ASC
Animals in Science Committee

Ways of Working

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Executive Summary

The Animals in Science Committee (ASC) is an independent non-department body sponsored by the Home Office. It provides impartial, expert advice to government departments – primarily the Home Office, the Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade (BIST), and the Department of Health, Northern Ireland (DoH NI) – on the ethical, scientific, and regulatory aspects of using animals in research, as governed by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA).

The WoW serves as a practical guide for how the ASC functions. It ensures that the Committee: operates independently and transparently; provides high-quality, evidence-based advice; engages effectively with government departments and stakeholders; and upholds the appropriate standards of public service and scientific integrity.

This document details:

- Remit, roles and responsibilities
- Engagement protocols
- Governance and accountability
- Development and publication of advice
- Appointments and conduct
- Data protection

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Animals in Science Committee (ASC, or the Committee) is an independent, non-executive advisory Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored by the Home Office. The Committee is convened under the requirements set out in the legislation of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act (1986) (ASPA)[1].

1.2 The Committee provides impartial and objective advice to the Home Office, Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade (BIST), and the Northern Ireland Department of Health (DoHNI), on issues relating to the ASPA and its functions under it.

1.3 This Ways of Working (WoW) provides guidance on the establishment, management and activity of the ASC. The information summarises good practice set out by the Governance Code on Public Appointments[2], the Code of Practice for Science Advisory Committees[3], Corporate governance code for central government departments[4], and the Seven Principles of Public Life[5].

[1] Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (legislation.gov.uk)
[2] https://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/regulating-appointments/governance-code/
[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/scientific-advisory-committees-code-of-practice
[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/corporate-governance-code-for-central-government-departments
[5] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life

1.4 This WoW supports and complements the Working Protocol between the Home Secretary and the ASC (Annex A). It supercedes the previous ASC Code of Practice.

1.5 Sources of guidance, which can be referred to for further detail, are referenced throughout the text.

1.6 The protocol governing the working of the Committee provides that:

i. Its role is to provide independent advice to Ministers;
ii. It will comprise a chairperson and Members with appropriate ranges of expertise all appointed through open competition, and in line with OCPA guidelines;
iii. It will be supported by staff in the Home Office Science Secretariat;
iv. Its costs will be met by the Home Office within affordability constraints;
v. Its Chair will have a seat on the Home Office Science Advisory Committee;
vi. Any formal reports and/or advice to Ministers or Home Office policy will, unless otherwise first agreed, be submitted through the ASC Secretariat.

2.0 Remit

2.1 Under ASPA, the ASC has two purposes: 1) providing impartial and objective advice to the Secretary of State on issues relating to the use of animals in scientific procedures; and 2) advising, promoting and sharing good practice with, and between, Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Bodies (AWERBs) in the UK.

2.2 At all times in its deliberations, the Committee will remain aware that ASPA not only requires it to provide advice to the Secretary of State and DoHNI, on matters pertaining to protected animals, but also to balance the interests of animal welfare with the legitimate needs of science and industry.

2.3 In fulfilling its function, the Committee will address itself to those matters having broad applicability with respect to the legal and regulatory framework governing the use of animals in science.

2.4 In addition to work commissioned by Ministers and/or the Committee's Policy Sponsor (the Animals in Science Regulation Policy Unit), the Committee is provided with the scope to consider matters of its own volition ("self-commission"), in line with statutory requirements.

3.0 Individual responsibilities

3.1 Members

3.1.1 Members of the ASC have collective responsibility for the effective operation of the Committee. They should engage fully in the collective consideration of issues, taking account of the full range of relevant factors, including any guidance issued by the Policy Sponsor, the responsible Minister or Secretariat.

3.1.2 Each Member of the Committee is expected to attend meetings regularly and to have read meeting papers in advance of meetings. Much of the work of the

Committee will be undertaken electronically and Members are expected to participate fully in these exchanges.

3.1.3 In the event of a Subgroup being convened, any appointed Member may be called upon to become members of or Chair meetings of the Subgroup.

3.2 Chair

3.2.1 In addition to the responsibilities of a Member, the Chair has particular responsibility for:

- providing effective leadership, ensuring that the views of all Members are heard and taken into account;
- making final decisions, in any event where Committee Members' views are not unanimous;
- working with Members of the Committee, the Policy Sponsor and the Secretariat to set the agenda for meetings and develop the forward work plan of the Committee; and
- ensuring that Committee outputs, notes, advice or reports, accurately reflect the discussions held and decisions made. The Chair will indicate that the minutes of meetings accurately reflect proceedings by "signing-off" once the full Committee has agreed them.

3.3 Co-optees

3.3.1 The range of expertise required for the Committee to achieve its objectives may change over time; and therefore, the balance of skills, expertise, and experience of Members may need to be supplemented. To enable this, the Committee is able to co-opt expertise, agreed by the Sponsor, for a period of time to provide such expertise as required to see through the effective completion of specific areas of work (see Annex B).

3.3.2 Co-optees are bound by the same responsibilities and expectations of conduct (see Section 9.0) as Members.

3.4 Secretariat

3.4.1 The Secretariat is provided by the Home Office, with expenditure paid for by that department, and provides impartial support to the Committee.

3.4.2 The role of the Secretariat includes, but is not limited to:

- providing the interface and point of liaison between the Committee and Home Office, including the Policy Sponsor, and assuring the independence of the Committee and its outputs;
- drafting and publishing Committee meeting notes, reports, and responses to correspondence regarding the ASC, arranging meetings and stakeholder engagement visits;
- organisation of workshops, conferences and public consultations;
- oversight of the recruitment and (as appropriate) re-appointment of Members and the Chair;
- providing induction for Members and the Chair on appointment; and
- ensuring that the Committee:
  - appropriately operates within its remit;

- complies with relevant guidance and legislation, e.g.:
  - the Code of Practice for Science Advisory Committees, guidance provided by the Governance Code on Public Appointments and Cabinet Office; and
  - the Freedom of Information Act 2000.[6]

3.5 Sponsoring Organisation (Home Office)

3.5.1 The Home Office is the sponsoring organisation of the Committee. The roles and responsibilities of the sponsoring organisation can be found in the Code of Practice for Science Advisory Committees[7].

