

# sacn

Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition

## SACN Code of Practice



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## **SACN Code of Practice**

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# 1. Introduction

1. This document sets out the Code of Practice for SACN members. This document should be read alongside SACN's [Framework for Evaluation of Evidence that Relates Food and Nutrients to Health](#). Unless otherwise stated, references to 'members' throughout this document apply to all members of SACN, its subgroups and working groups.

## 2. Terms of reference and function

2. The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) is a committee of the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID). It provides independent scientific advice on, and risk assessment of, nutrition and related health issues. It advises the 4 UK health departments and other government departments and agencies and is supported by a scientific secretariat based at OHID.
3. Its advice covers scientific aspects of nutrition and health with specific reference to:
  - Nutrient intakes and nutritional status of the population
  - nutrient content of individual foods and advice on individual nutrients and diet as a whole, including the definition of a balanced diet
  - monitoring and surveillance of the above aspects
  - nutritional issues which affect wider public health policy issues including conditions where nutritional status is one of a number of risk factors (such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, oral health, osteoporosis and obesity)
  - research requirements for the above.
4. Consideration of vulnerable groups (such as infants, adolescents and older adults), racially and ethnically diverse groups and health inequality underpins all SACN's evidence evaluations. Where relevant, and when available evidence allows, SACN also considers beliefs and cultural influences.
5. The function of SACN is to gather and assess scientific information (risk assessment) to assist policy making or analysis (risk management). The task of policy making is the responsibility of government, which will consider practical options for responses to the problem on which scientific advice has been sought, assessing those options and making decisions on them. Where required, SACN may advise on possible practical solutions, but does not develop policy on behalf of government. SACN has a public health focus, therefore the treatment of disease is outside SACN's remit, unless specifically requested to consider. Alcohol, other than as a source of energy, is also outside SACN's remit.
6. The [Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees \(CoPSAC\)](#) states: "Whether acting proactively or reactively, SACs should expect to operate free of influence from the sponsor department officials or Ministers, and remain clear that their function is wider than simply providing evidence just to support departmental policy". SACN sets its own agenda as well as responding to OHID issues and those of the 4 UK health departments and other government departments and agencies, in accordance with its terms of reference. In addition, issues for future consideration by the committee are raised through regular horizon scanning exercises, consideration of results of the National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS), and through updates or discussions of any other business at SACN meetings.

### 3. Appointment of SACN members

7. Appointments to SACN are made on merit and in accordance with the principles of the CoPSAC and the [Governance Code on Public Appointments](#) issued by the Minister for the Cabinet Office. The Chair and members are appointed as individuals to fulfil the role of the committee, not as representatives of their particular profession, employer or interest group, and have a duty to act in the public interest. Members are appointed on a personal basis, even when they may be members of stakeholder groups. In the interest of objectivity, SACN includes lay members and members with technical industry expertise and meetings are attended by observers from departments with responsibility for nutrition policy in each UK country.
8. Membership is not determined on a geographical basis but on suitability for the role, based on an assessment against criteria specified at the time of the recruitment of new members. New appointments are made through an open competition following advertisement of the roles in, for example, scientific journals and with relevant professional bodies or networks informed about roles that may interest their members.
9. Criteria for candidates are set out in an application pack sent to those who express an interest in the posts. Candidates are short-listed against the criteria and then invited for interview with the most suitable candidate for a particular role selected by an appointments panel on the basis of the candidate's application and interview. The appointments panel for SACN members normally consists of the SACN Chair, the SACN secretariat lead, the Head of Nutrition Science at OHID, and an Independent Public Appointments Assessor obtained through the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA).
10. Appointment to SACN's Subgroup on Maternal and Child Nutrition also follow a transparent process and are broadly in line with those for SACN. Expert individuals can be co-opted to SACN working and subgroups; where individuals are co-opted the length and purpose is agreed at the outset.
11. The Chair and members are usually appointed for terms of two or three years in order to stagger appointment end dates. In accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments issued by the Minister for the Cabinet Office, there is a strong presumption that members cannot serve in one post for more than 10 years. However, members can reapply to serve on the committee through open competition<sup>3</sup>. Members may be offered reappointment without the post being advertised up to the maximum 10-year term. This is desirable in order to retain expertise and experience on the committee. However, re-appointment of members is not automatic, but subject to conditions including satisfactory appraisal (undertaken in the year before their term ends) and regular attendance at meetings.

