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## Air Quality Expert Group

### Appointment of expert members

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Information pack for applicants

The closing date for the receipt of applications for this role is:  
**Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2021 at 12 pm (midday)**



# AQEG



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

Information packs are available in other formats such as larger font and Braille.

If you need a different format please contact us.

Email: [aq.secretariat@defra.gov.uk](mailto:aq.secretariat@defra.gov.uk)

### ***Diversity***

We are keen to ensure our public bodies are as diverse as possible. So we positively encourage candidates from underrepresented groups, including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people, people with a disability, and people with gender diverse identities.

Expert Committee Members are independent appointments made through open competition, in line with OCPA guidelines on best practice for making public appointments.

### ***Equal opportunities***

UK government has a policy of equality of opportunity. We aim to promote equal opportunity policies whereby no one suffers unfair discrimination either directly or indirectly, or harassment, on grounds such as race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sex, gender identity, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or age.

### ***Disability***

Defra will be operating an interview access scheme for disabled people (as defined by the Equalities Act 2010) who meet the minimum criteria for this appointment as published in these notes. If you wish to apply for consideration under this scheme, please notify the Department when you return your application. In addition, if you require any special arrangements at interview stage, please give details in a covering letter to enable us to make the appropriate arrangements if necessary. Furthermore, adjustments will be made in the event of a successful application.

# The Air Quality Expert Group

## Introduction

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is seeking up to seven individuals to serve as members of the Air Quality Expert Group (AQEG) from 9 November, 2021.

AQEG plays a vital role in providing advice to officials and key office holders in Government and the Devolved Administrations (DAs) on the evidence base supporting air quality policies and operations. The independent advice from AQEG helps shape Defra's evidence base to robustly support policy development and implementation. While AQEG's primary role is in the provision of scientific advice to assist Defra's strategic vision, members and the Chair are also called upon to provide ad hoc advice on occasion. The role of AQEG is particularly significant at present as Government begins to implement its Clean Air Strategy and the Net Zero climate policy.

The posts require scientific expertise in an area relevant to air quality and related pollutants. Candidates should be able to demonstrate knowledge of the range of the Committee's work and high levels of technical expertise in one or more of the fields detailed in the "Qualities and experience required" section.

## What is AQEG?

The Air Quality Expert Group was formed in 2001 and was converted from a Non Departmental Public Body to an Expert Committee to Defra in 2011.

AQEG has a remit to provide independent, expert advice on the science of air quality across Government and the Devolved Administrations, including the sources, behaviour, levels and mitigation options for key air pollutants.

AQEG's main functions are:

- Advising and working collaboratively with officials and key office holders in Defra and the Devolved Administrations; other delivery partners and public bodies; and EU and international technical expert groups;
- Liaising with Defra's Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA), supporting them as appropriate during emergencies and contributing to the Defra Science Advisory Council's annual report;
- Contributing to the development of the air quality evidence base: analyse, interpret and synthesise evidence; provide judgements on quality and relevance; suggest priority areas for future work; and advise on Defra's implementation of the air quality evidence plan (or equivalent);

- Give advice on current and future levels, trends, sources and characteristics of air pollutants in the UK;
- Horizon scanning and advising Government on new threats, opportunities and external variables, such as changes in international policy or specific events, with a potentially perverse impact on air quality in the UK and advising on mitigation strategies where appropriate;
- Provide independent advice and operate in line with the Government's Principles for Scientific Advice and the Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees (CoPSAC).

AQEG delivers advice predominantly through reports and advice notes. Published reports and advice notes can be found at <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/research/aqeg/publications>.

AQEG currently has 9 members, including the Chair, with additional *ad hoc* and *ex officio* members and observers. AQEG is supported by a secretariat comprised of staff from the Air Quality and Industrial Emissions (AQIE) Team in Defra.