3.6 Policy Sponsor (Animals in Science Regulation Policy Unit)

3.6.1 In the context of the work of the ASC, the Policy Sponsor has responsibility for the policy need and purpose of the Committee, as set out in ASPA. The outcome sought is to improve the quality of departmental policies for implementation by the Regulator.

3.6.2 The role of the Policy Sponsor includes, but is not limited to:

- co-ordinating an annual Ministerial commission, setting out key priorities and outputs required over the forthcoming year (and beyond)
- providing detailed and timely commissions to support the annual Ministerial commission, setting out the context and specific advice requested;
- attending and contributing to Committee meetings;
- regular engagement with the Committee to support understanding of the broader policy landscape;
- supporting the Committee in prioritising work to support policy;
- providing the Committee with such information as it requests for the purpose of enabling the Committee to exercise its duties under ASPA;
- facilitating information flow between relevant stakeholders and the Committee; and
- co-ordinating departmental responses to ASC reports and advice.

4.0 Engagement

4.1 Engagement with the Policy Sponsor

4.1.1 The Policy Sponsor will be the Committee's primary point of engagement with the Home Office. It will act as a bridge between the Committee and the Minister, and the Committee and the Regulator.

4.1.2 The Secretariat will co-ordinate engagement between the Committee and the Policy Sponsor at any time at the request of either party. This may be in the form of electronic exchanges or meetings.

4.1.3 The Policy Sponsor will meet on a regular basis with the Chair of the Committee, as determined between the parties. The purpose of this meeting will be to provide updates on the progress of the policy and operational work programme, review

[6] Freedom of Information Act 2000 (legislation.gov.uk)
[7] Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees and Councils: CoPSAC 2021 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Committee progress against the commission, and discuss any matters or issues arising in the animals in science landscape.

4.1.4 The Policy Sponsor will be invited to attend Committee meetings to provide updates on the progress of their work programme to the full Committee. A senior representative from the Policy Sponsor will also be invited to attend all open sessions of the full Committee meeting to promote openness of communication and engagement.

4.2 Engagement with Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade

4.2.1 Whilst Home Office is the lead Department sponsoring the ASC, BIST holds policy responsibility for Section 20(B) of ASPA, which states that the Secretary of State must support the development and validation of alternative strategies. As the ASC's remit is to advise government on the implementation of ASPA, the ASC will advise the responsible BIST Minister, the Minister for Science, directly on issues relating to Section 20(B).

4.2.2 BIST has the ability to commission the ASC directly on these matters, but will seek prior agreement from the Home Office as the Sponsor.

4.3 Engagement with the wider Home Office

4.3.1 The Regulator will be invited to submit an operational update to the Committee for each Committee meeting. The Head of the Regulator will be invited to attend at least one Committee meeting per year with an agenda item to share successes, progress and learnings.

4.3.2 The wider Home Office is able to engage with the Committee, and vice versa, via the Secretariat, who will co-ordinate any subsequent engagement as appropriate.

4.3.3 The Committee Chair will meet annually with the Home Office CSA to discuss progress of objectives and any other associated business.

4.4 Engagement with other governmental organisations

4.4.1 The Home Office, in their co-ordination role, is responsible for informing the Committee about work in other government departments which may have an impact on the ASC, including, but not restricted to correspondence, consultations, cross-government meetings.

4.4.2 The Chair will be invited and encouraged to attend any existing or new forums held with the Policy Sponsor to contribute to cross-governmental discussions.

4.4.3 If the work of the ASC has potential to affect other government departments, the Committee will raise these issues with the Home Office, whose role will be to communicate with policy officials in the relevant departments.

4.4.4 The ASC may directly interact with other Government Departments and other independent arms' length bodies, normally via a formal letter authored by the Chair. The ASC will inform the Home Office when such occasions occur.

4.4.5 The Secretariat should be made aware of any meetings between Committee Members and Ministers or other government representatives. The Secretariat will

advise the Home Office Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) and the CSA (or a representative) should be invited to attend. A member of the Secretariat may also attend to take a note of the meeting.

4.4.6 Members are not restricted from communicating with Ministers and others in their capacity as private individuals. However, if communication takes place in this individual capacity (for example, before a Parliamentary committee) it should be made clear that the individual's view is not necessarily that of the Committee.

4.5 Engagement with Department of Health, Northern Ireland

4.5.1 In support of the delivery of its functions of Section 29 (3) of ASPA, the ASC and its Secretariat will undertake regular contact with DoHNI to maintain engagement on all relevant matters related to the provision of advice and reports, recruitment, appointment and reappointment of Members.

4.5.2 DoHNI has the ability to commission the ASC separately, in particular where there is a Northern Ireland specific issue. This is likely to be exceptional and, where applicable, DoHNI will keep the Home Office sighted on draft and final commissions.

4.5.3 The ASC will copy DoHNI into correspondence with the Home Office Minister for information, and vice versa.

5.0 Accountability

5.1 Reporting

5.1.1 The Home Office Minister with portfolio for the ASC will act as the lead Minister overseeing its work and delivery of objectives. The Minister will meet the Committee Chair annually. Where the Committee is invited to advise Ministers on a particular issue, or where the Committee decides to undertake an area of work of its own volition, it will submit such reports, findings and/or recommendations to the relevant Minister(s) and DoHNI, through the Secretariat, unless otherwise agreed. A response will be provided by the relevant Minister(s) after due consideration of the recommendations as outlined within the Working Protocol (Annex A).

5.1.2 The Committee may produce an annual report of its operation for each preceding year (January – December) at the discretion of the Chair; these will be presented to Ministers.

5.1.3 The Chair of the Committee will meet with the Head of the Policy Sponsor on a routine working basis to discuss progress of objectives and any other associated business.

5.2 Quoracy

5.2.1 Recommendations and final advice shall be the responsibility of the whole Committee with a quorum of more than half of the Committee Members. This must include the Chair, or a Member nominated by those Members present to deputise for the Chair should they be unable to attend. These Members will either physically be present at the meeting or participating by remote conferencing. In addition, comments can be received in advance of the meeting via email. On occasion where Members are not in attendance and subsequently disagree with a decision, this will

be recorded (on an anonymised basis, unless considered otherwise), and made clear in such reports or recommendations made by the Committee.