12. Appointments of the Chair and members are made by the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) at OHID.

## **Remuneration**

13. Members may claim travel and subsistence expenses, which are properly and necessarily incurred in carrying out their role and responsibilities as a Member of SACN and in line with travel and subsistence policy for the Department of Health and Social Care (see Annex 1). Remuneration is taxable, and subject to National Insurance contributions, both of which will be deducted at source. Remuneration is not pensionable.

## **Time commitment**

14. Members of SACN and its Subgroup on Maternal and Child Nutrition (SMCN) are contracted for up to 10 days per annum and would be expected to be available for up to 3 one-day SACN and/or SMCN meetings a year.

## **SACN appraisals**

15. The Chair has a yearly appraisal with the SRO for SACN. Members are subject to a regular performance appraisal, to be carried out by the SACN Chair and secretariat. Appraisals are usually carried out the year before a member's term of office ends in order that there is sufficient time between appraisals to enable significant discussion. Members' performance is monitored continuously, between appraisals.

## **Termination of appointments**

16. Appointments may be suspended or terminated by OHID, without compensation, in the event that a member fails to fulfil his or her obligations or for conduct which renders the member unfit to remain in office. Any terminations must be agreed between the SACN Chair, secretariat and SRO (as appropriate). Members may also resign from office.

## **Personal liability and indemnity of committee members**

17. As stipulated in SACN terms of appointment, members are protected from personal liability in respect of bona fide acts done in discharging functions on behalf of SACN and are indemnified in respect of expenses incurred in connection with claims in

respect of such acts. A member may be personally liable if he or she makes a fraudulent statement which results in a loss to a third party; or may commit a breach of confidence under common law or criminal offence under insider dealing legislation; or if he or she misuses information gained through their position.

## 4. Role of members

18. Members are expected to abide by the “[Seven Principles of Public Life](#)” (sometimes referred to as the Nolan Principles), set out in the [Cabinet Office Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies](#) and at Annex of this document. The principles of general conduct set out in that document, should also be borne in mind as good practice by members.
19. Members should ensure they understand why they are being appointed and in what capacity, and the role they are expected to play on the committee. Members should understand the nature of any expertise that they are asked to contribute. Members with a particular expertise have a responsibility to make the committee aware of the full range of opinion within the discipline.
20. Members should confirm, before accepting an invitation to serve on SACN, its subgroups or working groups, that they are clear about the period of appointment and that they can fulfil the commitment required in terms of meeting attendance, committee business and preparation for meetings. These details are made known and discussed at the interview stage.
21. A member’s role is not circumscribed by the expertise or perspective he or she was asked to bring to SACN, its subgroups or working groups. Members should regard themselves as free to question and comment on the information provided or the views expressed by any of the other members, notwithstanding that the views or information do not relate to their own area of expertise. If members believe SACN’s method of working is not rigorous or thorough enough they are able to challenge methods either in open forum, through the Chair or by raising issues with the secretariat. All members have equal voice and the right to ask that any concerns be put on the record.
22. All members should regard it as part of their role to:
  - Ensure OHID and the 4 UK health departments and other government departments and agencies receive the highest quality, timely, advice
  - consider whether the questions on which the committee offers advice are those which are of interest to (and understandable by) the public and other interested parties outside the scientific community
  - examine and challenge, if necessary, the assumptions on which scientific advice is formulated and ask for explanations of any scientific terms and concepts which are not clear
  - highlight arising issues of public health concern that potentially require consideration by SACN
  - ensure that the committee has the opportunity to consider contrary scientific views and where appropriate the concerns and values of stakeholders before a decision is taken.

23. All members should share in the general responsibility to consider the wider context in which their expertise is deployed. Members should not speak on behalf of the committee unless designated to do so. The spokesperson will normally be the Chair of SACN, subgroup or working group, as appropriate.

