.
- ix. Members' role on the MAG should not be circumscribed by the expertise or perspectives he/she was asked to bring to the Group. Members should regard themselves as free and encouraged to question and comment on the information provided or the views expressed by any of the other members.
- x. Members can raise any concerns in regard to the MAG with the MAG Secretariat.

## 7. MAG Ways of Working

- i. DWP CSA will inform MAG of DWP's strategic direction of and priorities for departmental science and analysis.
- ii. MAG will meet 4 times per year.
- iii. Individual MAG members or sub-groups may be invited to contribute to specific thematic areas or meetings.

- iv. Declaration of Interests form (supplied by the MAG Secretariat) must be provided and signed by all MAG members and updated as appropriate and as circumstances change. The Register will be held by DWP only. Any issues should be discussed with the MAG Secretariat.
  
- v. MAG members generously provide their time and expertise in-kind, no honorarium is provided. DWP will reimburse all reasonable travel and incidental expense. In compliance with HMG guidelines, no first class travel can be undertaken for DWP business.