5.2.2 Decisions on the Committee's final advice/recommendations shall be made only by appointed Committee Members. External advisors (i.e. co-optees) shall not have the authority to make decisions.

6.0 Structure of business

6.1 Committee meetings

6.1.1 The full Committee shall normally meet a minimum of four times per year; one will be a strategic planning meeting.

6.1.2 The Secretariat will aim to schedule full Committee meetings 12 months in advance.

6.1.3 Full Committee meetings will begin and end with sessions at which only Committee Members and the Secretariat will be present ("closed sessions").

6.1.4 A senior representative from the Policy Sponsor will be invited to attend for the duration of Committee meetings, other than the closed sessions. The Head of the Policy Sponsor may request that specific members of the Unit be invited to be present for one or more agenda items in which they have an interest. Such persons may be invited to participate in the discussion at the discretion of the Chair. Their participation will be recorded for the relevant items.

6.1.5 In line with Section 2.4 of CoPSAC the ASC may invite external participants, such as observers, to be present for one or more agenda items in which they have an interest. Such persons will be recorded in their respective capacity. The ASC should consider the purpose and role of external participants in advance. External participants attend meetings by invitation only and will be bound by confidentiality rules and may not disclose, without the agreement of the ASC Chair, any information they hear in ASC meetings.

6.1.6 To support the government's obligations under Section 20(B) of ASPA, a representative from BIST will be invited to present any updates they have on matters within the Committee's remit as a standing agenda item for full Committee meetings.

6.1.7 To support the Section 29 (3) of ASPA, representatives from the DoHNI, will be invited to attend full Committee meetings.

6.1.8 To support the ASC's requirements in Section 20 (3) and Section 20 (B) of ASPA, a representative of the National Centre for Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research will be invited to present any updates they have in relation to animals in science as a standing agenda item for full Committee meetings. They will be classed as permanent observers and are able to attend the full open session of the meeting.

6.2 Subgroups

6.2.1 The majority of the work of the Committee will be carried out by the Committee's standing Subgroups and task and finish Subgroups. The Committee will also host, and participate in, workshops when necessary.

6.2.2 The Committee has two standing Subgroups:

- **Project Licence Thematic Review (PLTR) Subgroup**, which undertakes reviews of selected themes of project licences and evidence gathering to provide advice to the Animals in Science Regulation Policy Unit.

- **Animals Welfare Ethical Review (AWERB) Subgroup**, whose purpose is to facilitate communication and sharing of good practice between AWERBs on the ASC's behalf and report to the ASC on matters relating to AWERBs and their functions as defined by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA).

6.2.3 The Committee may additionally establish topic-specific, time-limited, task and finish Subgroups to carry out in-depth studies and to take forward specific pieces of work.

6.2.4 Subgroups shall be chaired by a Committee Member, with the option to include co-optees to increase the range of required expertise for specific areas of work.

6.2.5 Other than in exceptional instances, the work of Subgroups shall be passed to the full Committee for review and ratification. On any occasion where recommendations are not reviewed, or ratified by the full Committee, this should be made clear in such reports or recommendations made by the task and finish group.

6.3 Agenda Setting

6.3.1 The Chair will set the agenda for plenary meetings. This will be done in consultation with Subgroup chairs and representatives from the Policy Sponsor to ensure sufficient time is allocated to their associated agenda items. The whole Committee will be given opportunity to submit agenda items under Committee Matters and AOB.

6.3.2 Relevant papers/presentations to any agenda items are required to be circulated to ASC Membership by a deadline agreed upon by ASC Members and Secretariat. This will be a minimum of five working days before the meeting unless otherwise agreed. Occasionally, papers may be circulated on a shorter timeframe as late papers. In the case where papers/presentations are not provided by the deadline, the Committee reserves the right to remove the related item(s) from the agenda.

6.3.3 Updates from Subgroups should be circulated as a written update with the meeting papers to ensure sufficient time is allowed for discussion where needed.

6.4 Handling material

6.4.1 All papers that the Committee have access to will include handling instructions, including security markings to ensure the security of the data within the papers.

6.4.2 On occasions where sensitive material needs to be circulated with the Committee or Subgroups, documents will be made available via the Home Office secure portal – 'DocLab' or similar system. This portal will primarily be used for 'Official Sensitive' documents.

6.5 Meeting notes

6.5.1 Discussions at meetings will be open (noted in minutes for publication) unless declared confidential. If a discussion is confidential, no record of the discussion will be made.

6.5.2 The Secretariat will aim to draft minutes of meetings within two months of the meeting and, after approval by the Chair, circulate to meeting attendees for comment. Comments from Members should be submitted within ten working days. The Secretariat shall incorporate comments as appropriate and pass the final note to the Chair for ratification by Chair's action prior to publication. Full Committee meeting notes will be agreed and published within three months of a meeting.

6.5.3 Minutes of Committee meetings will be published on a non-attributable basis; except where there is explicit agreement, or need, to attribute a view or comment to an individual.

6.5.4 On occasions when a consensus cannot be reached, the different opinions and reasons underpinning these views will be reported.

6.5.5 Committee Members may be approached by colleagues, or others known to them, requesting information on Committee discussions beyond that provided in the minutes. Members should not share the details of Committee discussion beyond that which had been included in the published minutes. Under no circumstances should discussions or statements be attributed to Members by name.

6.5.6 Subgroup meeting notes will not be published. Key points and actions will be captured by the Secretariat to be shared with Subgroup Members and stored securely.

6.6 Business continuity

6.6.1 A deputy Chair for the Committee is appointed by the Committee. In the event of the Chair not being available to fulfil their responsibilities, the deputy Chair will be expected to sit in.

6.6.2 The Chair of the ASC will inherit a Membership on the Home Office Science Advisory Council for the duration of their posting. They will therefore have access to approach other Science Advisory Committee Chairs in the case that neither the Chair nor the deputy Chair are available to fulfil their responsibilities.

7.0 Outputs

7.1 Commissioning

7.1.1 The Committee's annual work programme will be commissioned by the Minister, as set out under the Working Protocol (Annex A). The annual commission will be co-authored by the responsible Home Office Minister and BIST Minister.

