



Home Office

**CHAIR AND FOUR MEMBERS  
BIOMETRICS AND FORENSICS ETHICS GROUP**

**Recruitment Information Pack**

**April 2019**



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## Foreword from the Home Office Chief Scientific Adviser

The Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group (BFEG) is an Advisory Non-Departmental Public Body that provides independent advice to Home Office Ministers.

The BFEG's wide remit and significant responsibility makes this an exciting and challenging post. The BFEG's strategic focus complements the legal and regulatory functions of the Biometrics Commissioner and the Forensic Science Regulator. The BFEG's remit includes consideration of the ethical impact on society, groups and individuals of the capture, retention and use of forensic samples and biometric identifiers for purposes which fall within the purview of the Home Office.

The BFEG's membership is therefore drawn from a diverse range of professional technical and non-technical backgrounds. It is this rich mix of backgrounds which allows a broad range of experience and views to be brought to the considerations at hand and ensures the committee's advice is well balanced. The Chair has the fascinating task of leading the BFEG to provide sound and effective independent advice in an area of great political and public interest and sensitivity.

The work of Government depends crucially on the time and expertise so generously given by its advisory committees and the leadership provided by their chairs. I am delighted that you are considering applying for this post.

I hope you agree with me that the work of the BFEG presents valuable forward-looking challenge and that, having read the enclosed material, you will be keen to apply your breadth and depth of knowledge to the Committee going forward.

**Professor John Aston**  
**Home Office Chief Scientific Adviser**

## About the Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group

The Biometrics Forensics Ethics Group (BFEG) was formally known as the National DNA database Ethics Group, (NDNAD EG) and was established in 2008 to provide Home Office ministers with independent ethical advice on the operation of the National DNA Database. On the 17 July 2017, the Home Office took the decision to extend the remit of the NDNAD EG to cover all forensic identification techniques including, but not limited to, facial recognition technology and fingerprinting. The group was then renamed the Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group. The remit of the BFEG was further extended on 12 February 2019 to provide independent ethical review of the use of large data sets by the Home Office. This move will build on the BFEG's existing work and will work to ensure that the use of an individual's personal data by the Home Office is legitimate and proportionate.

The role of the committee is to provide independent ethical advice to Home Office ministers on issues related to the use of biometrics and forensics. The BFEG is sponsored by the Home Office.

The appointment of the Chair and members will be based on their skills, expertise and experience. They will not be appointed as a representative of their employer(s), any interest group or organisation with which they have contact. The Chair and members shall be expected to consider issues on merit and provide independent advice acting in the public interest at all times.

Ministers commission key elements of the work of the group to enable development of a rolling programme of work streams. The BFEG may, at the request of ministers, conduct enquiries into other ethical issues relating to scientific services provided to the police service and other public bodies within the criminal justice system. In general, seventy percent of the group's workload is commissioned by the Home Office sponsor with the remainder decided upon by its membership.

## Priorities

The remit of the group includes consideration of the ethical impact on society, groups and individuals of the capture, retention and use of human samples and biometric identifiers for purposes which fall within the purview of the Home Office, including methodologies that concern the differentiation between, or identification of, individuals.

## Key sources of information

BFEG Code of Practice<sup>1</sup> covering:

- role, remit, and code of conduct;
- responsibilities and roles of the chair, members, secretariat and officials observing meetings;
- working groups of the BFEG;
- engagement with Ministers and officials;
- how advice from the BFEG will be presented;
- communications with the media;
- openness and transparency;
- code for observers;
- confidentiality of papers; and
- members' interests and personal liability.

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<sup>1</sup> Available from:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/636963/BFEG\\_-\\_Terms\\_of\\_Reference\\_Code\\_of\\_Practice\\_and\\_Working\\_Protocol\\_-\\_4\\_April\\_2017.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/636963/BFEG_-_Terms_of_Reference_Code_of_Practice_and_Working_Protocol_-_4_April_2017.pdf)

## Other Information:

The BFEG developed a set of ethical principles<sup>2</sup> for consideration of ethical issues in relation to biometrics and forensics. The principles were developed to augment trust in the work of the BFEG and vicariously in the biometrics and forensic services.

