

Renewing Work Advisory Group of Experts (ReWAGE)

Terms of Reference

Aims and Objectives

Informed and effective decision-making in a crisis relies upon access to the best available expert advice. ReWAGE is an expert advisory group that focuses on the recovery and renewal of work and employment in the UK post-Covid 19. ReWAGE supports a strategic response to jobs' recovery and renewal by engaging with government and supported by a range of stakeholders from business broadly defined and civil society.

In the context of government wanting to build back better and its levelling up agenda, ReWAGE supports government to:

- maintain and create jobs, improve the quality of jobs and ensure that the workforce has the right skills to access those jobs and access to training and jobs is available to all. Its scope covers employers, employees and the self-employed.

ReWAGE is independent of government but is intended to work closely with it. ReWAGE aims to ensure that co-ordinated, timely, expert advice based on science is made available to cross-departmental decision makers to support UK national, regional and devolved government during and beyond the Covid-19 pandemic. The composition of the Expert Group reflects this reach. The group will sit over 2021-22.

Drawing on its experts, ReWAGE will:

- advise on proposed actions, marshal and evaluate existing evidence, make evidence-based recommendations for policy development and assess the degree of consensus for an activity or conduct new analysis.

It will provide evidence papers and policy briefs determined by events, priorities and needs. It will also produce reports by commission. It will hold events to inform, gather and disseminate evidence, and problem identify. Events and briefings may be either open or closed.

Organisationally, ReWAGE is designed to be both flexible and scalable. It is likely that its precise role will evolve as the situation develops and that it will vary by the nature of events or the advice required.

Membership

Chairs

The duties of the Chairs are as follows:

- To provide leadership in the delivery of the function of ReWAGE.
- To oversee the operation and outputs of ReWAGE.
- To chair meetings of the Steering Group and have responsibility for taking a casting vote in the event of a tie in any vote undertaken at Steering Group.
- To chair meetings of the Expert Group.
- To chair meetings of the Advisory Group.
- To ensure that a record of information is maintained and is available to funding bodies.

- To liaise and work with the Sub-groups, ensuring that the full range of scientific opinion is taken into account.
- To have regular meetings with government at a senior level to help early identification of issues requiring advice and evidence.
- To communicate the advice, expertise and outputs of ReWAGE to government at a senior level.
- To act as spokespersons in media engagement and when responding to requests for media statements.
- To represent the consensus of ReWAGE at high profile events, engaging in national and local discussions and public relations opportunities as required.
- To peer review ReWAGE outputs and seek external review where necessary.

Secretariat

The Secretariat supports the work of the Group, Chairs and Steering Group, and has access to all Experts and Advisors. It comprises a Project Manager, Communications and Engagement Manager, and administrative and communications support. Contact: rewage@warwick.ac.uk

- The Secretariat shall:
 - organise Steering Group and Advisory Group meetings;
 - advise the Steering Group on operational matters;
 - organise Expert Group meetings;
 - assemble information and record meetings' conclusions;
 - maintain a record of the participants of the Expert Group, Sub-Groups and Advisory Group;
 - ensure meeting agendas are circulated in advance of those meetings;
 - ensure minutes are taken of Steering Group, Expert Group and Advisory Group meetings;
 - maintain a record of information about the operation of ReWAGE;
 - maintain a record of information about the evidence base of ReWAGE outputs.
- The Project Manager will be an impartial reporter of the operation and outputs of ReWAGE.
- Administrative support to the Project Manager is provided through the Institute for Employment Research at the University of Warwick. Contact: rewage@warwick.ac.uk
- Communications support is provided internally and externally for the Group.

Steering Group

The key functions of the Steering Group are to:

- Provide leadership and accountability to ReWAGE.
- Define strategy and to oversee progress on delivery of advice, expertise and outputs.
- Make decisions in terms of prioritising the programme of work of ReWAGE.
- Set delivery plans, budgets and governance.
- Agree on the mechanisms by which the Expert Group and Sub-groups will arrive at their final position and/or advice.
- Be clear on when experts are expected to reach a consensus on particular issues.
- Ensure transparency of the operations and outputs of ReWAGE and establish what documents and information is to be made open access through the ReWAGE website.
- When decisions are made to delay open access to these documents and information, it should agree a realistic timescale for reporting if reporting is allowed – see provisions in Rules of Engagement 6. below.

- Maximise visibility and promote the work of ReWAGE at national and international levels.

The Steering Group consists of the Chairs, Project Manager, funders and others by invitation from the Chairs. It meets monthly. These meetings will have a fixed calendar.

There will be joint bi-monthly meetings of the Steering Group and Advisory Group. These meetings will have a fixed calendar with prior notification.

Expert Group

The purpose of the Expert Group is to provide evidence-based advice and expertise in both oral and written form.

It comprises a balanced group of senior experts from universities and research organisations across the UK. These advisors have subject expertise and are drawn from a range of relevant scientific disciplines.

Experts are invited to participate in the group because of their nationally and internationally recognised expertise and existing experience of working with government and stakeholders from business widely defined and civil society. They are expected to identify, marshal and evaluate relevant available research in their specialist area.

Experts are participants of ReWAGE as individuals to fulfil the function of ReWAGE and as representatives of their profession or employing organisations. They are expected to maintain their contact with professional and disciplinary colleagues.

There will be monthly meetings of the experts in which all experts can participate. These meetings are for the internal exchange of ideas and communications, and to provide identity and coherence to the group. These meetings will have a fixed calendar with prior notification. Absences from these meetings are understandable. Members are normally expected to attend at least 50% of meetings. This level of participation ensures their active contribution and engagement with ReWAGE and the coherence of the group.

