

JBC Ministerial Board

Terms of Reference

1. Overview

The Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC), part of NHS Test and Trace, aims to identify early outbreaks of COVID-19 and to ensure local and national decision makers have access to expert analysis and insights when responding to outbreaks within their jurisdictions. The JBC has developed analytical methodologies to assess data and contextual information to build a picture of COVID-19 risk to the UK. This enables local and national decision makers to manage the COVID-19 risk from both National and International transmission.

Recognising the need to ensure Ministers from all four nations can contribute to JBC oversight, the JBC Ministerial Board will ensure the JBC is delivering its objectives as effectively as possible, with a strong spirit of collaboration and partnership, for all four nations of the UK.

2. Membership

The Board shall comprise the UK's four health ministers:

- The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP – Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
- Robin Swann MLA – Minister of Health
- Jeanne Freeman MSP – Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport
- Vaughan Gething MS – Minister for Health and Social Services

Dr Clare Gardiner will attend the Board in her capacity as JBC Director General. Two officials from each Administration will also be invited to attend, as agreed by their respective minister. Other relevant specialists may be invited to attend, depending on the subject matter to be discussed, as agreed by the membership.

The Board will meet three times a year. Responsibility for chairing the meeting will rotate according to the following pattern: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales.

3. Role and Responsibilities

The JBC Ministerial Board will:

- i. Ensure the JBC is delivering its objectives as effectively as possible for all four nations of the UK;

- ii. Provide a formal space for Ministerial discussion and act as an escalation point for any issues about the JBC's UK-wide role that cannot be addressed by officials;
- iii. Determine the membership and composition of the JBC Steering Board;
- iv. Provide constructive challenge and recommendations for improvement on effective four nation engagement;
- v. Consider the functioning of the JBC and whether it should be put on a statutory footing, in line with the Political Agreement; and
- vi. Operate, where possible, on a principle of unanimity.

4. Secretariat

The secretariat function for this Board will be provided by JBC, working closely with relevant officials from each Devolved Administration. Minutes of the meetings shall be distributed to attendees and retained for audit purposes.

5. Frequency of Meetings

The Board shall meet three times a year. Extraordinary meetings can take place at other intervals by agreement, as required.