## Support to the BFEG

The Biometrics and Forensic Ethics Group, and its working groups are supported by the Home Office Science Secretariat.

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<sup>2</sup> Available from:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/702184/Biometrics\\_and\\_Forensics\\_Ethics\\_Group\\_principles\\_website\\_v2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/702184/Biometrics_and_Forensics_Ethics_Group_principles_website_v2.pdf)

## Chair role and person specification

### Role Description

<b>Job Title:</b>	Chair of the BFEG
<b>Appointed by:</b>	Minister of State for Countering Extremism and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Equalities)
<b>Duration:</b>	An initial term of four years
<b>Remuneration:</b>	The role is unremunerated, but travel and subsistence expenses incurred on BFEG business will be reimbursed. No allowances will be payable, and you will not be eligible for any form of bonus payment. The expected time commitment is a minimum of 30 days per year, depending on the BFEG's work programme.
<b>Location:</b>	BFEG plenary meetings will normally take place at Home Office Headquarters, 2 Marsham Street, London. Some BFEG meetings may take place at a suitable external venue.

### Purpose:

The BFEG is an independent advisory non-departmental public body that provides independent, ethical advice to Home Office Ministers on issues related to the use of biometrics and forensics and the differentiation and identification of individuals. The BFEG's remit has recently been extended to include provision of ethical advice on the Home Office use of high volume data.

The Chair of the BFEG will be expected to deliver a key leadership role by harnessing the energy and expertise of BFEG members to deliver timely advice to Ministers. To enable this, the successful candidate will be required to develop and foster strong and constructive relationships with BFEG members and senior stakeholders, including Ministers, Parliament, Devolved Administrations, Government officials, and practitioners.

The Chair will, on behalf of the membership, provide the primary interface to Government Ministers and other stakeholders, including the public and media.

The Chair is accountable for ensuring the timely delivery of the BFEG's programme of work.

The Chair will develop and foster strong working relationships with the BFEG's Secretariat as well as policy officials from departments, including the Home Office.

The BFEG Chair will meet, at a minimum, annually with the Minister responsible for biometrics and forensics.

In common with BFEG members, the Chair of the BFEG is appointed as an individual and not as a representative of any particular profession, employer or interest group. The Chair will be expected to act in the public interest at all times, considering all issues from an independent perspective and on merit.

## Key responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the BFEG Chair are to:

- Provide leadership and ensure provision of impartial, balanced, objective advice and guidance to ministers on ethical issues relating to the use of biometrics and forensics;
- Discuss, and mutually agree with the Home Office policy sponsor, a rolling programme of work streams to be taken forward;
- Ensure that the business of the BFEG is expedited efficiently and effectively in a consistent, fair, transparent and objective manner;
- Chair the BFEG's quarterly plenary meetings;
- Act corporately with other members of the BFEG, ensuring all can provide their views;
- Respond to issues of concern raised by individual BFEG members;
- Adjudicate in any matters where BFEG members are unable to reach consensus, ensuring that outcomes represent the breadth of members' considerations and that uncertainties in the evidence base are made clear;
- Ensure that annual performance appraisals of members are undertaken and an annual report for the BFEG is published;
- Represent the BFEG in discussions with other agencies/relevant stakeholders as required; and
- Maintain liaison with the relevant policy leadership.

## Person specification

It is essential in your supporting statement that you provide evidence and proven examples against each of the selection criteria in Part One (Essential Criteria) only of the person specification.

At this stage responses to Part Two (Personal Qualities) should not be provided. Responses to the criteria listed in Part Two will only be required if candidates are invited for interview.

