



Constitution of the Pathology Delivery Board

As amended January 2025

1. The Pathology Delivery Board (the Board/PDB) is the successor to the Home Office Policy Advisory Board for Forensic Pathology, the latter was instituted in 1991 “to oversee the provision of forensic pathology services in England and Wales, to establish best practice for the specialty and to encourage the development of the profession through the training of practitioners and the support of academic departments and relevant research”. The Board took over from the predecessor on 1st October 2005. The original constitution was approved by the Secretary of State for the Home Department on 15th February 2010.
2. The Board is responsible to the Secretary of State for the Home Department (the Home Secretary) for ensuring appropriate provision of forensic pathology services to the criminal justice system in England and Wales by (but not limited to), the following:
 - (i) Identifying those forensic pathologists of sufficient skill and standing to provide credible expert assistance to police forces, coroners and courts in cases involving violent or suspicious death and making recommendations as to those forensic pathologists suitable to be members of the Home Secretary’s register of forensic pathologists (the Register),
 - (ii) Supervising the funding and training of new forensic pathologists to support the criminal justice system,
 - (iii) Protecting the integrity of the Register and maintaining the confidence of the public and the Home Secretary in the Register to support the criminal justice system, by amongst other actions:
 - setting admission criteria for the Register,

- operating disciplinary procedures under suitability rules issued by the Home Secretary,
 - undertaking appropriate audits and inspections,
 - setting expected levels of service,
 - reviewing management information,
 - entering into protocols with members of the Register,
 - establishing links with other regulatory bodies such as the General Medical Council and the Human Tissue Authority,
- (iv) Facilitating negotiations for the annual revision of the case fee paid by police forces to Home Office registered forensic pathologists for a forensic post mortem examination,
- (v) Ensuring that members of the Register are organised into PDB recognised group practices to support the rotas for police forces and to provide opportunities for peer review and professional development,
- (vi) Sharing ways of improving the standards of forensic pathology in England and Wales with members of the Register, coroners, police forces, the Home Secretary, the National Assembly of Wales, State Pathologist's Department, Northern Ireland, Scottish Government, the Law Officers, the Crown Prosecution Service, the Royal College of Pathologists, the Human Tissue Authority and others,
- (vii) Supporting the continued professional development of members of the Register,
- (viii) To act as the 'Designated Body' for all Home Office registered forensic pathologists in accordance with The Medical Profession (Responsible Officers) Regulations 2010 as amended by the Medical Profession (Responsible Officers) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. This includes supporting the Board's Independent Responsible Officer in the discharge of their duties to the General Medical Council,
- (ix) Although it is beyond the power of the PDB, the Board should endeavour to attract sufficient sub-specialty (organ specific) pathologists - including, but not limited to the disciplines of: ophthalmology, neuropathology, osteoarticular pathology, and paediatric pathology, to engage with the criminal justice system in support of Home Office registered forensic pathologists in the medical investigation of death. This will include identifying suitably experienced and trained practitioners and facilitating/supporting any necessary additional forensic training if required. The Board will also provide a 'criminal justice and courtroom skills training course' to

attract sub-specialty and paediatric pathologists to engage with police cases when resources are available,

- (x) Acting as a central point of referral for police forces and the Human Tissue Authority in relation to historically held human tissue from forensic post mortem cases,
- (xi) Providing support to the police service through the College of Policing for the training of senior investigating officers in pathology related matters and the medical investigation of suspicious death and homicide cases,
- (xii) Updating Home Office guidance in support of the National Police Chiefs' Council and police forces in relation to the medical investigation of death and dealing with sudden and unexpected death,
- (xiii) Collating and evaluating management information in respect of the activities of forensic pathologists at the discretion and direction of the Board,
- (xiv) Funding the salary and training costs of trainee forensic pathologists to ensure future recruitment to the Home Office Register,
- (xv) Supporting research into new techniques and advances in forensic pathology,
- (xvi) In partnership with the Royal College of Pathologists, setting standards (via the Board's Standards Committee) in forensic pathology in England and Wales through maintaining, updating and implementing the Codes of Practice and Performance Standards in Forensic Pathology, as well as producing advice and guidance on issues as and when necessary.
- (xvii) Dealing with any other matter as directed by the Home Secretary.