AQEG defines and prioritises its own work programme based on Government policy needs and draws on existing information and undertakes its own analysis to provide expert advice to the Defra CSA and Ministers. It may be required to give advice to Ministers and Defra officials on air quality matters on an *ad hoc* basis as and when requested. It will need to maintain close working relationships with all relevant Government departments and the Devolved Administrations to support its advice to Ministers and maintain members' awareness of policy developments and requirements.

For further information about the Air Quality Expert Group you may wish to visit the web site: <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/research/aqeg/about>

## The Role

### Description

Members will be required to work collaboratively to provide independent air quality advice to Defra and DA Officials, Defra Ministers and the Defra Chief Scientific Adviser. Members are required to:

- contribute scientific analyses for group discussion;
- analyse, interpret and synthesise evidence on air quality;
- provide judgements on quality and relevance of evidence;
- suggest priority areas for future work;
- provide advice on current and future levels, trends, sources and characteristics of air pollutants in the UK;

- draft scientific reports in collaboration with other Committee members; and provide rapid, *ad hoc* advice on specific issues where required.

The workload will vary depending upon the requirements of Defra and the DAs and events that may impact on their needs for expert advice on air quality. As a guide, members will be required to work 1-2 days per month, attending approximately 4-6 meetings per year. The maximum workload expected is 20 days per year.

Members must be willing to travel to meetings within the UK, while this is typically central London, since the beginning of COVID-19 restrictions, all meetings have been held via tele-conference, and this will be reviewed as restrictions ease with a blend of online and in-person meetings likely as the future model. We aim to use members' time as efficiently as possible, recognising the need to accommodate a diversity of working patterns.

## Qualities and experience required

To be appointed a member of AQEG requires someone who displays the following qualities and experience:

### Essential Criteria

#### **1: AIR POLLUTION RELATED TECHNICAL EXPERTISE**

Significant expertise, ideally with national or international reputation in one or more areas relevant to air quality and pollutants (listed below under 'Knowledge areas represented in AQEG' heading). The expertise of the whole committee will need to cover all the areas mentioned, consequently some areas may be prioritised to achieve a suitable spread of expertise. Strong evidence of ability to apply specialist knowledge to influence decision making, and deliver to schedule.

#### **2: PROBLEM SOLVING**

Proven expert ability to process and interpret complex information; well-developed analytical reasoning skills and judgment; the ability to provide intellectual leadership and create a pro-active approach to problem solving with a high level of professionalism and adaptability to allow application of skills to problems outside of specialist area of expertise.

#### **3: COLLABORATION**

Demonstrable ability to effectively work with others to achieve shared goals and make sound, balanced, and timely decisions both independently and with others (e.g. in committee), recognising the need to respect other expert's opinions and experience where there is not always consensus.

#### **4: COMMUNICATION**

Excellent communication in a straightforward, truthful and candid way, with a proven ability to negotiate, persuade and influence at all levels, including within a collaborative group; ability to translate complex scientific information for a non-specialist audience.

## **Knowledge areas of value to AQEG:**

The knowledge areas covered by AQEG include:

- Air pollution modelling and prediction.
- Impacts of air pollution on ecosystems.
- Emission inventories and projections.
- Agriculture and rural land use.
- Sources, processes and measurement of gas-phase and particle-phase pollutants.
- Industrial processes resulting in emissions to air.
- Emissions control, abatement, mitigation and technological solutions.
- Meteorology and long-range transport of pollutants.
- Science into policy.

Additionally, we are also looking for applicants to supplement the areas listed in the following knowledge areas:

- Indoor air, built environment and urban land use.
- Inequalities, socioeconomic and demographic factors that can impact air quality exposure and susceptibility.
- Remote sensing of air pollution.
- Air quality and climate change.

The expertise of the whole committee will need to cover all relevant areas of air quality science including those detailed above; applicants with expertise that complements that of existing members will be prioritised to achieve a suitable spread of expertise. We are looking for subject matter experts, and also encourage applications from early career researchers and from a wide range of backgrounds including private sector, academic and professional institutions, and non-governmental organisations.

