

PARLIAMENTARY BUREAU

COVID-19 RECOVERY COMMITTEE: REQUEST TO APPOINT AN ADVISER

Background

1. The Session 5 COVID-19 Committee appointed two advisers to support its scrutiny of the Scottish Government's response to COVID-19. The Session 5 Committee's legacy report recommended that the successor committee should appoint advisers to support its work in Session 6.
2. The COVID-19 Recovery Committee is responsible for scrutinising Scotland's response to the pandemic, including the Scottish Government's Strategic Framework. The Strategic Framework identifies six tools that the government is using in its response to the pandemic:
 - vaccination
 - testing and contact tracing (Test and Protect)
 - protective measures and the levels system
 - travel restrictions to reduce the risk of new cases and strains coming into Scotland (importation measures)
 - ensuring we all continue to follow the rules and guidance (adherence to measures)
 - support for people and businesses
3. The COVID-19 Recovery Committee considered its remit and policy issues likely to impact on its future work programme at its business planning day on 27 August 2021. At this planning day, the Committee heard from experts in epidemiology and public health about COVID-19 and issues that lie ahead in the future course of the pandemic. The Committee also received a presentation from the Scottish Parliament's Information Centre (SPICe) regarding the internal and external resources available to the Committee to support its scrutiny.

Appointment of Advisers

4. At its meeting on 16 September 2021, the COVID-19 Recovery Committee agreed to seek the Bureau's approval to appoint advisers. The Committee agreed that the focus of the advisers should relate to four of the six tools being used in the Strategic Framework, namely the vaccination programme; testing and contact tracing; protective measures and the levels system; as well as travel restrictions.
5. Due to the breadth of subject matter expertise being sought, the Committee agreed that three advisers would be required, each with a different specialism. It is proposed that in principle each adviser should be appointed at a standard day rate, not exceeding 15 days in total. The Committee anticipates, however, that the time commitment of each adviser may vary depending on the types of issues

that arise in the future course of the pandemic. The Committee has agreed the adviser specification set out below.

Adviser Specification

Adviser duties

6. The role of the advisers will be to assist the Committee in its scrutiny of the [Scottish Government's Strategic Framework](#), particularly in relation to:
 - vaccination
 - testing and contact tracing (Test and Protect)
 - protective measures and the levels system
 - travel restrictions to reduce the risk of new cases and strains coming into Scotland (importation measures)
7. The advisers' duties will include advising on the development of future inquiry work; preparing lines of questioning or written briefings; and providing oral advice to Committee members in private. The advisers will report to the Committee through the Clerk and may be asked to submit papers to the Committee.

Person specification

8. The individuals should be a recognised expert in the field of epidemiology; public health; or immunology. A demonstrated ability to undertake COVID-19 policy analysis is required. Experience in at least one of the following areas will also be necessary, and experience in more than one would be an advantage:
 - Vaccination and immunisation programmes (development and/or roll-out)
 - Public health policy development, implementation or analysis, including measures being used in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (such as testing and contract tracing; quarantine; self-isolation; social distancing; face coverings etc.)
 - Previous pandemic responses / analysis and/or policy-making related to preparation for future pandemic responses
9. If the candidate is an academic, evidence of recent publication in peer-reviewed journals in the areas of expertise highlighted for this position would be desirable. If the candidate is not an academic, demonstrable work experience in relevant fields will be desirable.

Conditions of Appointment

10. As an expert in the field (and given the size of the remit) the advisers may well have had an involvement with the main government agencies or pharmaceutical companies involved in providing services. Any such interests will be declared in the interests of transparency and accountability.

Time Commitment

11. It is envisaged that the advisers will each spend the equivalent of 15 days supporting the Committee over a two-year period, with possibility for extension if required.

12. The Committee's future work programme is likely to be reactive to events in the pandemic. The candidates must be flexible in their availability to speak to the Committee on Thursday mornings. Attendance at committee meetings will be held in private and can be facilitated remotely.

13. An indicative division of the time may include:

Advising on the development of inquiry work	2 days
Preparation of lines of questioning or written briefings	2 days
Preparing oral advice and attending private pre-meeting briefings	10 days

Work plan

14. It is estimated that the role and workload of each of the advisers should be completed within 15 days during a 24-month period. The contract may be extended beyond the initial 24-month period, if this is required. It shall be for the Committee to decide whether to extend the contract, subject to approval by the Bureau.

Decision

15. The Bureau is invited approve the appointment of three advisers to assist the COVID-19 Recovery Committee in its scrutiny of the Scottish Government's response to the pandemic.