

## **Independent Scientific Advisory Board**

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The need for an Independent Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB) was outlined jointly by the Medical Research Council and the Wellcome Trust to provide advice, support and guidance to the Principal Investigator (PI) and Scientific Director (SD) of ALSPAC on ALSPAC's scientific direction, strategy and operations, and the furtherance of its scientific mission.

#### **2. Remit**

- 2.1 The remit and work programme of ISAB incorporates:
- Provision of scientific advice on the scope of ALSPAC's scientific objectives
  - Provision of guidance and advice on the sustainability, strategic planning and enrichment of ALSPAC
  - Evaluation of ALSPAC's scientific outputs
  - Assessment of ALSPAC's contribution to the scientific community in the UK and internationally
  - Provision of advice from a scientific perspective on issues related to access to data and samples and data release
  - Review of complex, controversial or disputed proposals for access to data and samples that have been referred on by the ALSPAC Executive (AE)
  - Overseeing, reviewing and providing guidance on ALSPAC's strategic plans
  - Provision of advice on grant applications and the strategic direction of the study

#### **3. Membership**

- 3.1 The Chair of ISAB will have the responsibility for the timetable, agenda and conduct of ISAB meetings; for maintaining a record of proceedings and for producing reports of meetings for the PI, SD and funders. The AE will support the Chair in these responsibilities.
- 3.2 Members of ISAB will be scientists with appropriate experience in fields relevant to ALSPAC. The Funders, PI and SD will be jointly responsible for selecting, appointing, removing and replacing all members, including the Chair.
- 3.3 All members, including the Chair, will declare any relevant personal, academic, professional or business interests on an ongoing basis and, in particular, will declare any such interest prior to the consideration by ISAB of an item to which such interest relates. The Chair, supported by the PI/SD shall be responsible for the proper management of conflicts of interest. Members may be excluded from the consideration of specific items in which they have an interest where this is necessary to avoid unmanageable conflict or the appearance of it.
- 3.4 A quorum exists where at least half of the members are present.
- 3.5 Members are currently appointed for the period of the ALSPAC renewal grant (August 2019 to July 2024). Members will be selected from across the UK and international research (industry and academia) communities to ensure ISAB is

diverse in ethnicity and gender, representative of ALSPAC and funders evolving research priorities. Alterations to membership can occur during this period subject to individual member circumstance, though the expectation is that a 5 year term is adhered to. Members are invited as individuals based on their knowledge, expertise and experience in specific areas and are not attending as formal representatives of their employing organisations. Members are expected to fully understand and enact the recognised duties and responsibilities of their role.

- 3.6 A representative from the three funders, the MRC, Wellcome Trust and the University of Bristol, will be invited to attend ISAB meetings as observers.

#### **4. Meetings**

- 4.1 ISAB meets regularly as the need arises, roughly once every six months either online or in person. The Chair of ISAB is responsible for chairing the meetings. Administrative support for the meetings will be provided by ALSPAC.
- 4.2 Meeting documents will be sent out via email at least one week prior to the meeting. It is expected that members will come to the meetings fully prepared to participate in the meetings.
- 4.3 Members are expected to deliver on actions in a timely manner.
- 4.4 Minutes of all meetings will be taken and provided to all members.

#### **5. ASG Minutes and Reporting**

- 5.1 Papers for the meeting will be sent out electronically no less than one week prior to the meeting date.
- 5.2 The minutes of the meetings are circulated to all ISAB members and observers.

#### **6. Constitution**

- 6.1.1 These terms of reference were endorsed by the Medical Research Council and the Wellcome Trust on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023.