3. The Board shall comprise of the following:

- (i) A chair, appointed by the Home Secretary,
- (ii) A secretary, appointed by the chair,
- (iii) A deputy chair, appointed by the chair,
- (iv) A deputy secretary, appointed by the chair,
- (v) A Home Office senior civil servant (in the event of the chair not being at SCS level),
- (vi) A nominee from the Coroners' Society of England and Wales,

- (vii) The President of the British Association in Forensic Medicine, ex officio,
- (viii) The chair of the Royal College of Pathologists, Forensic Pathology Specialty Advisory Committee, ex officio,
- (ix) A member of the Register elected by members of the Register,
- (x) A nominee from the Crown Prosecution Service,
- (xi) A nominee from the National Police Chiefs' Council's Homicide Working Group,
- (xii) The National Police Chiefs' Council lead on forensic pathology for the police service, ex officio,
- (xiii) The Forensic Science Regulator or a nominee from the office of the Forensic Science Regulator,
- (xiv) A representative of the College of Policing,
- (xv) A representative from the Human Tissue Authority,
- (xvi) A representative from the Chief Coroner's Office,
- (xvii) A representative of the Inquiries and Coroners Division, Ministry of Justice,
- (xviii) A representative from the National Crime Agency's Forensic Medical Advice Team,
- (xix) Any other person or representative of an organisation at the discretion of the chair.

Other persons may attend as observers at the discretion of the chair.

In relation to paragraph 3(vi) – 3(xiv) (inclusive) and only when an organisation therein referred to is subject to change which effects the composition of the Board, the composition of the Board may be amended by a proposal being passed by the Board. In all other circumstances the composition of the Board may only be changed by the chair with the agreement of the Board.

4. Quorum for meetings for the Board shall be five members of whom two must be forensic pathologists. In the event of a tie on a vote on any matter before the Board, the chair of the meeting shall have a casting vote.
5. Each member of the Board may nominate an alternative to take their place in their absence. If the chair and the deputy chair are absent, the secretary shall chair the meeting.
6. In addition to any sub-committee that the Board may establish from time to time, the Board shall maintain:

- (i) A Registration and Training Committee to consider new applicants to the Register,
- (ii) A Disciplinary Review Committee to consider complaints referred by the secretary of the Board.
- (iii) A Standards Committee to set and review standards relating to forensic pathology, including the auditing of work of members of the Register.

6.1 The Registration and Training Committee shall comprise of the following:

- A chair and secretary appointed by the chair of the Board,
- Three forensic pathologists appointed by the Board,
- One member to represent the interests of coroners appointed by the Board,
- One member to represent the interests of the Crown, Prosecution Service, appointed by the Board,
- One member to represent the interests of the police service in England and Wales, appointed by the Board.

Quorum for the Registration and Training Committee shall be three members, one of whom must be a forensic pathologist.

6.2 The Disciplinary Review Committee shall in accordance with the Home Secretary's Suitability Rules, October 2012 (as amended October 2018) comprise of the following:

- A lay member as chair (i.e. a non-forensic pathologist),
- Two forensic pathologists of at least 5 years standing; to be selected in relation to each complaint to avoid any conflict of interest,
- One legally qualified member,
- One member to represent the interests of the coroners,
- One member to represent the interests of the police.

Quorum for the Disciplinary Review Committee shall be three members; one of whom must be a forensic pathologist, and one of whom is legally qualified

6.3 The Standards Committee will be chaired by a person appointed by the Board.

Membership of the Standards Committee shall comprise persons in each of the following categories. Where stated, the relevant organisation shall normally be invited to nominate a suitable person to the post:

- a. Forensic Pathology

- i. Two Home Office registered forensic pathologists with significant experience of working within the criminal justice system. Nominating body is the British Association in Forensic Medicine.
 - ii. The President of the British Association in Forensic Medicine (ex-officio).
 - iii. A forensic pathologist with significant experience of investigating suspicious or violent deaths. Nominating body is the Royal College of Pathologists.
 - iv. A forensic pathologist with significant experience of investigating suspicious or violent deaths in Scotland. Nominating body is the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service.
 - v. A forensic pathologist with significant experience of investigating suspicious or violent deaths in Northern Ireland. Nominating body is the Northern Ireland Executive.
- b. Police
 - i. Up to two senior police officers with experience in the application of forensic pathology to the investigation of crime. Nominating body is the National Police Chiefs' Council.
- c. Coroners
 - i. A coroner with experience in the application of forensic pathology within the coronial justice system. Nominating body is the Coroners' Society of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- d. Human Tissue
 - i. An official with knowledge of the Human Tissue Act 2004 and the operation of the Human Tissue Authority. Nominating body is the Human Tissue Authority.
- e. Criminal Justice System
 - i. A lawyer with experience of prosecuting or managing the prosecution of cases in which forensic science has been at issue. Nominating body is the Crown Prosecution Service.
- f. Pathology Delivery Board
 - i. An official with responsibility for, or working with, the PDB. Nominating body is the Home Office Forensic Pathology Unit.

If not a member as a result of a nomination described above, the following shall also be a member for so long as they hold the relevant position:

- g. The Lead of the Standards Committee audit group (ex-officio)
- h. The Responsible Officer appointed by the Pathology Delivery Board (ex-officio).

A separate document sets out the terms of reference for the Standards Committee.

- 7. Without prejudice to the Home Secretary's powers and subject to the Suitability Rules issued by the Home Secretary, the chair of the Board, or in the chair's absence, the secretary of the Board is permitted by the Home Secretary to take any steps deemed necessary to maintain the integrity of the Register and of the criminal justice system including the suspension of a member of the Register and the disclosure of information to the criminal justice system (but not the removal of a member from the Register).
- 8. The Board shall meet from time to time as directed by the chair.
- 9. Administrative and operational support to the Board is provided by the Home Office Forensic Pathology Unit.
- 10. The Home Secretary remains accountable to Parliament for the operation of the Register and for the provision of forensic pathology services to the criminal justice system in England and Wales and may vary the Board's constitution from time to time.

Version Control

Version: 5

Last amended: September 2024

Approved by: Pathology Delivery Board

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Next review: two-year intervals

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Version History

Version Number	Date Approved	Approved By	Brief Description
V.5	24/02/2025	Pathology Delivery Board	<p>02/09/2024 – Addition of NCA to the composition of the Board.</p> <p>02/05/2024 – Addition of representative from the Coroners and Inquests Division within the MOJ, and the Chief Coroner's Office to the composition of the Board. Update of the Board's responsibilities: at (2)(vi); (2)(viii) (which is incorporated into (2); (2)(xiii) previously (2)(xii); addition of responsibility at (2)(xvii) – Dealing with any other matter as directed by the Home Secretary. Update to quorum of Disciplinary Review Committee. Amendments to minor grammatical and punctuational errors.</p>

V.4	09/03/2022	Pathology Delivery Board	<p>09/03/2022 - Addition of representative of HTA as full member of the Board, and amendments to minor grammatical errors and spacing issues.</p> <p>27/01/2022 - minor changes to remove reference to the regulation of the FSR. Expand 2(x), add 2(xvii). Addition of Standards Committee with effect from 01/04/2022.</p>
V.3	22/04/2020	PDB chair Mark Greenhorn, Head of Home Office Science Secretariat, Pathology, Regulation and Services	<p>Circulated to PDB for comments on amendments on 16/12/2019. No comments received.</p> <p>14/10/2019 – Rebranded constitution on to HO branded report. Reworded: 2(iv), 2(v), 2(ix), 6.1, 6.2, 9, 10. Added to the Board’s responsibilities: 2(x) to 2(xvi). Amended composition of the Board. Removed 11.</p>
V.2	26/11/2012	Minister of State for the Home Department	Ministerial approval obtained on 26/11/2012. Circulated to PDB at meeting on 18/12/2012.
V.1	15/02/2010	Minister of State for the Home Department	Version 1.

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