

Applies to England, Scotland and Wales

# Appointment of members of the UK Zoos Expert Committee (ZEC)

1 June 2026

## Position

We are seeking three new members with different areas of expertise for the UK Zoos Expert Committee:

Experts in animal welfare in zoos and or with zoo veterinary expertise, who are currently working for a zoo (small, medium or large) or in zoo-related work.

## Appointment specification

**Appointing Body:** Defra

**Number of vacancies:** 3

**Location:** Various

**Appointing Authorities:** Government administration appointment Wales, Government administration appointment Scotland and Government administration appointment Northern Ireland.

**Introduction:** The UK Zoos Expert Committee provides Ministers across the UK with access to independent, authoritative, impartial technical advice on zoo matters. This supports the policies, priorities and responsibilities of the UK Government and Devolved governments.

We are looking for three new members who have the right qualities to work as part of a group of experts who have wide ranging, zoo related interests. You will build good working relations with other members of the Committee and with Defra and the Government Administrations to ensure that the Committee works effectively. You will make an active and constructive contribution to the work of the Committee, so that it can produce collectively agreed and soundly based advice. You will be able to lead on particular work streams where needed and deliver outputs and advice in a timely manner.

## **Vacancy description**

### **The Zoos Expert Committee**

The Committee's main responsibility is to provide advice and recommendations on encouraging the role of zoos in conservation, education and scientific research; to keep the operation and implementation of the zoo licensing system in the UK under review; and to advise or make recommendations to Ministers of any legislative or administrative changes that may be necessary.

All members sit in a personal expert capacity and do not represent any particular body. Members are selected for their expertise on areas such as animal welfare, conservation, education, zoo veterinary issues, local authority implementation, large zoo operation, small zoo operation and zoo inspections.

The Secretariat for the Committee is provided by Defra whilst further input is provided by officials from all UK Administrations.

For further information about the work of the ZEC and current members, please contact the ZEC Secretariat by email at [zecsecretariat@defra.gov.uk](mailto:zecsecretariat@defra.gov.uk).

### **Person specification (essential criteria)**

#### **Post A: An expert with experience of zoos in the UK and who has veterinary expertise**

##### **Essential criteria:**

- Currently working within a zoo or within the zoo sector, with veterinary medicine expertise in zoos.
- Ability to see the wide picture and maintain a positive attitude and pro-actively contribute to discussions and ongoing work to ensure the Committee provides Defra and the Devolved governments with collectively agreed, soundly based, actionable advice in a timely manner.
- Ability to understand and value different perspectives and to build productive working relationships both within the Committee and with Defra and the Devolved governments.
- Ability to examine issues in an impartial way and to be able to work collaboratively on a wide range of zoo-related issues, drawing on, but not limited by their expertise.
- Ability and willingness to lead on particular work streams where needed.

##### **Desirable criteria:**

- Included in the Secretary of State's list under list 1 of zoo inspectors under the Zoo Licensing Act 1981.
- Current practical working experience, of ideally more than five years, within the zoo sector or related expertise in this area.

- Post-graduate veterinary qualification in zoo medicine or related disciplines
- Experience of working with others to build consensus.

## **Post B: An expert in large zoos in the UK**

### **Essential criteria:**

- Currently working within a large zoo with expertise in this area.
- Ability to see the wide picture and maintain a positive attitude and pro-actively contribute to discussions and ongoing work to ensure the Committee provides Defra and the Devolved governments with collectively agreed, soundly based, actionable advice in a timely manner.
- Ability to understand and value different perspectives and to build productive working relationships both within the Committee and with Defra and the Devolved governments.
- Ability to examine issues in an impartial way and to be able to work collaboratively on a wide range of zoo-related issues, drawing on, but not limited by their expertise.
- Ability and willingness to lead on particular work streams where needed.

### **Desirable criteria:**

- Current practical working experience, of ideally more than five years, operating or managing a large zoo or related expertise in this area.
- Included in the Secretary of State's list under list 2 of zoo inspectors under the Zoo Licensing Act 1981.
- Experience of working with others to build consensus.