7.1.2 Additionally, the Committee has scope to commission work under its own volition ("self-commission").

7.1.3 Proposals for self-commissioned projects can be presented at plenary meetings or submitted via the Secretariat for consideration by the Committee. Proposals should follow a consistent mechanism of being considered and approved by the full Membership before being taken forward by a Subgroup.

7.1.4 Proposals for self-commissioned projects should be initiated using a Project Initiation Document (PID). The PID should outline the aims of the project, how evidence will be collected, along with a brief description of the strength of evidence

available on the topic and will be presented to the Committee for consideration (see Annex C). The Committee will then collectively decide on whether to approve the initiation of the project.

7.1.5 The Chair of the new Subgroup would usually be the Member who proposed the project. However, this may not always be the case, and Members who have proposals but who are unable to Chair the Subgroup should not be discouraged from submitting a proposal.

7.2 Reports

7.2.1 The ASC uses evidence from a wide range of sources to develop its recommendations (see Annex C). For each identified question, the Subgroup should identify appropriate sources of evidence.

7.2.2 To gather evidence, the Subgroup might search appropriate databases, approach individuals or organisations, or launch a call for evidence or evidence gathering session. Calls for evidence may be published on the ASC website or directed towards specific stakeholders. Evidence gathering sessions can be organised by the Secretariat. The Subgroup may also consult the Policy Sponsor for relevant organisations from which to seek evidence.

7.2.3 Once evidence has been collected, a bespoke analysis will be agreed by the Subgroup. The chosen method of analysis will depend on the purpose of the report and the identified questions. The Subgroup may choose to finalise the specific methodology once it is clearer what evidence is available. The Chair of the Subgroup will be responsible for deciding the methodologies used and the analysis of the evidence.

7.2.4 Each report should include a description of the methods used in data collection and analysis.

7.2.5 Quality assurance should take place prior to publication. The Committee and the Secretariat will be responsible for undertaking the quality assurance (see Annex C).

7.3 Publications

7.3.1 The Committee will operate under a presumption of openness. Commissioning letters, responses and press releases will be published.

7.3.2 Advice will be published on the ASC website five working days after its presentation to the Minister, unless an objection is raised within in this period or there are otherwise pressing reasons for not doing so (see Annex A). Advice will be accompanied by a letter to the relevant Minister(s). This letter should include:

- the origin of the report, i.e. whether this was commissioned by Minister(s), or self-commissioned;
- the scope of the report;
- conclusions presented, referencing how they are relevant to the identifying issues; and
- a summary of recommendations made.

7.3.3 Advice will be objective and independent of government. Where uncertainty exists, including where there is weak or contradictory evidence, this will be reported

alongside an evidence-based judgement, concerning the associated level of risk and uncertainty.

7.3.4 If the Minister is minded to not accept the ASC's advice, this will be discussed with the ASC Chair, before making a final decision. If key recommendations are not to be accepted, the Minister will write to the ASC setting out the reasons for rejection in advance of any public comment by the Home Office on the matter.

7.3.5 The Minister will aim to provide a decision on all ASC recommendations, and to publish a response within six months of receipt. This timeframe can be adjusted depending on the nature of the advice and the need to consult with other government departments or stakeholders. If a response is unlikely to be published within six months, the ASC will be informed of the reasons and a prospective date will be given. If a response is unlikely to be published within twelve months, the Minister will write to the Committee Chair setting out the reasons and the letter will be published on the ASC's website.

7.3.6 The Committee is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), and the Data Protection Act 2018.

8.0 Appointments

8.1 Terms and re-appointments

8.1.1 Appointments and reappointments to the Committee are made in line with the guidelines of Governance Code on Public Appointments[8]. Appointments are made jointly with the Minister and the DoHNI, and co-ordinated by the Home Office Public Appointments Team.

8.1.2 Prior to launching a recruitment round for new Committee Members, the Secretariat should discuss and document particular areas of expertise, skills and experience required, in advance of any appointments made, with the Chair, Members, departmental CSA, relevant Home Office and DoHNI officials, and relevant government departments. The desired expertise will then be passed onto the Home Office, who will conduct the recruitment campaign as outlined in the Working Protocol (Annex A).

8.1.3 All Committee Members, including co-optees, will be required to undertake (as a minimum) Counter-Terrorist Check security vetting, prior to appointment being approved.

8.1.4 Members are appointed for a period of up to three years. Consideration will be given to the phasing and length of appointments to ensure continuity, fresh perspectives and Membership diversity, for example including gender, age, disability and ethnicity.

8.1.5 Appraisals will be undertaken annually. Only individuals that have performed satisfactorily will be considered for reappointment.

[8] https://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/regulating-appointments/governance-code/

8.1.6 There is no presumption of reappointment. Reappointments, or extensions to appointments, will be subject to compliance with the Guidance for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies[9].

8.1.7 In the event of co-opting Members (see paragraph 3.3), the principles and process for co-option will be followed as set out in Annex B.

8.2 Notice and Termination of Appointment

8.2.1 Appointment may be terminated by the appointee or by the Minister for any reason before the expiry of the fixed period by giving three months' notice in writing to the other.

8.2.2 No notice period is applicable if the appointment is terminated early by mutual consent.

8.2.3 Should the Committee be dissolved, restructured, or wound up during the period of a Member's appointment, the appointment would cease with effect from that dissolution or such other date as is specified in any relevant legislation.

8.2.4 The Department may terminate a Member's appointment immediately by writing if:

a) they have been absent from meetings of the Committee for a period of more than 6 months without the permission of the Chair of the Committee;
b) their attendance becomes so erratic as to interfere with the effective running of the Committee;
c) they become bankrupt or make an arrangement with creditors;
d) their estate has been sequestrated in Scotland or they enter into a debt arrangement programme under Part 1 of the Debt Arrangement and Attachment (Scotland) Act 2002 (asp 17) as the debtor or have, under Scots law, granted a trust deed for creditors;
e) they are disqualified from acting as a company director;
f) they have been convicted (whether before or after appointment) of a criminal offence, , the conviction not being spent for the purposes of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (c. 53);
g) they become subject to a debt relief order; or
h) they are, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, unable or unfit to discharge the functions of the appointment for any other reason of whatsoever nature.