## Part one – essential criteria

Applicants should be able to evidence the following skills and experience:

- Committee experience at a senior level including experience of chairing high profile multi-disciplinary meetings and facilitating discussion through to agreed conclusions;
- Experience of working with Government, and an understanding of the policy and policy environment and a clear understanding of the role of scientific and ethical advice in informing policy in an area of political and public attention and sensitivity;

- The ability to draw out an appropriate balance of ethical, legal and moral issues and considerations in relation to these of public interest and importance;
- Strong communication, negotiating and interpersonal skills to build effective working relationships with Ministers, policy owners, Government departments, and other key stakeholders, including the scientific community, practitioners and law enforcement; and
- Ability to think logically and objectively to analyse complex information and identify key issues and make effective decisions, including excellent judgement under pressure.

## **Part two – personal qualities**

- The confidence and ability to take overall accountability for the BFEG's work and representing the BFEG when required before Government ministers;
- Empathetic but decisive leadership that makes progress through consensus;
- Projecting confidence and authority in public appearances.
- Flexibility of thought.
- Decisiveness and independence.

**Due diligence:** Please note that as part of the recruitment process, due diligence, including social media checks will be undertaken on the appointable candidates.

## Members role and person specification

### Role Description

<b>Job Title:</b>	Biometrics and Forensics Science Ethics Group (BFEG) members.
<b>Number of roles:</b>	4
<b>Appointed by:</b>	Minister of State for Countering Extremism and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Equalities)
<b>Duration:</b>	Appointment for three and a half years.
<b>Time commitment:</b>	The expected time commitment is 10-15 days per year. The role is unremunerated, but members will be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred whilst carrying out business on behalf of the BFEG, in line with Home Office policy.
<b>Location:</b>	Mostly central London.

### Purpose:

Members of the BFEG are appointed as individuals to fulfil the role of the group and have a duty to act in the public interest. Members are not appointed as representatives of their profession, employer or interest group.

Committee members are expected to:

- Attend and contribute to quarterly plenary BFEG meetings and subgroup meetings, as necessary; and
- Act corporately with other members to ensure that the BFEG fulfils its responsibilities by providing ministers and the Department with impartial, independent, balanced and objective ethical advice on issues within the group's remit.

Members also have responsibility for:

- Developing the evidence base of topics under consideration to formulate advice;
- Examining and challenging, if necessary, the assumptions on which advice is formulated;
- Ensuring that the BFEG where appropriate the concerns and values of stakeholders are considered before a decision is taken; and
- Ensuring the BFEG acts in accordance with the Code of Practice for members, which incorporates the Seven Principles of Public Life and the Code of Practice for Science Advisory Committees.

## Person Specification

To complement its existing skills and knowledge, the BFEG is seeking up to 4 new members. Applicants should have demonstrable expertise as either:

- A legal professional with considerable knowledge of forensic science, biometric data and the ethics of consent.
- A social scientist with considerable knowledge of the social and ethical impact of technological innovations upon individuals; or
- A data ethicist with experience of working with large data sets and who can demonstrate experience of applying this to issues across the biometric, forensic and criminal justice arena or other relevant fields.

In addition to the above your supporting statement should provide evidence of your skills and experience against the essential and desirable selection criteria set out below. Please be clear about the scale and significance of your role/achievement. The evidence you provide against the selection criteria will be used by the selection panel to determine your suitability for the role.

### Essential skills and experience

- An understanding of the breadth and depth of ethical issues related to the collection, storage and use of biometric and forensic information and data;
- The ability to think logically and objectively to analyse complex information from diverse sources, identify key issues and make effective impartial and balanced decisions;
- Strong interpersonal skills, including the ability to work collaboratively with committee members and stakeholders and to actively and constructively contribute to discussions, negotiating between conflicting opinions and values and generating options to reach consensus;
- The confidence to deal with difficult situations sensitively and take accountable decisions;
- An appreciation of equality and diversity and a willingness to champion difference; and
- An awareness of how the views of the scientific community and the public are changing politically and socially.

