
Description of committee

The British Paediatric Surveillance Unit was set up in 1986, to undertake active surveillance of rare and uncommon paediatric conditions and infections across the UK and Republic of Ireland, and now also acts as an advocate for rare diseases in children. Internationally known, it is a joint initiative between the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH), Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), University College London Institute of Child Health (UCL-ICH), the latter in conjunction with the Great Ormond Street Hospital Charity. Each of these organisations contribute to the funding of the BPSU and oversee its strategic direction via the BPSU Partnership Board.

The Scientific Committee reports to the BPSU Partnership Board and all three organisations noted above (RCPCH, DHSC, UCL-ICH) are also represented on the Scientific Committee, along with representatives from Health Protection Scotland and the Republic of Ireland. Other members of the Scientific Committee are appointed to provide a broad range of paediatric clinical expertise, which include community health, neonatology, infectious disease, general paediatrics, epidemiology, and public health. In addition, the Scientific Committee includes paediatric trainee representatives, Patient and Public Representatives for public involvement in research, and two medical advisors, one from the UCL-ICH and one from DHSC, who help with the review of study applications. The Scientific Committee also supports the Chair and staff at the BPSU.

The responsibility of the Scientific Committee is to deliver and implement the aims and objectives of the BPSU in terms of the studies that it supports and its reporting system. Its objective is to advance knowledge of rare or uncommon childhood conditions, disorders or infections, which are of public health importance, through active monthly reporting by paediatricians participating in a national reporting scheme that runs across the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

The Scientific Committee is responsible for:

- Inputting into the yearly budget
- Signing-off the annual report
- Reporting to the Partnership Board on the activities of the BPSU
- Receiving regular financial reports from the Head of the BPSU
- Implementing the aims and objectives of the reporting system
- Inputting into and drafting the three-year strategic plan for BPSU
- Ensuring the BPSU adheres to good data governance practices

In accordance with College policy, all candidates should be in Good Standing with the RCPCH.

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The business of the Scientific Committee is:

- The implementation of the aims and objectives of the BPSU
- Guiding and monitoring the operation of the BPSU
- Providing peer review of and approving applications from investigators proposing conditions to include on the BPSU reporting system
- Advising on the design and conduct of research studies
- Developing written and other guidance for potential applicants, to include the process for applying and expected good practice in relation to research governance and public involvement by study investigators
- Receiving and reviewing draft reports and publications from investigators
- Supporting the wide dissemination of BPSU outputs and impact to a variety of stakeholders
- Encouraging engagement of paediatricians in surveillance activities and promoting awareness of conditions being researched
- Approving reports of the work of the BPSU, including the annual report and annual plan, in addition to encouraging and monitoring public involvement in BPSU studies

Role Details

The post-holder is accountable to the BPSU Scientific Committee Chair.

The appointment is for 3 years, renewable for a further 2 years.

Eligibility

Applicants must be a consultant paediatrician who is a regular reporter to the BPSU and whose primary mailing address is in the Republic of Ireland

Role purpose and responsibility

This includes peer review, methodological contribution to and approval of study applications, selection of the annual Sir Peter Tizard Bursary awards, contribution to the working of the BSC and promotion of the aims and objectives of the BPSU.

The Committee Member will be required to attend up to 6 meeting (either morning or afternoon meetings, duration roughly 3 hours) per year. Attendance at BSC meetings is monitored. Membership is reviewed if individual attendance drops below fifty percent or if Member's are absent from more than two consecutive meetings. It is expected that at least two-thirds of Committee Members are in attendance at each meeting. Members may be asked to represent the BPSU at other internal or external meetings of each of the parent bodies of the Unit.