8.2.5 Members are, in any event, obliged to inform the Department if any of c)-g) in paragraph 8.2.4 apply.

8.2.6 If the Department is considering whether to terminate a Member's appointment prior to the expiry of the fixed term, they will be notified of the proposal and of the reasons for it and will be offered an opportunity to have a meeting with the Department before any final decision is taken. If their appointment is subsequently terminated, they will receive notice in writing of this fact, such notice will contain a statement of reasons for termination.

[9] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-for-ministerial-appointments-to-public-bodies

8.2.7 In the event of the Department is considering whether to terminate a Member's appointment pursuant to 8.2.6, the Secretary of State may require that the Member ceases their role as a Committee Member whilst the matter is being investigated.

8.3 Time commitment

8.3.1 Commitment to Committee activities for Members is estimated as fifteen to twenty days per annum.

8.4 Balance of expertise

8.4.1 Members will have a range of backgrounds and expertise of relevance to Home Office work. Members will work across a range of topics, drawing on, but not limited by, their expertise.

9.0 Conduct

9.1 Public Service Values

9.1.1 The Chair, Members, and co-optees of the Committee must, at all times:

- observe the highest standards of **impartiality, integrity** and **objectivity** in relation to the advice they provide and to the management of this public body[10];
- be **accountable** for their activities and for the standard of advice they provide for Ministers. The Minister of the sponsoring Department is answerable to Parliament, and the public more generally, for the policies and performance of the Committee; and
- act in accordance with Government policy on **openness** and comply fully with the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information and any relevant legislation on disclosure of information.

9.2 Standards in Public Life

9.2.1 The Chair, Members, and co-optees are expected to:

- follow the Seven Principles of Public Life set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life[11], as they apply to service on the Committee;
- comply with this Ways of Working, and ensure that they understand their duties, rights and responsibilities, and that they are familiar with the functions and role of the Committee and any relevant statements of Government policy;
- not misuse information gained in the course of their public service for personal gain or for political purpose, nor seek to use the opportunity of public service to promote their private interests or those of connected persons, firms, businesses or other organisations;
- not hold any paid or high-profile posts in a political party, and not engage in specific political activities on matters directly affecting the work of the Committee. When engaging in other political activities, Members should be conscious of their public role and exercise proper discretion. These restrictions do not apply to Members of Parliament, local councillors or to Peers in relation to their conduct in the House of Lords (see Annex D for further information); and
- declare and register any interests they have that are relevant (either actual or perceived) to the remit of Committee (see Section 10).

[10] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-ethical-code-for-scientists
[11] The Seven Principles of Public Life - GOV.UK

9.3 Media

9.3.1 The Secretariat will usually be responsible for handling media enquiries about the Committee and its associated work. Members who are approached directly by the media with enquiries relating to ASC business should contact the Secretariat in the first instance, for advice on handling. The Secretariat will liaise with the Home Office press office, the Committee Chair, and the CSA will be informed as appropriate.

9.3.2 The Committee Chair will be the primary spokesperson for any contact with the media unless the Chair or the Secretariat has made other specific arrangements.

9.3.3 The Committee, CSA, Secretariat, policy officials, and Policy Sponsor will all follow a "no surprises" policy when dealing with the media. Committee Members should notify the Secretariat of any intention to communicate publicly on matters relating to the Committee's remit indicating whether reference will be made to their Committee Membership. The mechanism for making announcements is detailed within the Home Secretary and the ASC's working protocol.

9.3.4 Committee Members may, in the course of their Committee related work, address conferences and seminars, or have other speaking arrangements at which the media are present. In these circumstances, Members should take care to make it clear that they are speaking in a personal capacity and not as a Member of the Committee.

9.3.5 Committee Chair and Members should confer with the Secretariat before accepting any invitation to attend meetings or speak on the behalf of the Committee. If speaking on behalf of the Committee, unless first discussed with the Chair/Secretariat, only information already within the public domain should be referred to and appropriately referenced.

9.3.6 Further guidance concerning communication with the media can be found within the Government Office for Science's Code of Practice on Scientific Advisory Committees[12].

9.4 Gifts and Hospitality

9.4.1 Members:

- shall not accept any gifts or hospitality which might, or might reasonably putatively appear to, compromise your personal judgement or integrity or place you under an improper obligation;
- shall never canvass or seek gifts or hospitality; and
- should inform the Secretariat of any offer of gifts or hospitality and ensure that, where a gift or hospitality is accepted, this is recorded in a public register in line with the rules set by the body.

9.4.2 Members are responsible for their decisions on the acceptance of gifts or hospitality and for ensuring that any gifts or hospitality accepted can stand up to public scrutiny and do not bring the public body into disrepute.

[12] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/scientific-advisory-committees-code-of-practice

9.5 Liability

9.5.1 If legal proceedings are brought against any Committee Member, by a third party, the Home Office will meet any civil liability which is incurred in the execution or purported execution of their Committee functions, provided that they have acted honestly, reasonably, in good faith and without negligence.

9.5.2 Further information on the Government's views on the potential for liability in negligence of government scientific advice has been provided by GO-Science[13].

10.0 Recording of Interests

10.1 Declaration of interests

10.1.1 It is important to avoid the possibility of Members of the Committee being influenced or appearing to be influenced, by their private interests in the exercise of their public duties. All Members should, therefore, declare any personal or business interests relevant to the work of the Committee which may, or may be perceived (by a reasonable Member of the public) to influence their judgement. This should include, as a minimum, payments to Members personally and payments to the relevant part of the organisation for which a Member works. Members should be aware of their responsibility not to be seen to allow their judgement to be influenced in considering receipt of any gifts or hospitality offered in the exercise of their public duties (see 9.7).

10.1.2 If Members feel that there are interests outside the scope of this document which could be perceived as influencing their work in relation to the Committee, for example the personal or business interests of close family Members (personal partners, parents, children or siblings and the personal partners of any of these) they should declare those or approach the Secretariat for advice.

