



Department for
Science, Innovation
& Technology

Government Chemist Programme Expert Group Meeting

Wednesday 28th January 2026

Guildford

Attendees:

<u>DSIT</u> David Burns Ian Belcher <u>PEG</u> Brenda McRory Chelvi Leonard Declan Naughton Diane Turner John Collins Jonathon Griffin Jessica Merryfield Kasia Kazimierczak Oliver Severn Paul Berryman Simon Branch Sophie Rollinson	<u>LGC</u> Amber Meredith Caroline Pritchard John Black Julian Braybrook Kirstin Gray Malcolm Burns Martina Uroye Paula Domann Paul Hancock Selvarani Elahi
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Apologies: Gillian Mceneff

1. **Welcome & minutes of the last meeting:**

- 1.1 A PEG member opened with welcoming attendees and PEG members and reminded all those present of the usual housekeeping rules.
- 1.2 Minutes from the previous GC PEG meeting (July 2025) were reviewed and approved.

2. **Review of completed actions and matters arising from previous meetings:**

- 2.1 **Action 1:** DSIT/LGC were actioned to check if a PEG member had completed the relevant PEG paperwork. **Action Completed.**
- 2.2 **Action 2:** A PEG member asked if the Nutrition Research Registry developed under project CB10 has been published. A GC staff member replied that they would send the link and flyer for the Research Registry to the PEG member, who will disseminate to the Health Food Manufacturers Association. **Action Completed.**
- 2.3 **Action 3:** A PEG member commented that there was a concern raised by the FSA policy team on analytical detection of PBOs being mentioned in project CB4, given this is no longer a UK government position and the sensitivities involved. A GC staff member replied

that this was legacy text written prior to the Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) regulation being approved, and that imported food containing unauthorised PBOs/NGTs still required testing. The GC team confirmed that there is no work planned for testing of authorised PBOs in the current Programme, and that they would remove the term 'PBO' from one of the deliverables in the project for clarity. **Action Completed.**

2.4 **Action 4:** LGC to circulate attributive and non-attributive minutes of the meeting. **Action Completed.**

2.5 **Action 5:** LGC to circulate a poll for the Autumn 2025 meeting. **Action Completed.**

3. DSIT Update

Comments and questions raised following the presentation are summarised below:

- 3.1 A PEG member commented that the increased GC funding was positive, but the phasing is an issue.
- 3.2 A PEG member also commented that it is better to front load funding as it is harder to plan for the future with back loaded funding.
- 3.3 DSIT replied that the feedback from the GC PEG and the compelling case made by LGC contributed to the increased GC funding.

4. Government Chemist Update

Comments and questions raised following the presentation are summarised below:

- 4.1 A PEG member commented positively on the recent GC quarterly report and also how impressed he was with the continued delivery of the Programme during the move to Guildford. A GC staff member replied that there were challenges with the move and that some staff were lost.
- 4.2 A PEG member commented that the new laboratories were impressive and that the launch event was very well organised.
- 4.3 A PEG member praised the GC team for managing the move and keeping their ISO accreditation established.
- 4.4 A GC staff member commented that the team regained ISO 17025 accreditation at Guildford within just a few weeks and praised the planning of the move.

5. GC 23-26 Programme Update

Comments and questions raised following the presentation are summarised below:

- 5.1 A PEG member commented that it is good to see work on microplastics will continue into the next GC Programme. A GC staff member replied that the GC inputted into a recent article in Chemistry World on microplastics.
- 5.2 A PEG member further commented that work on microplastics is timely and that the GC needed agility in terms of budget to be able to react quickly to emerging issues. They also commented that there is a lack of metrology for new foods.

- 5.3 A PEG member commented that the GC Programme aligns well with Defra priorities. The importance of dissemination through the Food Authenticity Network was highlighted and a question about impact metrics and whether they are still being collected was asked. A GC staff member replied that impact metrics are still collected on a yearly basis that feed into the wider NMS indicators.
- 5.4 A PEG member asked a question on the wider dissemination of the report from project CB1 on novel food production and if it was worth updating as the landscape changes. A GC staff member asked how the GC could extend the outreach of the report. The PEG member suggested interacting with the RSC.
- 5.5 A PEG member commented that for CBD, the technology has overtaken the legislation and that enforcement laboratories had seen a drop off in samples being submitted from Trading Standards. The PEG member further commented that their laboratory had gained accreditation on the back of the first CBD ring trial and supported a future ring trial and also legislative clarity to support enforcement.
- 5.6 A GC staff member emphasised the need to reconvene the cross-government CBD working group. A PEG member replied that the FSA could help with the interaction with the Home Office.
- 5.7 A PEG member commented that the CBD work is a good example of the importance of the GC Programme.
- 5.8 A PEG member further commented that the OPSS was looking at CBD levels in cosmetics.
- 5.9 A PEG member commented that overall, the GC work is important and aligns with FSA priorities.