## **Post C: An expert in small zoos in the UK**

### **Essential criteria:**

- Currently working within a small zoo (for example, a zoo with a section 14(2) dispensation), with expertise in this area.
- Ability to see the wide picture and maintain a positive attitude and pro-actively contribute to discussions and ongoing work to ensure the Committee provides Defra and the Devolved governments with collectively agreed, soundly based, actionable advice in a timely manner.
- Ability to understand and value different perspectives and to build productive working relationships both within the Committee and with Defra and the Devolved governments.
- Ability to examine issues in an impartial way and to be able to work collaboratively on a wide range of zoo-related issues, drawing on, but not limited by their expertise.
- Ability and willingness to lead on particular work streams where needed.

### **Desirable criteria:**

- Current practical working experience, of ideally more than five years, operating or managing an aquarium or related expertise in this area.
- Included in the Secretary of State's list under list 2 of zoo inspectors under the Zoo Licensing Act 1981.
- Experience of working with others to build consensus.

## **Time requirements**

The appointments commence in October 2026. Appointments will be made, in consultation with Scottish, Welsh, and Northern Irish colleagues, by the Defra Director, Animal and Plant Health and Welfare, who is the designated Senior Responsible Owner for these appointments.

Appointments will be for four years. Re-appointments may be made subject to satisfactory performance assessment and will be at the discretion of Defra and the Devolved governments. The appointee may resign at any time by giving notice in writing to Defra. Defra may terminate the appointment under certain conditions. In the event that the committee is dissolved during your tenure, your appointment would cease with effect from that dissolution.

This is a part-time role, and members will be expected to contribute approximately 15 days a year to ZEC work. This includes attending meetings, providing advice via email, and drafting or preparing work. There are regular whole Committee meetings three times per year; however, ad-hoc subgroup meetings are often arranged to work on specific tasks. In-person meetings generally take place in London but can take place in other UK locations. Meetings are predominantly being held virtually. The ZEC holds annual plenary meetings where Ministers across the UK and or external stakeholders can attend and discuss the work of the Committee.

Defra is currently leading on a programme of reforms to the zoo licensing regime on behalf of GB governments, following a major update of the Secretary of State's Standards of Modern Zoo Practice. Members will not be expected to contribute to all ongoing projects but are expected to contribute regularly and remain actively involved throughout their term. Officials from Defra and the Devolved governments hold performance management meetings with the Chair of ZEC three times per year to ensure the efficacy of the Committee.

**Length of term:** 4 years

## **Remuneration detail**

### **Committee Members:**

Members are entitled to an attendance fee of £300 per day.

Full day rate (8 hours): £300

Half day rate (4 hours): £150

Quarter day rate (2 hours): £75

Members can claim the fees for attending meetings as well as time spent on ZEC business not associated with a particular meeting for example, for research or drafting work, with the agreement of the Secretariat and within available resources. Members can be reimbursed for all reasonable expenditure incurred in connection with attendance at ZEC meetings, visits, and representative events. Members will be expected to contribute approximately 15 days a year to ZEC work

## **Application deadline**

12:00 (midday) on 19 June 2026

## **How to apply**

All candidates are required to complete the following forms:

- Monitoring form 1 (Conflicts of interest conduct and advertising Questionnaire)
- Monitoring form 2 (Diversity Questionnaire)

Candidates should submit their CV with education, professional qualifications and employment history and the names and contact details for two referees, together with their statement of suitability.

The statement of suitability should give evidence of the strength and depth of your ability to meet the essential criteria for this role. Please provide specific examples to demonstrate how you meet each of the criteria (maximum of two pages).

Your CV and statement of suitability should be returned by the closing date: 12:00 (midday) 19 June 2026.

Email to: [zecsecretariat@defra.gov.uk](mailto:zecsecretariat@defra.gov.uk)

For further information please email: [zecsecretariat@defra.gov.uk](mailto:zecsecretariat@defra.gov.uk)

## **Additional information**

We expect to have candidates shortlisted by week commencing 22 June 2026 and panel interviews to commence on 29 June 2026.

It is essential that your supporting statement gives full but concise information relevant to the appointment, clearly demonstrating how you meet each of the essential criteria. Please specify which role you are applying for.

At the shortlist meeting the panel will assess each application against the essential and desirable criteria and will then decide who to invite for final interview.

Interviews are expected to take place online via Microsoft Teams and will last for approximately 45 minutes. Further details about the format will be provided to you in advance.

Contact details: [zecsecretariat@defra.gov.uk](mailto:zecsecretariat@defra.gov.uk)

## **Attachments**

Attach candidate pack