10.2 Declarations of interests at meetings

10.2.1 A declaration of any interest should be made at any Committee meeting where it relates specifically to a particular issue under discussion.

10.2.2 At the start of each meeting, Members will be requested to declare any conflicts of interest alongside items on the agenda. The Secretariat will record any such declarations or conflicts in the minutes.

10.2.3 It may not be appropriate for Members to participate in the discussion or determination of matters in which they have an interest, and may be asked by the Chair to withdraw from the meeting. The Secretariat will record whether a Member subsequently withdraws from the meeting.

10.3 Register of interests

10.3.1 The Secretariat is required to publish an up-to-date register of Members' interests. Members should notify the Secretariat immediately of any changes to their entry.

10.3.2 Committee Members should declare any financial or other interests, or any personal connections that arise during their term of appointment including those

[13] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/375323/14-1210-scientific-advice-government-legal-liability.pdf

that could be seen as providing a conflict of interest – real or perceived – between their public duties and private interests.

10.3.3 It is the responsibility of any new Member to inform the Committee Secretariat in advance of their appointment that may impinge on their duties as a Member of the Committee. The Secretariat should regularly review and the update the 'Declaration of Interests' on the website. Members can contact the Secretariat for further information about the Register of Interests, including examples of what should be included.

11.0 Appraisals

11.1 Members Appraisals

11.1.1 To comply with the Commissioner's Code, an annual appraisal of Committee Members and the Chair will take place.

11.1.2 The appraisal process:

- evaluates each individual Members' contributions against their appointment criteria, and the individual's performance and commitment to ensure the Committee as a whole meets its aims and objectives;
- offers Members a formal opportunity to receive feedback on their performance during the course of the appraisal period;
- allows members the opportunity to feedback on Committee performance and effectiveness; and
- will provide Ministers with assurances that those appointed to Non Departmental Bodies are continuing to provide effective support to the bodies to which they are appointed, and an evidence base for considering reappointments.

11.1.3 In carrying out the appraisal the Secretariat will, before the end of an appraisal period, ask Members to complete a self-assessment of their Committee activities that shall include relevant evidence-based examples. The self-appraisal will then be shared with the Chair of the Committee in advance of holding a 1:1 appraisal conversation with each Member. After the appraisal conversation, the Chair will add their comments to the appraisal form before passing it back to Members for concluding comments. Appraisals will be saved by the Secretariat, and form part of any consideration for reappointment.

11.2 Chair's Appraisal

11.2.1 The appraisal of the Chair will include questions that are relevant to the responsibilities of the role. All Members will be asked to provide feedback to the Chair in advance of the appraisal conversation that will be held with the Home Office Chief Scientific Advisor. Appraisals will be saved by the Secretariat and form part of any consideration for reappointment.

11.3 Committee Appraisal

11.3.1 The ASC annual report will provide the Minister, CSA, and Policy Sponsor with assurance that the Committee is operating in an effective manner and that any concerns or impediments to functionality are addressed in a timely manner. The Chair will raise any concerns with the CSA.

12.0 Remuneration and expenses

12.1 Remuneration

12.1.1 Appointment to the Committee is on a voluntary basis and fees are not payable.

12.1.2 The Home Office will reimburse all reasonable expenses (including travel, and subsistence) properly and necessarily incurred in respect of your carrying out the required duties of your role as a Committee Member.

12.2 Claiming expenses

12.2.1 All transport and accommodation must be booked via the Secretariat through the Home Office travel service. Committee Members may not book transport and accommodation themselves and claim the cost back later.

12.2.2 Claims for reimbursement, together with supporting receipts, should be sent to the Secretariat mailbox (asc.secretariat@homeoffice.gov.uk). If this is not possible, claims can instead be received by post. Please contacted the Secretariat for the most appropriate mailing address.

12.2.3 Reimbursements for expenses claims will be made in line with guidance set out by the Home Office. The Secretariat will provide advice and assistance when claiming reimbursement of expenses, including the most up-to-date guidance, ceiling rates and methods for claiming.

13.0 Data Protection

13.1 The ASC presents all details regarding recent data protection protocol within the 'Privacy Impact Notice'. This document is used as a reference for any data protection queries. Alternatively, the ASC Secretariat can be contacted if any further guidance is required.

ANNEX A: WORKING PROTOCOL BETWEEN THE HOME SECRETARY AND THE ANIMALS IN SCIENCE COMMITTEE

1.0 Background and scope

1.1 The use of animals in regulated scientific procedures raises ethical, animal welfare and scientific issues. It is essential that animal welfare ethical review bodies, practitioners, policy makers, and ministers have access to the best available evidence and advice to inform their interests in this field. For this reason, the Government values the work and independent advice of the Animals in Science Committee (ASC).

1.2 The ASC is an independent, non-executive, non-departmental public body set up under Sections 19 and 20 of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 as subsequently amended, hereinafter referred to as "the Act". The ASC is responsible for providing impartial and objective advice to the Home Office and the Northern Ireland Department of Health, and to the animal welfare and ethical review bodies, on issues relating to the Act and their functions under it.

1.3 This working protocol supports the ASC in discharging its duty under the Act, both to provide advice on matters referred to it by Ministers, and matters considered under its own volition.

1.4 The Home Secretary has entered into this protocol with the ASC, as the Secretary of State who sponsors the ASC as an advisory non departmental public body and discharges the responsibility for making appointments to the body. The Home Secretary will generally delegate responsibilities in this area to a designated Minister, referred to in this protocol as "the Minister". This document will be reviewed as appropriate.

2.0 Engagement

2.1 The key principles set out below intend to support effective engagement between the ASC and the Government.

2.2 The ASC and Ministers are committed to ensuring that the best evidence-based advice is available to Government on the use of animals in science, working together with the common purpose of the effective application of ethical review and the "3Rs" (the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of animals in research and testing), taking into account the legitimate requirements of science and industry, the protection of animals against avoidable suffering and unnecessary use in scientific procedures.