Duties include:

- 1) Supporting the Unit to achieve its strategic aims and objectives.
- 2) Supporting the chair of the BPSU Scientific Committee and supporting the peer review and approvals process of studies of conditions proposed for inclusion on the 'orange card.'
- 3) Supporting the work of the Medical Advisers and the appointment, induction and work of other committee members as required.
- 4) Contributing to the development of a yearly strategic review including work and financial plan
- 5) Being an advocate for the work of the BPSU

Working relationships

The post holder will work with the BPSU Chair, and other Committee members.

Time commitment

Committee members will be required to attend 6 half day meetings per year and devote sufficient time to the role to meet the demands of the role. You may be asked to represent the Committee at other internal or external meetings of the College. Meetings will normally be held online via Teams, with 1-2 in-person meetings per year which will be held at the London RCPCH office.

Support provided from the College

The first point of contact will be via the BPSU Project Coordinator.

Members will be reimbursed for the cost of travelling expenses (in line with the College's expenses policy) and subsistence to attend College meetings. Remote attendance options may also be offered for some meetings.

Knowledge, skills and experience required

Essential:

- Currently practicing as a paediatric clinician in the Republic of Ireland
- GMC of Ireland specialist register as paediatrician with minimum 3 years' experience post CCT or equivalent
- Member in good standing with RCPCH or equivalent organisation and the BPSU (orange card compliant)
- Has knowledge of research governance issues, including ethics, data protection and consent and confidentiality
- Good communication and team working skills
- [Member of the College in Good Standing with RCPCH](#)
- Has attended [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#) training within the last 3 years.

Desirable:

- Applications are welcomed from all paediatric specialties
- Higher degree (MD or PhD)
- Epidemiological and public health knowledge
- Research or academic experience
- Experience of serving on Committees

Process

Applications for roles should be submitted electronically at [volunteering opportunities](#) no later than the closing date. Your CV should also be uploaded, and we will ask you to include a statement of up to 250 words outlining the relevant experience and reasons for applying to the post.

When undertaking a role at RCPCH all role holders must agree to respect and uphold the charitable objects, vision, and values of the RCPCH and uphold the [code of conduct](#) which embodies of the values that the RCPCH holds the breaking of which could lead to sanction. Core to RCPCH's values is the exemplary behaviour of its members, both as professionals and also as individuals.

Appointed candidates will be asked to [register their interests](#). This is to ensure that personal circumstances that might compromise a volunteer's ability to be seen as acting correctly are properly disclosed.

The role holder must be committed to following the College's safer working practices guidelines when working with children, young people and adults at risk. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, with the role holder required to comply with the College's Safeguarding policy. Appointed candidates must also have attended Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training within the last 3 years.

The College may – at its discretion and with the agreement of the candidates – choose to offer this role as a role-share between more than one candidate once the appointment process is complete. Details will be discussed with candidates at the time should this arise.

The RCPCH wants to represent all the communities we serve and are dedicated to creating an inclusive working environment. The College is particularly keen to receive applications from those who belong to an underrepresented group as defined in the equality act 2010, including age, disability, sex, race, religion or belief, gender reassignment, married or in a civil partnership, pregnancy/parental leave, or sexual orientation.

The College is a disability confident leader, please let us know if you require any reasonable adjustments or accommodations as a result of a disability, impairment or health condition.

Members can also receive support to cover the costs of caring responsibilities, where these responsibilities would otherwise prevent them from undertaking voluntary work for the College, as per the [removing barriers](#) fund. Claims must be submitted using the appropriate form and the College should be made aware of these requests at least a month in advance. For further information please contact edi@rcpch.ac.uk.

Eligible candidates who have the required knowledge, skills and experience may be invited to attend an interview either at the College's Offices or via tele-conferencing.

Personal information about unsuccessful candidates will be held for 6 months after the position has been filled, it will then be securely destroyed. Personal information about successful candidates will be retained on their membership file. The information contained in this will be kept secure and will only be used for purposes directly relevant to that person's responsibilities as a committee member. Please also refer to the [membership privacy notice](#) which explains how we will use the data we collect from you.

Dr Jan Dudley
Registrar
2026