Sub-groups

To provide subject specific advice and evidence, Sub-groups will be constituted. These Sub-groups provide subject specific expertise, with membership drawn from the Expert Group. This arrangement will help ensure that deliberation within and coordination of ReWAGE is manageable and will also concentrate expertise on particular issues.

The Sub-groups will be created by the Steering Group as required. Experts in the Sub-groups can invite additional support from non-ReWAGE experts as necessary. Additional members must be registered with the Secretariat.

Sub-group sizes and duration will be flexible and may respond to circumstances. Membership will be determined by subject expertise. Meetings are held as required. Outputs will be reviewed by the Chairs or their nominees.

Advisory Group

The Advisory Group provides advice to the Steering Group on:

- The priorities in the programme of work of the Expert Group and Sub-groups.
- ReWAGE's strategy to fulfil its function.
- Progress to deliver ReWAGE's advice, expertise and outputs.
- Its engagement with government as well as other stakeholders not participating in ReWAGE.

It consists of stakeholders from business representative organisations broadly defined and civil society organisations. Membership is by invitation.

There will be joint bi-monthly meetings of the Steering Group and Advisory Group. These meetings will have a fixed calendar with prior notification.

The organisational structure of ReWAGE is outlined in the Appendix.

Meetings

A calendar of all meetings will be disseminated to all ReWAGE participants and published and updated online on the ReWAGE website.

Outputs

To be user-friendly for decision makers, most documents produced by the Group will be short in length and written in plain language. Outputs are based on consensus about the evidence. All ReWAGE evidence papers and policy briefs and reports should be agreed by the respective sub-group based on that consensus.

Outputs are peer reviewed by the Chairs or their nominees. This review will be speedy and light touch. Authorship of papers, briefs and reports will be determined by the authors, will include their institutional listing and be badged as ReWAGE. Papers, briefs and reports will be confirmed for release by the Chairs and, in the first instance, disseminated by the Secretariat.

Where germane, papers, briefs and reports will be accompanied by a press release provided and supported by the Communications and Engagement Manager and in liaison with the press teams of the Universities of Warwick and Leeds and relevant funders.

Through the Secretariat, experts may be asked to provide oral communications to decision makers and the media. Experts that agree to do so through ReWAGE will represent ReWAGE and their home institutions. This arrangement does not preclude experts speaking independently to the media in a personal capacity.

Rules of Engagement

Operationally, ReWAGE has a process map or framework through which its advice and outputs are developed:

1. ReWAGE is independent of Government but, insofar as they are relevant, will operate according to the [Principles of scientific advice to government - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk). Through evidence, it supports policy deliberation to make that deliberation more effective and efficient.
2. ReWAGE will set its own programme of work as well as respond to government issues and may independently produce reports on any aspects of work, employment and the labour market.
3. Issues for examination may be suggested by ReWAGE members, government or stakeholders in the Advisory Group and other interested parties. Through this consultation, priorities will be set by the Steering Group.
4. ReWAGE's function is to support government but its discussions are not restricted by or limited to existing government departmental policy.

5. The experts are expected to identify, marshal and evaluate existing evidence in their subject area. Where ReWAGE feel that necessary research is lacking, the Steering Group will seek to have research commissioned in rapid response mode.
6. Where that research is commissioned through a government department, departmental procurement rules and procedures should apply, which may include non-disclosure of evidence in some cases.
7. Whether acting proactively or reactively, ReWAGE operates free of direction from government departments' officials or Ministers.
8. ReWAGE will review scientific research, and offer independent expert judgement, including highlighting where data are missing and where uncertainty or disagreement exists. Where germane, advice and outputs will reflect the diversity of academic opinion. Advice that is published will make clear the limitations of any data used, and assumptions made or criteria applied will be clearly identifiable.
9. To maximise its utility and impact with government, advice and outputs from the Expert Group and its Sub-groups require consensus about the evidence. Unanimity may not always be possible. In cases where unanimity is not possible, the majority and minority positions should be recorded and consensus established as to the reasons for the lack of unanimity and these reasons made explicit in advice and outputs.
10. ReWAGE will publish outputs as open access wherever possible, subject to the provisions in 6. above. In general, any new work required and commissioned through ReWAGE should be published in the name of ReWAGE. The Steering Group should encourage the publication of commissioned research results in the scientific press, including literature reviews.
11. The Chairs will act as spokespersons in routine communication of advice and outputs to senior government official and Ministers. The Chairs should have a nominated contact for routine engagement (normally via the Secretariat).

Code of Conduct

On a general level, to maximise the impact of ReWAGE, it is essential that the group work on the basis of consensus and coherence. In addition, it is important to delineate experts' work for ReWAGE and their other non-ReWAGE work. To these ends:

- Open and frank discussion will be encouraged. Experts should be free to question and forward ideas based on evidence.
- The communication of internal discussions to those outside the group should only be undertaken with the express consent of the group (normally via the Secretariat).
- ReWAGE experts are expected to show respect and tolerance to each other and to take responsibility for maintaining the coherence of the group.
- ReWAGE experts are free to publish and present their own research outwith ReWAGE.
- ReWAGE experts are free to communicate publicly their advice to government, subject to normal confidentiality restrictions, including when it appears to be inconsistent with government policy.
- ReWAGE experts have the right to engage with the media and public independently of their work with ReWAGE.
- ReWAGE experts should make clear in what capacity they are communicating. If an expert is speaking or writing in a personal or professional capacity to the media (which they are entitled to do) and they are identified as a member of ReWAGE, it should be made clear that the individual's view is not necessarily that of ReWAGE.

- ReWAGE experts must comply with the Code of Conduct, Rules of Engagement and the Terms of Reference of the group(s) of which they are a member, and ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities, and that they are familiar with the function and role of ReWAGE.

Appendix: Organisational structure of ReWAGE

