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| Appointment of members to the DfT Science Advisory CouncilInformation for applicants |



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Are you interested in using your science and engineering expertise and skills to directly influence government as it delivers an exciting transport agenda, building a better and cleaner transport system?

The Department for Transport (DfT) invites applications for new members of the DfT Science Advisory Council (SAC), a committee of experts external to DfT who provide independent, strategic advice and challenge to the Department on science and technology – speaking directly to DfT decision-makers on some of the most important issues of the day.

We are looking for up to four new members who have expertise in one of several specified technical areas relevant to transport, together with the broader skills to contribute effectively across all SAC activities, including working with other experts to analyse issues outside their own specialism.

## Introduction to Department for Transport

Everybody uses transport in one way or another – whether travelling to work, school or to visit friends and family, or in the delivery of goods and services to our shops and to our door – the transport system is at the heart of the UK’s economy, connecting people and places across the country and beyond.

From reducing the environmental impacts of transport, to ensuring the needs of users are at the heart of current and future transport systems, the Department for Transport (DfT) looks after some of the biggest issues facing Government today.

We work with our agencies and partners to support the transport network that helps the UK’s businesses and gets people and goods travelling around the country. We plan and invest in transport infrastructure to keep the UK on the move.

## Science in DfT

Science is critical to DfT achieving its objectives in the years ahead. We are in a time of high ambition and high challenge. It is widely acknowledged that transport is undergoing a period of rapid, transformative change, resulting from automation, electromobility, digital connectivity and data, rapidly changing consumer demands and the imperative for rapid action on carbon. To respond to this exciting but challenging agenda it is essential that DfT has access to the best external expertise and advice on science, technology and engineering.

## The DfT Science Advisory Council

The DfT Science Advisory Council (SAC) was established in 2014 to provide strategic advice and challenge to the Department on key science and technology areas. The SAC's membership is formed of academic and industry experts with specialisms relevant to transport. The SAC currently has a Chair and 11 members, however, as four are about to leave, we are recruiting to appoint three or four new members (advertised separately), taking membership back to 12. Further details on the [SAC’s current membership](https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/dft-science-advisory-council#chair) and recent activities are provided on the [SAC website](https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/dft-science-advisory-council).

The SAC provides independent expert advice and challenge on a range of science, social science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) issues relevant to DfT policy and operations. Members support the Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) in ensuring departmental activity is informed by the best external expertise and evidence, advising, assuring and challenging the nature and quality of DfT’s use of science and technology and identifying relevant emerging issues and trends. The SAC often examines how science and innovation can support policy in specific areas, working with DfT officials to frame the policy issue and consulting additional subject-specific experts to bring new thinking and evidence into DfT.

The objectives of the SAC are to:

* advise the CSA on DfT’s systems, capabilities and processes for obtaining STEM advice that is fit for departmental needs
* review and challenge DfT’s strategic STEM priorities and activities
* examine specific STEM issues, advising on opportunities and risks and contributing to horizon scanning capability
* build and reinforce links to national and international research communities, enabling DfT to access the best evidence
* respond to ad-hoc requests for advice to support DfT decision-making, where appropriate
* provide constructive challenge on DfT’s STEM evidence

The SAC is a departmental expert committee, providing independent advice while being supported via a secretariat function provided from within DfT.

***"Having been a member of SAC for three years before joining DfT as Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA), I can confidently say this is a really exciting opportunity to influence the heart of decision making in DfT. Members of the Council are asked to bring independent views about the work of DfT and the CSA, and manage to be both collegiate and diverse in their perspectives. The external challenge and expertise brought by SAC is critical to support me as CSA in bringing scientific and engineering advice and assurance to the Department. SAC also covers an exciting breadth of themes across transport, from decarbonisation and resilience to skills."***

Prof Sarah Sharples, DfT Chief Scientific Adviser

## Role description

Members contribute to the SAC delivering its objectives by providing their independent expertise and professional advice and challenge across the full range of SAC activity.

We are looking to appoint up to four new members with specific expertise in one or more of the technical areas listed within the essential criteria provided below. Alongside this specific expertise, it is equally important that candidates demonstrate the other essential criteria to enable them to contribute effectively across SAC activities, including on issues outside their own areas of specialism. All members are encouraged to contribute to all SAC discussions by providing insight and challenge, drawing on, but not being constrained by, their own knowledge.

Members of the SAC must abide by the [Nolan principles](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life) of public service. Members are appointed in a personal capacity and not as representatives of their employers or other organisations to which they may be affiliated, and should act in the public interest at all times. All members are responsible for ensuring the independence, objectivity and impartiality of the SAC. Members must declare any potentially conflicting interests relevant to the work of the SAC.

We would like to increase the representation of industry within the SAC membership and welcome applicants from industry as well as from academia.

## Equality, diversity and inclusion

We would like to ensure the diversity of the SAC membership, and applications from people who hold protected characteristics from under-represented groups are particularly welcomed. The Civil Service and DfT are committed to understanding, respecting and representing as broad a range of views and backgrounds as we have in UK society. We know that diverse perspectives and experiences are critical to an effective, modern Civil Service.