## 5. Role of the Chair

24. The role of the Chair goes further than simply chairing meetings. It is the key to achieving committee effectiveness and the additional workload should be taken into account in appointment of the SACN, subgroup or working group Chairs.
25. In addition to the responsibilities of a member, Chairs of SACN and its subgroups and working groups have responsibility for:
- the operation and output of the committee/working group/subgroup, including assessing the workload and ensuring that the volume of work does not compromise the rigour of discussion
  - ensuring that the full range of scientific opinion, including unorthodox and contrary scientific views are appropriately taken into account
  - ensuring that any significant diversity of opinion among the members of the committee/working group/subgroup is fully explored and discussed and if it cannot be reconciled is accurately reflected in the report and in any other communications with OHID or the 4 UK health departments and other government departments and agencies
  - ensuring that every member of the committee/working group/subgroup has the opportunity to be heard and that no view is ignored or overlooked, using, where appropriate, a structured process which ensures that all views are captured and explored
  - reporting the committee/working group/subgroup advice to OHID and the 4 UK health departments and other government departments and agencies, including alerting them to new evidence likely to have an impact on current policy
  - representing the consensus of the committee/working group/subgroup to the public or the media (unless other specific arrangements have been made)
  - ensuring that the secretariat accurately documents the proceedings of the committee/working group/subgroup so that there is a clear audit trail showing how a decision was reached.
26. The SACN Chair has overall responsibility for SACN and its subgroups and working groups. The Chair also has particular responsibility for:
- keeping track of committee progress against the agreed work programme for the purposes of monitoring and evaluating the performance of SACN
  - ensuring that the right balance of skills is represented in the SACN membership
  - ensuring that members have any necessary training to enable them to fulfil their role
  - keeping track of individual members' performance in order to carry out members' appraisals with the SACN secretariat.

## 6. Role of the secretariat

27. The primary function of the secretariat is to support SACN by assembling and analysing information and recording conclusions of meetings. The secretariat must not be constrained by normal departmental interests and should be free to act independently in supporting the committee. It should advise members on relevant committee process and procedure. It should bring to the attention of the committee emerging issues of common interest with OHID so as to inform the committee's deliberations. Issues of common interest with the 4 UK health departments and other government departments and agencies should be raised by officials, either to the committee directly where they observe meetings in an official capacity, or via the secretariat in the case of all other government departments and agencies.
28. It is the responsibility of OHID, in discussion with the Chair, to provide secretariat support sufficient to enable SACN to fulfil its remit. The resource implications of appropriate secretariat support should be discussed with the SACN Chair to ensure realistic expectations can be met. The secretariat should arrange regular briefing meetings with the Chair.
29. The secretariat should be an impartial and disinterested reporter. It should at all times respect SACN's independent role. It should guard against introducing bias during the preparation of papers, during meetings, or in the reporting of the committee's deliberations. The secretariat should ensure that the proceedings of SACN are well documented so that there is a clear audit trail showing how the committee reached its conclusions.
30. The secretariat should, as far as it is aware or able, identify all relevant scientific and policy information held by OHID, and ensure that it is made available to SACN as required. Consideration should be given to the necessary processes to ensure that policy leads and secretariats are able to effectively engage to this end.

## **7. Role of official observers**

31. Departmental representatives and advisers attending meetings as official observers should at all times respect SACN's independence. They should also ensure that their departments are promptly informed of any matters which may require a response from government departments. Observers should be given the opportunity to inform the committee of any science and policy matters which may be of relevance to SACN. Official observers should, as far as they are aware or able, identify all relevant scientific and policy information held by their departments, and ensure that it is made available to SACN as required. In addition, there should be a permanent item on the agenda of SACN meetings to allow for updates from official observers.