### Desirable

- Evidence of working successfully in a professional, community or voluntary capacity on committees or other decision-making groups and reaching impactful and timely conclusions.

**Due diligence:** Please note that as part of the recruitment process, due diligence, including social media checks will be undertaken on the appointable candidates.

## Response Instructions

If you wish to apply for either, or both of these positions, please supply the following **by midnight 23 April 2019**:

- A **comprehensive CV** (maximum two sides A4, minimum 11 font) setting out your career history and including details of any professional qualifications.
- A **short supporting statement** (maximum two sides A4, minimum 11 font) giving evidence of the strength and depth of your ability to meet the essential criteria for the role. Please provide specific examples to demonstrate how you meet each of the experience, qualities and skill areas identified in the person specification.
- In addition, please also complete and return via email the **forms at Annex A**, relating to referees, diversity, nationality, political activity and conflicts of interest.

**PLEASE MAKE IT CLEAR IN YOUR APPLICATION WHICH ROLE YOU ARE APPLYING FOR**

Completed applications should be emailed to [publicappointments@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:publicappointments@homeoffice.gov.uk)

Please note it is your responsibility to ensure we receive your application by the closing date.

## Further Information

If you have any queries about any aspect of this role, or merely wish to have an informal discussion, then please contact Dr Jo Wallace (Head of Home Office Science Secretariat) on 020 7035 5076 or by e-mail at [joanne.wallace@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.wallace@homeoffice.gov.uk).

If your query relates to the public appointments recruitment process then please contact Pauline Hyman in the Public Appointments Team in the first instance on 07876813841.

## Indicative Timetable

Please note that these dates may be subject to change. Please let us know in your application letter if you are unavailable for interview on the date below.

Closing Date for Recruitment Advertisement	23 April 2019
Shortlist Meeting	w/c 6 May 2019
Candidate Interviews	w/c 3 June 2019
Meeting with Minister of State for Countering Extremism (if required)	Post interview

## Recruitment Process

This role is being competed in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments (December 2016)<sup>3</sup>, which sets out the regulatory framework for public appointments processes. The Code is based on three core principles – merit, openness and fairness.

**The Advisory Assessment Panel (Panel) for the Chair campaign will be chaired by** Professor John Aston, Home Office Chief Scientific Adviser; and will include Alex Macdonald, Home Office Data & Identity Deputy Director and BFEG policy sponsor; and Samantha Harris, Government Office for Science.

**The Advisory Assessment Panel (Panel) for the Members campaign will be chaired by** Professor Tom Sorell, Deputy BFEG Chair; and will include Dr Jo Wallace, Head of Home Office Science Secretariat, Home Office; and Imogen Block, Senior Policy Advisor, Data Ethics Policy Team, Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

The Home Office Public Appointments Team will acknowledge your application and keep you updated on the progress of the competition.

At the short-listing meeting the selection panel will assess each application against the essential criteria and decide who to invite for final interview.

Interviews are expected to take place in Central London and will last for between 45 and 60 minutes. Further details about the format will be provided to you in advance.

The decision to appoint to this role rests with the Minister of State for Countering Extremism. Appointable candidates may be invited to meet with them, or another Minister, before a final decision is made. As a result, there may be a delay in informing candidates of the outcome of the competition.

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2:[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/578498/governance\\_code\\_on\\_public\\_appointments\\_16\\_12\\_2016.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/578498/governance_code_on_public_appointments_16_12_2016.pdf)

## Terms of Appointment

### Appointment Term

- Your appointment will be made by the Minister of State for Countering Extremism and will be for a period of three and a half years for members and four years for the Chair.
- There is a possibility of re-appointment at the end of this period of office at the discretion of the Minister of State for Countering Extremism, subject to a satisfactory appraisal of performance and mutual agreement.
- It should be noted that this role is a public appointment; the post holder will be neither an employee of the Crown nor of HM Government. Such appointments are not normally subject to the provisions of employment law.
- The appointment may be terminated prior to the conclusion of the period of appointment.

