

Terms of Reference

Type of Group	Task Force
Title	
Last Reviewed	Approved by the Board 28 November 2024
Next Review due	November 2026 (every two years by the Board)

The *In vivo* Policy Task Force leads on policy matters related to animal research regulation and legislation in the UK and Ireland by horizon scanning for upcoming issues and responding to relevant consultations.

Terms of Reference: *In vivo* Task Force

A Task Force is a smaller group than a Committee, focusing on one topic rather than a full strategic area. The group exists indefinitely under the guidance of the Policy Committee.

PURPOSE

Reporting to the Policy Committee, and in collaboration with the relevant members of staff, this Task Force is responsible for:

- Identifying public policy areas that will impact on animal research and to develop position statements where appropriate;
- Providing feedback on *in vivo* presentation applications for conferences and advising on the training hub;
- Coordinating The Society's response to policy consultations with the potential to impact on animal research legislation and regulation, working closely with other Committees and organisations as appropriate;
- Identifying other collaborations and support systems The Society should engage with.

The *In vivo* Task Force (IVT) will work with staff to deliver project plans set by the Policy Committee and/or the Board. It may also propose new projects to the Policy Committee for consideration where they align with the remit of IVT and, where the aim is to achieve the objectives as set out in The Society's Strategy.

REMIT

The IVT will work to enhance the environment for the *in vivo* sciences by proactively identifying potential legislative and regulatory changes that will impact on the animal research work our members and the wider physiology community undertake. This will include, where appropriate, contributing to consultations and discussion, as well as collaborating with other interested groups in order to support good scientific and welfare practice and promote the application of the 3Rs.

GOVERNANCE

Membership

The membership requires a balanced portfolio of skills knowledge and experience to be able to fully support and engage with the remit of the IVT. The maximum size of the Task Force will be eight.

The Task Force will comprise of:

- The Chair, who will be a member of The Society. In the absence of the Chair, due to for example, illness, the remaining members present can elect one of themselves to chair that meeting;
 - Two members of the Task Force may be elected joint Co-Chairs with equal responsibility and the power to delegate decision-making to one another in the case of absence.
- Other members (a maximum of 2 may not necessarily be members of The Society).

The quorum necessary for the transaction of business shall be 50% of the membership of the Task force, plus one.

External members should be chosen to include an appropriate range of skills and expertise not found among the membership. Members of the Task Force will normally serve a term of three years.

There is a minimum expectation of 33% female representation and ideally 50% across all Society activities. All Society meetings should be conducted in a manner that is supportive of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion to ensure that the entire talent pool be considered in all discussions regarding Society activities.

The Chair of the IVT shall be an *ex-officio* member of the Policy Committee.

Staff Attendance

The Associate Director of Strategy and External Relations will provide the conduit between the Task Force, the Policy Committee and staff.

The Associate Director of Strategy and External Relations shall be required to attend the Task Force, unless otherwise delegated to an appropriate member of staff.

Recruitment of Members

New Task Force members, including the Chair will be recruited through the following process as agreed by the Board:

- Chair of the Task Force, Chair of the Policy Committee working with the Associate Director of Strategy and External Relations identify the required skills and experience and carry out a skills gap assessment
- Open call to Membership detailing the required skills, experience and time commitment, complemented by targeted search where appropriate;
- Potential new members provide statement of interest;
- Chair of the Policy Committee and Task Force and the Associate Director of Strategy and External Relations will discuss applications, assess and record demonstration of skills and experience against requirement;
- Successful candidates invited to join the IVT.

Frequency and duration

The Task Force will meet as required and may lie dormant for a short period and then come back into action when there is a piece of relevant work or a discrete project.

Absence for scheduled meetings

Where the absence of a Task Force member is unavoidable, apologies should be sent to the Chair as soon as possible and comments on the agenda items and papers submitted prior to the meeting. Reasonable adjustments in the form of remote access to meetings and allowances for absence in exceptional circumstances may be made.

Finance and legal

A Task Force may not authorise expenditure and must observe any budget set for it and follow the financial controls and accounting procedures and requirements set by the Council for The Society. A Task Force must not enter into any legal commitments or incur any financial or other liabilities on behalf of The Society. The Task Force budget will be agreed annually by members of the Policy Committee (of which the Chair of the IVT is an *ex-officio* member).

Conflicts of interest and loyalty

A Task Force member who has a clear and substantial interest in a matter described above should declare that interest before, or at the beginning of any Task Force meeting where the matter is to be discussed, whether or not that interest is already recorded in the Register of Interests. Ideally, a notice should be sent to the Chair before the meeting. The Chair of the meeting should ask, at the beginning of each meeting, whether anyone has or may have a conflict, where this might be relevant. As new conflicts are discovered they should be added to the Register of Interests. Further details are provided in The Society's Policy on Conflicts.

Reporting procedure

Agendas and associated documentation will be distributed seven days before the meeting, via email.

The Task Force must have formal minutes of its meetings and record all proceedings, decisions and recommendations. Minutes, approved by the Chair, should be written within two weeks of the meeting and circulated to Task Force members. The "Chair's minutes" will be submitted to the next Policy Committee meeting and included as part of the Policy Committee's reporting as appropriate.

Confidentiality clause

Task Force members are expected to observe appropriate confidentiality and discretion in matters of the IVT and handling/safe-keeping of information and documents, in particular in relation to any personal, proprietary, or commercial information.

In particular, papers marked as confidential or information disclosed in committee deliberations should not be discussed with colleagues who are not members of the committee, with other organisations, the media, or members of the committee who are excluded from discussions because of a conflict of interest. The approval of the Chair should be sought prior to any disclosure.