## 8. Openness, transparency and publication scheme

32. SACN is committed to the values of openness and transparency and recognises that they are fundamental principles, along with independence, which underpin public confidence in the scientific risk assessment process. SACN is also committed to engagement with interested parties. Papers for the committee's meetings, agendas and minutes are posted on the [committee's website](#), subject to certain exceptions on grounds of commercial or other sensitivity.
33. SACN's main committee agenda and papers are published approximately two weeks prior to a meeting. The aim is to publish the draft minutes within six weeks of the committee meetings, and final minutes are agreed at the following meeting, and then are published in place of the draft version. Final minutes of subgroup and working group meetings are published once they are agreed as a final record of a meeting.
34. Where possible, the committee's 3 main meetings are held in open session by default. Occasional SACN main meetings and the majority of SACN working groups and subgroup meetings are held in closed session to allow for free and frank discussions by independent scientific experts on potentially contentious issues. To avoid the possibility of members' comments being taken out of context, they are allowed to consider the evidence and formulate draft conclusions in closed session, until such time as it will be beneficial to the review to consult the general public and the wider scientific community. Members are also required not to disclose their discussions or any privileged information outside the context of SACN, subgroup or working group meetings.
35. Initial discussions on scoping papers for each potential SACN review are held in open session at main committee meetings and the working group convened to take forward an issue will hold a call for evidence from the public at the beginning of a review. In addition, every review, report or position statement is either discussed at a SACN meeting open to observation by the public, published for public consultation, or both, before it is finalised. SACN and its subgroups and working groups should strive to seek the opinion of the general public and the wider scientific community whilst determining the scope of a review.
36. External observers at any of SACN's open meetings have the opportunity to ask questions at the close of the meeting.
37. The governments of all 4 UK countries are committed to working with a wide range of sectors, including consumer organisations, industry and charities, in order to tackle issues relevant to public health nutrition. In line with this, SACN includes lay members and members with technical industry expertise to ensure a broad range of expertise, experience and perspectives are available during discussions. The Chair

and the secretariat must stay alert to the potential for bias and take appropriate steps to ensure this does not occur throughout SACN's discussions and the drawing of conclusions.

## 9. Handling Declarations of Interest

### Definitions

**Interest:** An interest is an association or connection relevant to the work of SACN that may or may not influence a SACN member's behaviour or judgement in the exercise of their public duties.

**Declared interest:** An interest, as defined above, of which the SACN secretariat has been informed and/or which has been published in the SACN annual report, as well as through other relevant reporting procedures.

**Actual conflict of interest:** Where an interest has the potential to conflict with the public duty of a SACN member, to such an extent that a reasonable member of the public might question whether a member's behaviour or judgement could be/has been influenced by that association, this is explored in discussion with the SACN secretariat, Chair and OHID Senior Responsible Officer (as appropriate). After the aforementioned discussion, any interest that is deemed to compromise a member's judgement on issues relating to the current SACN work programme will be considered an actual conflict of interest and restrictions on a member's participation instigated.

## Declaring interests

38. Members must declare all their interests at the time of their appointment and must promptly notify the secretariat of any changes. Before or at the start of every meeting members will be asked to declare any changes to their interests, which will be recorded in the minutes. It is the responsibility of each member to indicate if they have an interest in any item of business on the agenda of a meeting of SACN or its subgroups and working groups. Where this happens, in accordance with the provisions below, the Chair will determine whether a member should or should not take part in any discussion or decision on an issue. In addition, where members declare an organisation's views rather than a personal view, they should make that clear at the time of declaring that view. Members are required to re-read this code of practice document annually and should consult the SACN secretariat if they require guidance.
39. It is the duty of the SACN secretariat to update and publish the register of committee members' interests. The SACN secretariat should review and maintain the register annually, publishing details as part of the annual report. In addition to annual publication, the SACN secretariat will maintain a 'live' published register of interests, which will be updated as soon as possible after an interest is declared. A snapshot of the 'live' register of interests will be included in the annual report to act as a permanent record.
40. Members should declare all current interests, and any non-current interests will remain on the declarations of interest for up to 12 months after they have ceased, to ensure that they are included in at least one SACN annual report and therefore the permanent record. New members should declare interests going back five years prior to the date of their appointment, in the first instance. Declarations should be of relevance to the work of SACN and include: organisation name; nature of interest (for example, consultancy / research funding); whether an honorarium/payment is received; details of the subject matter; and dates. When populating the declaration of interest table (see Annex 3) members should use the following as a guide:

## Personal or family financial interest

41. Personal financial gain or financial gain to a family member (for example, spouse, partner or dependents) through, for example:
  - holding a directorship, or other paid position in an organisation related to the work of SACN
  - carrying out consultancy or fee-paid work for an organisation related to the work of SACN
  - having shareholdings or other beneficial interests in a business related to the work of SACN
  - receiving expenses or hospitality to attend conferences or workshops or similar meetings related to the work of SACN, from any organisation other than their employer.
  - receiving gifts from organisations related to the work of SACN (consistent with DHSC's policy and procedure on registering of gifts, hospitality and declarations of interest).
  - receiving honoraria for meetings or similar, related to the work of SACN.
42. Members are required to declare all shareholdings of relevance to the work of SACN; however, these could range from having a few shares to having a controlling interest in a business. Therefore, members should declare whether the value of shares held exceeds £5,000 for each organisation, and any active or controlling role in an organisation related to the work of SACN should also be declared. Where the value of shares may fluctuate, the declaration should be made based on the situation as at 1<sup>st</sup> January each year. This declaration should be for the value of the shares alone, **not** the cumulative total of shares and any other financial benefit from the same organisation.
43. Members should declare the funding source of their salaries, should it be derived from an organisation other than their main employer if this connection could be construed as having the potential to influence their judgement in the exercise of their duties.
44. The holding of financial instruments such as a pension scheme would not be counted as a financial interest provided the member or family member has no influence on the management of the financial instrument.
45. Members should declare whether or not the cumulative total of all personal financial interests from a single body/source related to the work of SACN exceeds £5,000 per annum.

## **Non-personal financial interest**

46. Payment or other benefit to an organisation in which a member is employed, which is not received personally but is for work in which a member is directly involved or is directly responsible for, from a body relating to the work of SACN, including:
- a grant or fellowship or other payment to sponsor a post, or contribute to the running costs of the department
  - commissioning of research or other work, by a unit in which a member is employed
  - funding for, or other contributions to, research
  - contracts with, or funding from, OHID.
47. Members should declare whether or not the cumulative total of all non-personal financial interests in a single body/source exceeds £5,000 per annum.
48. Members are not required to declare all relevant interests of their co-workers, it is only necessary to declare those in which a member is jointly involved or for which a member has oversight/ responsibility.

## **Personal non-financial interest**

49. This refers to a situation in which a member has acted in a way such that the public might reasonably believe that he or she may not consider evidence in a fair and unbiased manner. Examples include:
- active advocacy on behalf of an organisation with a strong opinion on a matter under consideration
  - other public or published statements expressing a clear opinion about a matter under consideration
  - holding office in a professional organisation, charity or advocacy group with a direct interest in a matter under consideration by SACN
  - authorship or co-authorship of a document used as evidence in a matter currently under consideration by SACN.
50. Considering that members are appointed on the basis of their scientific expertise on topics related to the work of SACN, it is expected that papers authored or co-authored by members will be used to inform committee reviews. It is not necessary to include a list of publications or articles in the register of interest, but where a member's paper is considered as part of a review, this should be highlighted in the minutes of the relevant discussion.
51. If a member has an interest not specified in these notes but which they believe should be declared, they should seek advice from the secretariat.
52. Information and context are vital to understanding declared interests and communicating these will complement SACN's policy of transparency and openness. A positive and useful way of doing this would be for members to feedback at meetings on relevant aspects of their work outside of SACN, which appear on the register of interests.

## **Recognising potential conflicts of interest**

53. It is unlikely that suitably qualified professionals are entirely unconnected or without interest in their area. Contributing to the work of SACN should not preclude members from presenting on their area of expertise or restrict their ability to practise. SACN should encourage its members to involve themselves in discussions of the wider community, scientific or otherwise.
54. A conflict may arise where interests could be regarded as influencing members' advice, and it is the duty of the secretariat to consider the potential for conflict in members' declared interests. Some organisations have wide-ranging portfolios, which are not *all* of relevance to SACN, and an interest should not be deemed a conflict by name association alone. Instead, the secretariat should consider these

potential conflicts in the context of a members' role and the subject matter of their involvement with an organisation or other body.