### The position of Remuneration

- The BFEG Chair and members are unremunerated.
- The post holder can claim reimbursement for reasonable travel and subsistence costs necessarily incurred during the course of their duties at rates set centrally.
- No allowances will be payable and you will not be eligible for any form of bonus payment.

**Time Commitment:** Members are expected to attend Committee meetings and associated working group meetings as needed. Overall, commitment will equate to 10-15 days per year, depending on BFEG's work programme.

**Location:** Committee-level meetings will normally take place at Home Office Headquarters, 2 Marsham Street, London. BFEG Full Council meetings usually take place at a suitable external venue.

**Availability:** The successful candidates will be encouraged to take up this appointment as soon as possible, subject to the successful completion of pre-appointment checks and security clearance.

**Security clearance:** The successful candidates will be required to have or be willing to obtain security clearance to SC level. Pre-appointment checks will also be undertaken on immigration and criminal convictions. It usually takes between 4-5 weeks to obtain the security clearance. The role will be offered on a conditional basis until the successful candidate has passed all checks.

**Nationality:** This is a non-reserved post and therefore open to UK Nationals, British Nationals Overseas, British Protected Persons, Commonwealth Citizens, EEA Nationals of other member states and certain non-EEA family members and Swiss Nationals under the Swiss EU Agreement. There must be no employment restriction or time limit on your permitted stay in the UK. In order to confirm your eligibility for this post, please complete the Nationality form at the end of this candidate pack which asks for information regarding this. You will not be asked to produce the evidence stated at the application stage, but you will be required to do so should you be invited to the final panel interview.

**Confidentiality:** You will be subject to the provisions of the Official Secrets Act and required to exercise care in the use of official information acquired in the course of official duties, and not to disclose information which is held in confidence.

**Disqualification for appointment:** There are circumstances in which an individual will not be considered for appointment. They include:

- people who have received a prison sentence or suspended sentence of three months or more in the last five years;
- people who are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order;
- in certain circumstances, those who have had an earlier term of appointment terminated;
- anyone who is under a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986; and,
- anyone who has been removed from trusteeship of a charity.

**Standards in public life:** You will be expected to demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct. All successful candidates will be asked to subscribe to the BFEG's working protocol. Candidates will be expected to abide by the "Seven Principles of Public Life" set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

**Registration of interests:** The purpose of these provisions is to avoid any danger of BFEG members being influenced, or appearing to be influenced, by their private interests in the exercise of their public duties.

Public appointments require the highest standards of propriety, involving impartiality, integrity and objectivity, in relation to the stewardship of public funds and the oversight and management of all related activities. This means that any private, voluntary, charitable, or political interest which might be material and relevant to the work of the body concerned should be declared. It is important, therefore, that you consider your circumstances when applying for a public appointment and identify any potential conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived.

There is a requirement to declare any actual or potential conflict of interest you may have in being appointed to the BFEG in a separate form. Any actual or perceived conflicts of interest will be fully explored by the Panel at interview stage.

**Political activity:** Members will need to show political impartiality during their time on the BFEG and must declare any party-political activity they undertake in the period of their appointment. Details of the successful candidates declared political activity must be published by appointing departments when the appointments are publicised.

The (online) Political Activity Declaration will be kept separate from your application and will only be seen by the Panel prior to interview – the Panel may at that stage explore with candidates any potential for conflict of interest. It is appreciated that political activities may have given you relevant skills, including experience gained from committee work, collective decision making, resolving conflict and public speaking. If, therefore, you have had such experience and you consider it relevant to your application for this post, you may if you choose include it separately in the main body of your application.

**Data Protection:** The Home Office takes its obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act seriously. Any data about you will be held in secure conditions with access restricted to those who need it in connection with dealing with your application and the selection process. Our data protection policy is in line with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act. Our data protection officer can be contacted by writing to [dpo@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:dpo@homeoffice.gov.uk).

