



## AI ETHICS ADVISORY PANEL

### Minute of the meeting held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021

#### Attendees

**Laurence Lee** (*Chair*)  
Second Permanent Secretary for Defence

**Professor Nick Colosimo**  
Executive Manager Future Capabilities, BAE systems

**Dr Merel Ekelhof**  
Exchange Officer at the US Joint AI Center (acting in personal capacity)

**Dr Darrell Jaya-Ratnam**  
Managing Director, DIEM Analytics

**Professor Peter Lee**  
Professor of applied ethics, University of Portsmouth

**Professor Dame Angela McLean**  
MOD Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA)

**Richard Moyes**  
Managing Director and co-founder, Article 36

**Professor Gopal Ramchurn**  
Director at the Trusted Autonomous Systems Hub, University of Southampton

**Professor Mariarosaria Taddeo**  
Deputy Director of the Oxford Digital Ethics Lab

**Professor David Whetham**  
Professor of Ethics and the Military Profession, Kings College London

#### Apologies

**Professor Dapo Akande**  
Director of the Oxford Institute for Ethics, Law and Armed Conflict

**Tabitha Goldstaub**  
Founder of CognitionX and chair of the AI Council

**Lt Gen Roly Walker**  
Deputy Chief of Defence Staff for Military Strategy and Operations (DCDSMSO)

**Dominic Wilson**  
MOD Director General for Security Policy

#### Also attending

Hd DST Policy: Dr Chris Moore-Bick  
DST-DAU-International: [REDACTED]  
CDEI: [REDACTED]

DST-DAU-StratPol2: [REDACTED]  
SPO: [REDACTED]

#### Introduction

1. The Chair welcomed members of the panel, introduced the participants, and his new role as overall lead for AI ethics policy in the MOD. The Chair made the following points:
  - The MOD continues to see AI-driven technologies as a source of significant and ongoing benefit, with the potential to revolutionise all parts of the organisation.
  - However, the department can only adopt the technology successfully for Defence if we go about it responsibly, safely and ethically.

- There is increased activity in the AI policy space: the UK Government published its national AI Strategy, and Defence is soon to publish its own approaches to responsible AI.
  - The department's work in this area must now turn from high level policy and principles to implementation across the organisation.
2. The chair also updated the panel on membership, with Lt. Gen Roly Walker taking over Lt. Gen Doug Chalmers' role as Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff for Military Strategy and Operations, and sitting on the panel for future meetings.

**Review: Update on MOD's latest work on AI Ethics**

3. [REDACTED] from the DAU updated the panel on work undertaken since the previous meeting. This included:
- Minor wording changes to the ethical principles as a result of the panel's previous written responses.
  - The evolution of the MOD's AI Strategy, due to be published by the end of the year.
  - Increased public and parliamentary engagement on the subject of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS).
  - Policy development on how to implement ethical AI policy across Defence.
  - The sharing of the ethical principles across the Chiefs of Defence by the Second Permanent Secretary.
  - The intended publication of the MOD's *Approaches to Safe and Responsible AI* in the w/c 18th October, this document to include the ethical principles, as well as the existence of the panel.
4. In response, the panel discussed:
- The importance of transparency when speaking publicly of the panel's role in policy creation, and the need to publish the names of the panellists in the upcoming ethics documents.
- [REDACTED]
- The need to assure the principles across current AI projects to ensure that they are currently being followed.
  - The need to clearly demonstrate a direction of travel on implementation across Defence.
5. The DAU took actions to review the inclusion of LAWS content within the upcoming *Approaches to Safe and Responsible AI* document, and to ensure panellists names are included in the description of the AI Ethics Advisory Panel.

**Discussion: Key issues for implementing the ethical principles across Defence**

6. Chris Moore-Bick, Head of Defence Science and Technology Policy for MOD, introduced the current policy thinking underway on implementing the principles. This included:
- The need to be outward facing and transparent in implementation, to take a whole-lifecycle approach to the development and use of AI systems, and to take a context-specific approach as set out in the principles.

- The overall areas within Defence for primary focus on implementation: procurement and purchasing, education, research and development, and operations.
7. In response, the panel discussed:
- Whether an independent board or body could be set up to play the assurance role within Defence.
  - The level of ethical auditing required by Defence.
  - The advantages and disadvantages of Head Office taking the lead on implementation rather than delegating and empowering development teams to set up ethical practices.
  - The need to focus on the human organisational aspect of implementation rather than a narrow focus on testing and evaluation.

### **Summary**

8. The Chair closed the meeting, thanking the participants, and agreeing the next session of the Ethics Advisory Panel will be early in the new year.

### **Actions**

9. MOD to review the inclusion of LAWS content within the upcoming *Approaches to Safe and Responsible AI* document, and to ensure panellists names are included in the description of the AI Ethics Advisory Panel.
10. MOD to share suitable information about the panel publication with panellists prior to launch.