2.3 In discharging their respective responsibilities:

i. The ASC and its Members will work under the Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees[14], incorporating the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles). In particular, the ASC Chair and its Members will act in the public interest and observe the highest standards of public office, including impartiality, integrity, and objectivity, whilst being accountable through Ministers to Parliament and the public.

ii. Ministers will continue to work under the Guidelines on the Use of Scientific and Engineering Advice in Policy Making[15] and the Ministerial Code[16], which states that Ministers "should have regard to the Principles of Scientific Advice to Government."

iii. Ministers will collaborate with other Ministers where their legal obligations under the Act require them to do so, and take measures to ensure that the ASC have appropriate access to these Ministers through agreed engagement processes.

2.4 In continuing to provide its advice on the available evidence to the Minister:

(i) The ASC will work with best endeavours to the Government's priorities for the ASC that will be communicated by the Minister in writing at appropriate intervals, including any "in year" requests for advice. The ASC will also consider and take forward work of its own volition which it considers appropriate within available resources.

(ii) The ASC will be guided by the relative priority given by the Minister to each of the specific commissioned areas of work to inform its programme of work, taking into account work that it may wish to undertake of its own volition.

(iii) The ASC will inform the Minister how it intends to take forward commissioned work and will set out putative timelines. With due regard to the ASC's duty to consider any matter referred to it by the Minister, and matters of its own volition, in the event that the ASC foresees or encounters difficulties in providing advice or prioritising that advice in the manner requested, the Chair of the ASC will discuss the ASC's reasons with the Minister.

(iv) The ASC will publish its advice five working days after its presentation to the Minister, unless an objection is raised within in this period or there are otherwise pressing reasons for not doing so. (Such reasons might include, for example, issues of national security or the safety of individuals, prevention of crime or the protection of property (including intellectual property or

[14] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/scientific-advisory-committees-code-of-practice
[15] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/scientific-and-engineering-advice-guidelines-for-policy-makers
[16] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministerial-code

commercially sensitive information), or other sensitivity of documents or information.)

(v) The Chair of the ASC will report to the Minister on progress against each of the priorities when they meet. It shall be the duty of the ASC Chair to bring to the attention of the Minister any substantive matter pertaining to the use of animals in science, considered by them or the ASC, before making public statements thereof; this is exclusive of those matters under formal consideration by the ASC, whether requested by the Government or of its own volition, where there is an expected publication procedure.

2.5 In commissioning work of the ASC, the Minister will take account of the ASC's current work programme, including any work that it is undertaking of its own volition. In continuing to give careful consideration to all of the ASC's advice:

i. The Minister will not pre-judge the ASC's advice in advance of receiving it;

ii. The Minister should meet with the ASC Chair on a regular scheduled basis, at least annually, and either the Minister or the Chair may request additional meetings at other times;

iii. Before issuing a response, the Minister will give appropriate consideration to the ASC's advice;

iv. If the Minister is minded not to accept the ASC's advice, the Minister will, before making a final decision, offer the opportunity for a discussion with the Chair of the ASC, or nominated representative;

v. If key recommendations are not to be accepted, the Minister will write to the ASC setting out the reasons for rejection in advance of any public comment by the Home Office on the matter;

vi. The Minister will look to provide a decision on all ASC recommendations, and to give a response (published subject to the same provisos as the advice itself) within six months of receipt. If a response is unlikely to be published within six months, the ASC will be informed of the reasons and a prospective date given; and,

vii. The Home Office will provide the ASC with the resources and support required to carry out its functions under the Act and the programme of work commissioned by the Minister, without in any way constraining the committee in the way it chooses to carry out its work.

3.0 Expertise and the Membership

3.1 The ASC needs to draw on a diverse range of expertise from within its Membership in order to fulfil its duties. The relevant areas of expertise will vary according to issues under consideration at any time. The list below sets out what these are likely to include. This is not, nor is it intended to be, an exclusive or exhaustive list of likely relevant areas of expertise, but will be given due regard when appointments are made to the ASC.

3.2 The ASC should inform the Home Office of desired expertise based upon fulfilling the Minister's and its own work objectives. The Home Office will seek the views of the ASC to inform any recruitment campaign for ASC Members before any recruitment process is undertaken. The Home Office Chief Scientific Adviser, or nominated representative, will advise the Minister on the balance of Membership requirements appropriate to the available resource and the need for effective functioning.

3.3 For recruitment panels for new Members (excluding the Chair), the ASC Chair, or nominated representative chosen from among the Membership of the ASC, should sit on the panel. The final decision on appointments remains with the Home Secretary. The Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies, including the Seven Principles of Public Life, applies to all appointments to the ASC. All Members of the ASC are appointed as individuals on the basis of their expertise, not as representatives of any particular profession, employer, or interest group.

3.4 While it is likely that most of the expertise required by the ASC to fulfil its remit will be available from within its Membership, the ASC is always able to consult, or co-opt, outside experts if for any reason it needs to draw on expertise not covered by current committee Members. When advising Government, it will make clear to the Minister (and, if the advice is published, to the public) the names of outside experts that have contributed to the evidence base. However, recommendations and final advice remain the responsibility of the ASC itself.

3.5 The relevant areas of expertise are likely to include:

- the use and welfare of non-human primates in scientific procedures;
- the use of animals in the pharmaceutical industry, including the work of contract research organisations in a regulatory environment;
- animal welfare[17];
- approaches and technologies for the replacement of animals in scientific procedures by non-animal alternatives;
- statistics and experimental design;
- veterinary science and practice;
- ethics;
- law (including the legislative process and an understanding of public policy);
- the breeding, care and acquisition of animals;
- the form, function and working of the local animal welfare and ethical review body;
- clinical experience, with an understanding of the patient experience; and

[17] Animal welfare in general, as well as specific to the use, breeding and supply of animals protected under the Animal (Scientific Procedures) Act.

- the creation and use of animals containing human material

3.6 It is anticipated that the ASC Membership will be drawn predominantly from those with expertise as listed above. The list of likely relevant expertise will be kept under periodic review by the ASC and the Government, acting in concert.