In connection with your application we will collect, store, and use the information provided by you in your CV, supporting statement, forms at Annex A and your interview (where applicable). We will also collect information from referees named in your application.

We will use this information to assess your suitability for this role. We will retain it for two years, unless you consent to our retaining your CV and contact details for the purposes of alerting you to future opportunities as set out below.

**Equal Opportunities Monitoring:** The Home Office is committed to providing equal opportunities for all, irrespective of race, age, disability, gender, marital status, religion, sexual orientation and transgender.

As part of the application process we ask candidates to complete equal opportunities monitoring information (see form at Annex A). This will help us to monitor selection decisions to assess whether equality of opportunity is being achieved. The information on the form will be anonymised, treated as confidential, and used for statistical purposes only. The form will not be treated as part of your application. It will be retained for two years. Anonymised diversity data on public appointments and appointees will also be shared with Cabinet Office for the purposes of their audit of the procedures and practices of public appointments and to ensure compliance with the public-sector equality duty.

The equal opportunities monitoring form is used for monitoring the selection process only. The form will not be treated as part of your application and will not be shared with the selection panel. If you do not wish to have these details recorded please return the form uncompleted.

### **Interview Access Scheme for Disabled Persons**

As a member of the Employers Forum on Disability, we are committed to actively encouraging applications from people with disabilities. Applicants with a disability are guaranteed an interview if they meet the minimum criteria for the appointment, as outlined in the relevant role description. Declaring a disability for the purposes of a guaranteed interview is your decision and is entirely voluntary. If you wish to apply under the Interview Access Scheme, please complete the form at Annex A.

Whether you choose to apply under the Interview Access Scheme or not you can still ask us to make particular arrangements for you when attending an interview. You can also contact us if you want to discuss the criteria for the role or have questions regarding your application.

**Centre for Public Appointments Database:** As set out in Annex A, if you consent, we will retain your CV and contact details for the purposes of alerting you to any opportunities that may arise in future. We will also share your CV and contact details with the Centre for Public Appointments

in the Cabinet Office who may use it for this purpose. They may also share it with other Government Departments so that they can contact you about such opportunities. You may withdraw your consent to your information being processed for this purpose at any time by contacting [dpo@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:dpo@homeoffice.gov.uk).

Under certain circumstances, by law you have the right to:

- Request access to your personal information (commonly known as a "data subject access request"). This enables you to receive a copy of the personal information we hold about you and to check that we are lawfully processing it.
- Request correction of the personal information that we hold about you. This enables you to have any incomplete or inaccurate information we hold about you corrected.
- Request erasure of your personal information. This enables you to ask us to delete or remove personal information where there is no good reason for us continuing to process it. You also have the right to ask us to delete or remove your personal information where you have exercised your right to object to processing (see below).
- Object to processing of your personal information where we are relying on a legitimate interest (or those of a third party) and there is something about your particular situation which makes you want to object to processing on this ground.
- Request the restriction of processing of your personal information. This enables you to ask us to suspend the processing of personal information about you, for example if you want us to establish its accuracy or the reason for processing it.
- Request the transfer of your personal information to another party.

If you would like to review, verify, correct or request erasure of your personal details, object to the processing of such or request that we transfer a copy of such to another party please contact [dpo@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:dpo@homeoffice.gov.uk).

**Complaints:** If you are not completely satisfied with the way your application is handled at any stage of the competition, please raise any complaint in the first instance with:

Public Appointments Team  
Home Office  
Third Floor, Peel Building  
2 Marsham Street  
SW1P 4DF

We will reply to your complaint within 20 days. If, after receiving our response you are still not satisfied, you may contact the Commissioner for Public Appointments:  
The Commissioner for Public Appointments Room G/8, Ground Floor 1 Horse Guards Road  
London SW1A 2HQ. Tel: 0207 271 0849.