

# Scientific Advisory Board

## Terms of Reference

### 1. Purpose

The Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) advises and supports Bowel Cancer UK in delivering its research funding activity in line with the organisation's strategic objectives.

Following expert review, the SAB provides independent, expert recommendations on which research applications should be funded, in line with Bowel Cancer UK's strategic priorities and agreed budgets.

### 2. Scope

The SAB provides professional expertise on matters relating to the assessment and funding of research supported by Bowel Cancer UK.

The SAB's remit does not extend to fundraising, communications, policy activity or financial decision-making, unless explicitly requested by the Board of Trustees.

### 3. Authority and accountability

The SAB is an advisory body and has no executive powers other than those specifically delegated within these Terms of Reference.

Recommendations made by the SAB are subject to ratification through Bowel Cancer UK's governance processes, through the Impact Committee. If recommendations fall outside agreed parameters, the Impact Committee will seek ratification from the Board of Trustees.

The Chair of the SAB will normally be invited to present the SAB's funding recommendations and key points of discussion to the Impact Committee following the annual SAB meeting. In order to maintain their independence, the Chair of the SAB will not attend other meetings of the Impact Committee unless specifically requested.

### 4. Duties and responsibilities

The SAB will:

- Work within the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) [Principles of Expert Review](#) and relevant policies
- Make recommendations on research funding following expert assessment and discussion
- Confirm that the breadth and depth of the review stages has been met satisfactorily.
- The SAB may be asked to triage applications if required (e.g. in instances where a large number of applications have been received).

- Provide advice to the charity on research funding processes and funding mechanisms and act as a strategic sounding board on matters relating to Bowel Cancer UK's research ambitions.
- When considering research applications, members are expected to draw on their own expertise and general knowledge in their contribution to collective discussion and decision-making across all applications under review. Members are not expected to provide specialist assessment for every application but should take into account external expert review and lay review feedback when forming recommendations
- Undertake additional advisory tasks at the request of Bowel Cancer UK through its governance structures

## 5. Membership

The SAB will normally consist of 8–12 members, reflecting the scale of Bowel Cancer UK's research investment, and will be supported by co-opted members as and when required. Members are appointed for their scientific, clinical or professional expertise relevant to Bowel Cancer UK's research strategy and funding portfolio.

Membership may include scientists, clinicians, other health professionals and individuals with relevant methodological or sector expertise.

Bowel Cancer UK aims to ensure that the membership of the SAB reflects a balance of expertise, perspectives and backgrounds, including consideration of specialty, geography and lived experience.

Appointments to the SAB are made subject to recommendations by the Head of Research and the Chair of the SAB, with oversight from the Board of Trustees by the Impact Committee. Members are appointed for an initial term of three years, subject to a review after the first year. Members may be reappointed once for a further three-year term. Individuals who have stepped down may not rejoin the SAB for a minimum of three years.

Two representatives of the Lay Review Panel will be invited to participate in work of the SAB, of which at least one must attend the relevant meetings.

A Trustee may attend meetings as a non-voting observer.

Additional members or specialist advisers, including early-mid career researchers, may be co-opted where specific expertise is required.

## 6. Chair

The Chair is appointed by Bowel Cancer UK and is responsible for the effective and fair operation of the SAB.

The Chair will:

- Facilitate discussion and ensure balanced consideration of scientific and lay perspectives
- Ensure conflicts of interest are appropriately identified and managed

- Ensure discussions are robust, inclusive and aligned with Bowel Cancer UK's strategic priorities
- Support the recruitment of new SAB members
- Act as an ambassador for Bowel Cancer UK

The Chair must be independent of any application under consideration and must not apply for, or be named on, any Bowel Cancer UK research funding application during their term as Chair.

The Chair does not score applications.

## **7. Deputy Chair**

A Deputy Chair is appointed to support the Chair and to act in their absence or where the Chair has a conflict of interest.

The Deputy Chair may participate fully in discussions and scoring, except where a conflict of interest exists.

## **8. Meetings**

The SAB meets once per year, normally aligned to Bowel Cancer UK's annual grant round.

Meetings are held virtually. In exceptional circumstances, meetings may be convened in person. Additional meetings may be convened where required.

The quorum for meetings is no fewer than five members.

Members who are unable to attend meetings may be asked to provide written comments in advance.

All members are expected to engage in discussion of the full range of applications under consideration, drawing on external expert review and lay review feedback alongside their own expertise.

Members who miss two consecutive meetings without reasonable cause may be asked to step down.

## **9. Conduct and confidentiality**

Members are expected to act with professionalism, respect and integrity, and to engage constructively with the views of others.

All information shared through the SAB is confidential and must not be disclosed outside the Board.

Confidential materials must be securely destroyed once they are no longer required.

## **10. Conflicts of interest**

Members must declare any actual or perceived conflicts of interest in line with Bowel Cancer UK's [Conflict of Interest Policy](#).

Where a conflict exists, this will be documented, and the persons concerned will not take part in the discussion, scoring or recommendation relating to that application. The Chair of the SAB must confirm to the Head of Research that any conflicts of interest have been fully resolved. If a conflict of interest has not been declared, or resolved to the Chair's satisfaction, this must be notified to the Impact Committee.

## **11. Administration**

Secretariat support is provided by the Research Team at Bowel Cancer UK. Staff attend meetings in a non-voting capacity.

## **12. Expenses**

SAB meetings are usually held virtually, and members should not normally expect to incur travel or subsistence costs.

Where in-person attendance is required, or where travel is agreed in advance for specific meetings or activities, members will be reimbursed for reasonable travel and subsistence expenses in line with Bowel Cancer UK's expenses policy.