4.0 AGREEMENT

4.1 This working protocol was agreed between the Minister and the Chair and Members of the ASC.

ANNEX B: PROCESS FOR CO-OPTING MEMBERS

1) Principles of Co-option

a) Co-option is a process available to the chairs of ASC subgroups to ensure that, for specific workstreams, there is the appropriate expertise – including subject matter or institutional memory – needed to develop and publish high quality recommendations to Government.

b) Co-option should be considered only if there is insufficient expertise within the existing ASC Membership with respect to a particular workstream and if the expert proposed has the capacity to contribute to the workstream, or if the availability of a specific external expert in a subject might significantly enhance the value of the advice that the ASC can offer. Before co-option is considered, all ASC Members with appropriate expertise should first be offered the opportunity to participate in the workstream.

c) Where gaps in ASC expertise are identified and co-option is required, then consideration should be given by the ASC Chair to advertising for this expertise (if it is of ongoing relevance to the ASC at the next recruitment round).

d) Co-option should be for the time the expertise is needed and in a personal capacity. This would usually be for the time a report is being written on a particular topic.

e) Co-optees will be expected to abide by the Nolan principles of public life for the duration of their co-option.

f) Co-optees will be bound by confidentiality rules and may not disclose, without the agreement of the ASC subgroup Chair, any information they hear in subgroup meetings.

g) Occasionally, a co-optee may be engaged in more than one workstream. Once co-opted, as long as the other principles of co-option are followed, they would not be expected to re-start the co-option process for each workstream.

h) Government officials should not be co-opted. Instead, they should be invited to observe/present evidence. The Secretariat will record the capacity in which experts are attending (individual or organisational representative).

i) On a case-by-case basis and in exceptional cases at the discretion of the ASC Chair, a co-opted Member of a sub-committee or working group may be invited to assist at the 'Plenary' meeting for discussion/presentation of a specific workstream. In such circumstances, the co-opted Member may contribute to discussions relevant to their expertise but not be able to make decisions.

2) Co-option Process

a) If the chair of a sub-committee or working group identifies the need for additional expertise which cannot be provided by ASC Members, they should approach the Secretariat to alert them.

b) Chairs/Secretariat/committee Members may be aware of people with appropriate expertise from their own networks.

c) Once a person with relevant expertise is identified, the Secretariat will pass on details to the ASC Chair, who will make the final decision on co-option to each workstream.

d) If the person is considered to be appropriate for co-option, the Secretariat will formally approach the individual and explain the nature of the work, the likely time commitment and ask if they are interested in co-option.

e) If the person is interested in the co-option, an induction pack will be provided by the Secretariat. This pack will also be provided to ASC Members, to clarify the roles and responsibilities of co-optees.

f) The Secretariat will maintain and regularly review a register of all co-optees.

g) The co-optee may require security clearance. This should be completed before the co-optee engages in any ASC work of a sensitive nature.

3) Co-option Pack

a) The co-option pack includes details on the Members role in the committee, key responsibilities and details on the scope of the workstream on which they would be contributing to, in the form of a project initiation document (PID) (Ref 1.)

b) The co-option pack includes the confirmation letter to sign and useful links/annexed documents which would be useful to co-opted Member to read-through prior to the start of their posting.

ANNEX C: MATERIALS FOR ADVICE DEVELOPMENT

A) STRUCTURE OF A PROJECT INITIATION DOCUMENT (PID)

PROJECT TITLE
Topic background & key issues
Overview of the strength of available evidence in the area.
Project aims & questions to answer
Scope & exclusions
Process
Chair, Membership, and possible co-option
Methodology
Stages
Proposed timescale for completion

B) SOURCES OF DATA

Sources of Data	**Examples of types of data**
Published research literature	Peer reviewed journals
Conference papers/abstracts, 'grey' literature	Unpublished/non peer reviewed papers/web reports
Evidence from Government departments and devolved administrations	Reports from Home Office such as published statistics National Centre for the Replacement Refinement and Reduction of Animals in research (NC3Rs) Animals in Science Regulation Unit (ASRU) (including approved project licences) UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade (BIST)
Evidence from UK individual or organisational stakeholders	Individual UK experts RSPCA British Society of Animal Science (BSAS) Animal Science Group (ASG) Animal Welfare Ethical Review Body (AWERB)

	Laboratory Animals Science Association (LASA) Laboratory Animals Veterinary Association (LAVA) Institute of Animal Technology (IAT) Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) Animals Free Research UK (AFRUK) Royal Veterinary College (RVC) Centre for Philosophy of Natural and Social Science (CPNSS) London School of Economics (LSE) Cruelty Free International (CFI) Fund for the Replacement of Animals in Medical Experiments (FRAME) People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)
Evidence from non-UK individuals or organisations	Individual non-UK experts Oversees suppliers and breeders of animals

C) QUALITY ASSURANCE CHECKLIST

Has the collected evidence answered the identified questions?	
Does the report include: - a description of the methods used in data collection, search criteria and analysis. - in addition to anything the ASC decide is necessary to be included.	
Has the methodology for analysing the evidence changed as a result of the evidence?	
Does the report clearly state the sources of the data and types of data?	
Does the report include a response to the question(s) being asked?	
Do each of the recommendations reflect the evidence?	
Has the report been referenced correctly?	

ANNEX D: POLITICAL ACTIVITY

- In your public role, you should be, and be seen to be, politically impartial. You should not occupy paid party-political posts or hold particularly sensitive or high roles in a political party.

- You should abstain from all controversial political activity and comply with Cabinet Office rules on attendance at Party Conferences.

- On matters directly related to the work of the Committee, you should not make political statements or engage in any other political activity.

- In your official capacity, you should be even-handed in all dealings with political parties.

- Subject to the above, you may engage in political activity but, at all times, should, remain conscious of your responsibilities as a Committee Member and exercise proper discretion.

- You should inform the Committee Secretariat before undertaking any significant political activity.

- You should comply with the Cabinet Office's rules on lobbying for NDPBs.[18]

- If you have any remaining doubts about your activities, you should seek advice from the Committee Secretariat prior to undertaking significant political activity.

- You are expected to inform the Secretariat of any intention to accept a prominent position in any political party and to understand that appointment may be terminated if the Secretary of State feels that the positions are incompatible.

- If you accept a nomination for election to House of Commons then you will resign the appointment.

- Committee Members will undertake their duties with due regard to the Cabinet Office guidance for civil servants during an election period. The guidance will be circulated to all Members ahead of an election period.

[18] www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/62130/ndpbs-lobbying.pdf