## Essential criteria

Candidates must be able to demonstrate the following essential criteria:

Significant current expertise relevant to transport applications in one or more of the following areas:

* Batteries and electrification
* Biodiversity and land-use
* Data, digital and telecommunications
* Position, Navigation and Timing
* Transport energy systems, including hydrogen and/or other alternative fuels
* Transport risk, resilience and/or security research
* User-Centred Design

Have an interest in and understanding of the interface between science, innovation and policy, including the application of science and technology to address societal problems

The ability to critically and objectively analyse issues across a broad range of topics, drawing on, but not being limited by, your expertise

* Active membership of your professional community with routes/networks to access further expertise
* A collaborative working style and the ability to constructively contribute insights, analysis and challenge in a formal meeting setting

## Time commitment and term of office

Candidates should ensure they have sufficient time to meet the expectations of the role. SAC business will usually take place in DfT offices in London, Leeds or Birmingham, and/or via video conference, and will require a total time commitment equivalent to approximately 7-8 days per year, excluding travel time. This will be focussed around four principal, all-day SAC meetings per year, and associated preparation and actions. Members will also be asked to respond to occasional small requests between meetings.

Meetings are normally arranged well in advance and every effort will be made to avoid state school holiday periods. The next meeting is scheduled for 29 October, with successful candidates invited to attend if available.

Appointments will be for a standard term of four years, with the possibility of reappointment for one further term. Successful applicants are expected to commit to the SAC for a minimum of two years.

## Remuneration and expenses

Members will be remunerated for their time on SAC activities, excluding travel time, at a rate of £40 per hour. Members will be able to claim reasonable time for meetings, meeting preparation, review of meeting outputs and other agreed actions.

Members will also be able to claim reasonable (standard class) travel expenses.

## The appointment process

**Applications close at midnight on Sunday 22 September 2024**. We expect to have informed shortlisted candidates by 5pm Tuesday 24 September, with interviews on the afternoon of Thursday 26 September. Candidates will be informed of the outcome as soon as possible thereafter and will be invited to attend the October SAC meeting in Leeds on Tuesday 29 October. We will do everything we can to meet these dates, but it is possible they may be subject to change. Please indicate in your email application if you anticipate difficulties being available for the stated interview dates.

The appointment panel will be led by DfT’s Chief Scientific Advisor, Professor Sarah Sharples. The panel will assess submitted CVs and Statements of Suitability against the essential criteria to decide who to invite for interview.

Interviews are expected to take place via Microsoft Teams and will last for approximately 30 minutes. Candidates will not be asked to prepare anything specific in advance of the interview but will again be expected to demonstrate how they meet each of the essential criteria and what they would personally bring to the SAC.

## How to apply

It is important that your application gives full but concise information relevant to the appointment, clearly demonstrating how you meet each of the essential criteria.

To apply, please submit:

* a CV of no more than two sides of A4, minimum font size 11
* a Statement of Suitability of no more than 750 words, clearly setting out, via specific examples, how you demonstrate the essential criteria and what you would bring to the SAC
* a completed Supporting Information Form

Applications should be sent to SAC.Secretariat@dft.gov.uk with subject line “SAC member application.”

If you have specific questions about the role or the application process, or require additional assistance to support you in your application, please email SAC.Secretariat@dft.gov.uk.

If you wish to have an informal discussion about the role with a senior DfT official please contact the office of DfT’s Chief Scientific Adviser via DfTChiefScientificAdviser@dft.gov.uk.

## Disability

As a Disability Confident employer, we positively welcome applications from individuals with disabilities and we make adjustments, wherever possible, to include everybody in our recruitment and selection process. The Department is committed to:

* Interviewing all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum standard for the advertised essential criteria, even if the standard is subsequently raised to manage applicant numbers
* Providing a fully inclusive and accessible recruitment process
* Being flexible when assessing people, so disabled job applicants have the best opportunity to demonstrate that they can do the job
* Making reasonable adjustments through the recruitment and selection process

If you have a disability and wish to apply under the Guaranteed Interview Scheme or requirement reasonable adjustments should you be invited to interview then please declare this in the Supporting Information Form.

## Conflicts of interest and integrity

It is important that members of the SAC maintain the confidence of DfT officials and ministers and of the public.

If you have any interests that might be relevant to the work of the SAC, and which could lead to a real or perceived conflict of interest if you were to be appointed, please provide details in the Supporting Information Form.

If you are involved, or have been involved, in any activities that could call into question your own reputation and/or damage the reputation of the SAC and/or DfT, these should also be disclosed so that the panel may consider whether it may affect your application. DfT will carry out appropriate due diligence checks prior to appointment.

If you have queries about this and would like to discuss further, please contact DfT’s Public Appointments Team, DfTPublicAppointments@dft.gov.uk.

## Data protection

DfT is committed to protecting the privacy and security of your personal information and does so in accordance with data protection law including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). DfT is the controller for any personal data which you provide to us as part of your application, and it will not be shared outside DfT. Information provided will be kept securely within DfT and destroyed within 24 months after the conclusion of the recruitment campaign.