## **Terms of appointment**

### **Period of appointment**

The successful candidates will be appointed for a term of three years, expected to begin on 9 November, 2021.

Re-appointment may be made subject to satisfactory performance assessment and will be at the discretion of the sponsor team Director and Chair of the AQEG.

The appointees may resign at any time by giving notice in writing to the sponsoring Director. The sponsoring Director may terminate the appointment under certain conditions, which will be notified to the successful candidate on appointment.

## Remuneration and Allowances

£172.20 per day. Legitimate travel and other expenses will be fully reimbursed. As a guide, members will be required to work approximately 1-2 days per month, attending approximately 4-6 meetings per year. The maximum workload is 20 days per year.

## Conflicts of Interest

You must inform the Department if you have any conflict of interest that might affect your ability to undertake this role. You should disclose information on any relevant business interest, public appointment or position of authority, including other connections with commercial, public or voluntary bodies.

## Applying for a role

### How to respond

All candidates are required to complete the following forms:

- Monitoring form 1 (Conflicts of Interest, Conduct and Political Activity Questionnaire)
- Monitoring form 2 (Diversity Monitoring Questionnaire)
- Monitoring form 3 (Recruitment Advertising Questionnaire)

Candidates should submit their CV with education, professional qualifications and employment history and the names and contact details for two referees, together with their statement of suitability. The statement of suitability should give evidence of strength and depth of your ability to meet essential criteria for this role and will be the main evidence used for the sift process. Please provide specific examples to demonstrate how you meet each of the criteria in no more than two pages.

Your CV and statement should be returned to the following address by Monday, 16 August 2021, 12 pm (midday).

**Email to: [aq.secretariat@defra.gov.uk](mailto:aq.secretariat@defra.gov.uk)**

### Selection Process

#### Short listing

This appointment is being made in close accordance with the guidance laid down by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA). The candidates who demonstrate that they meet all the essential criteria will be invited to interview. It is therefore essential for your statement to give full but concise information relevant to the appointment.

Shortlisting will take place in the week commencing **Tuesday, 31<sup>st</sup> August** and candidates invited to interview will be informed in the week commencing **Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> September**.

## Interviews

Interviews will take place from **15<sup>th</sup> September – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021**.

The interview will last about 45 minutes and candidates will be asked questions to assess whether they can demonstrate that they meet the essential criteria. As part of the interview, candidates will also be asked to give a presentation lasting between 5 – 7 minutes on a topic of relevance to Government policy on air quality.

All interviewees will be advised in writing of the outcome of the interview.

Candidates will be able to claim reasonable expenses incurred travelling to and from the interview (please note you may be asked to justify travelling costs if the Department consider the claims unnecessarily excessive). Please notify Defra beforehand ([aq.secretariat@defra.gov.uk](mailto:aq.secretariat@defra.gov.uk)) if you are likely to claim and costs if known.

## Further information

For queries about your application or the recruitment process, please email: [aq.secretariat@defra.gov.uk](mailto:aq.secretariat@defra.gov.uk)

For queries about AQEG, please email Prof Ally Lewis, AQEG Chair: [Ally.lewis@ncas.ac.uk](mailto:Ally.lewis@ncas.ac.uk)

In order to give candidates a further insight into the type of work AQEG does and how it operates, an informal information session is planned on

**Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> July 2021, 11:30 – 12:30pm**

This session will be delivered online and is open to all potential applicants to help inform your decision to apply. If you wish to attend, please register your interest by contacting [aq.secretariat@defra.gov.uk](mailto:aq.secretariat@defra.gov.uk)

## How we will handle your application

Defra will acknowledge receipt of CVs and your statement. Candidates will be contacted again after shortlisting and again once the panel have considered all the applications at interview.

## Data protection

Defra is committed to protect your privacy and to process your personal information in a manner which meets the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018.

## The Seven Principles of Public Life

### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

### **Integrity**

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

### **Objectivity**

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

### **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

### **Openness**

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

### **Honesty**

Holders of public office should be truthful.

### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.