6. Referee Cases Update

Comments and questions raised following the presentation are summarised below:

- 6.1 In relation to the alcohol case, A PEG member asked whether the GC had also looked at the presence of methanol or propanol. A GC staff member replied that the team had not checked for methanol or propanol as there was limited sample volume.
- 6.2 A PEG member asked why glycerol was added to the vodka. A GC staff member replied that some manufacturers add glycerol as a marker for authenticity and noted the levels were extremely low (mg/L), so unlikely to affect viscosity or taste.
- 6.3 A PEG member thanked the GC for their support as a number of the imports were through Felixstowe and also highlighted the importance of referee case support for the Port Health Authorities.
- 6.4 A GC staff member commented that there was an uptick in mycotoxin samples which is worth highlighting within the FSA. Another GC staff member suggested leveraging the FSA link email system as a method for disseminating GC findings and raising awareness among enforcement officers.

7. Overview of GC 26-29 Core Programme

Comments and questions raised following the presentation are summarised below:

- 7.1 A PEG member commented that impact needs to be more visible within the next GC Programme.
- 7.2 A PEG member commented that the market now includes many complex plant-protein blends, especially vegan and vegetarian products and suggested that detecting and quantifying plant proteins should be considered within project CB1.
- 7.3 A PEG member commented that the proposed Programme was on point and that it was good to see data assurance being brought into future work.
- 7.4 A GC staff member commented that the data assurance work in project CB4 is a new and important area and emphasised the value of using historical referee-case datasets to improve understanding of data integrity, data modelling, and multivariate analysis.
- 7.5 A PEG member commented on the need for the GC programme to remain responsive and flexible with respect to dynamic alignment of some UK policies with EU ones as part of the ongoing sanitary and phytosanitary negotiations. The PEG member also asked how the Programme accounts for emerging issues such as legislative alignment with the EU, or newly emerging contaminants. A GC staff member replied that the SF3 project will give the GC flexibility to respond to issues that emerge unexpectedly.
- 7.6 A PEG member commented that FSA may be interested in co-funding some of the activities.
- 7.7 A PEG member further commented that the funding profile is important, particularly to fill any potential gaps in the future.

8. GC 26-29 Programme (Additional funding) – PEST(LE) workshop & Prioritisation

Comments and questions raised following the presentation are summarised below:

- 8.1 All PEG members participated in a PESTLE workshop to identify additional technical priorities to address within the next GC Programme. A separate report summarising the findings of the workshop will be drafted by the GC team and sent out to PEG members **(ACTION 1)**.

9. Feedback and questions

- 9.1 A PEG member thanked all the presenters for their presentations and asked for comments from PEG members.
- 9.2 A PEG member praised the team on the great work presented and was happy to be in Guildford following the move.
- 9.3 A PEG member commented that the meeting had been hugely valuable and is looking forward to working with the GC team.
- 9.4 DSIT commented that the meeting was great from their point of view and is looking forward to seeing the output of the PESTLE Workshop.
- 9.5 A PEG member commented that they were happy to see the increase in funding and praised the seamless nature of the move to Guildford.

- 9.6 DSIT also thanked all GC PEG members for their valuable contributions.
- 9.7 A PEG member commented that they will be attending a forthcoming meeting with chairs from the other PEG groups. Another PEG member replied that they would like to see more interaction of the GC PEG with Advance Manufacturing, Energy & Environment and Sustainability PEGs around engineering biology.
- 9.8 GC team to circulate attributive and non-attributive minutes of the meeting (**ACTION 2**).
- 9.9 GC team to circulate a poll for the Summer 2025 meeting (**ACTION 3**).
- 9.10 Potential topics to be considered for the next GC PEG meeting were an update on Programme indicators/Impact and a summary of EngBio activities.