55. An interest is generally seen to have potential for conflict when the subject matter relates to that of a current SACN discussion item. Therefore, members will not be excluded from discussion of an issue on the current SACN work programme simply on the basis of involvement with food companies, industry or other interested parties, but only where an actual conflict of interest exists. In addition, the secretariat must consider whether a member's role is such that they may be influenced by an organisation. For example, it is likely that talks and presentations given by members will relate to a current area of work for SACN; however, it is unlikely that a member would be influenced whilst presenting their own scientific opinion in open forum, with minimal compensation/honorarium. Involvement varies greatly from ownership of, or employment within, an organisation, endorsement of products, and collaborating to reach scientific conclusions with conflicted organisations.
56. The member appointed to SACN to provide technical industry expertise and will only need to refrain from participation in discussions and drawing up of final conclusions where there is judged to be an actual conflict of interest relating to a particular item under discussion.
57. There are interests other than direct interaction with commercial organisations, which have the potential for conflict. Academics who are members of SACN, SMCN or related working groups and the wider scientific community seek the majority of their research funds from public and Non-Government Organisations (NGO) sources and have an interest in attracting work to their group. There is a potential conflict if SACN advice contradicts previous research findings or places less emphasis on the relevance of their research focus, as this might adversely affect the amount of research funding they are able to attract.
58. A potential conflict may also arise, where an expert has been vocal in expressing an opinion within the scientific community or wider media prior to the finalisation of SACN advice, if SACN advice would contradict this view and possibly affect a member's scientific credibility. This refers to previously held opinions and the intent is not to inhibit a member's ability to practice and offer their professional opinion outside of SACN, but to ensure strong opinions do not affect the balance of SACN advice. The committee welcomes diverse opinion. It is particularly important to follow SACN's procedures for ensuring that conclusions and recommendations made in its reviews reflect the considerations of the entire membership.

## **Avoiding or resolving conflicts of interest**

59. In the lead up to the finalisation of SACN reports, reviews, or advice, the Chair and secretariat should consider a period in which members do not give talks,

presentations or interviews on the content of a report. It would be preferable for discussions to include SACN's published advice, and as members could be unconsciously influenced by draft conclusions made, invitations should be declined from when draft conclusions are being drawn up, until these have been published for public consultation and/or final conclusions have been made public. This time period should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The secretariat must ensure that this time period is not so long that it restricts a member's ability to practise, as mentioned in the previous section. If draft or final conclusions are due to be published and it is practical for all involved, it would be preferable for talks or interviews to be delayed until after conclusions have been published, to ensure their inclusion in discussion and debate. Members should discuss this possibility with the secretariat, who will seek the advice and support of the OHID Communications Team.

60. Once considered, the secretariat should in the first instance discuss any concerns regarding members' interests with the Chair, and where necessary, seek the views of the SRO or other senior officials in OHID. If an interest is deemed to have potential for conflict, discussions should be held between the member in question, the Chair, and the secretariat to gather further information and come to a decision on whether a conflict is present. Where a declared interest has been considered, this should be noted in the 'live' register of interests, along with the decision reached.
61. Where there is conflict, members will be asked to either step down from their commitment or to refrain from participation in discussions and drawing up of final conclusions on related agenda items. It may be that the conflict is such that it would be impractical for a member to continue on SACN, if they would have to withdraw from a considerable amount of SACN's routine business. In such cases a member may be asked to stand down from SACN, or its subgroup or working groups. Members should withdraw from discussion of matters in which they feel they cannot act impartially.
62. Where there is no clear conflict, the Chair and secretariat must stay mindful of interests and take steps to ensure no bias exists throughout SACN's discussions and the drawing up of conclusions. The following paragraphs should be used as a guide.
63. Officials within the secretariat are closely involved during the drafting of SACN reports and evaluation of evidence; therefore, they should play an important part, along with members, in identifying possible bias throughout the deliberations of SACN and its working or subgroup. To support this task, SACN has procedures in place to ensure that conclusions and recommendations made in its reviews reflect the considerations of the entire membership. These include:
  - the use of an agreed framework which sets out criteria for consideration of different types of evidence (see [SACN framework for the evaluation of evidence](#))

- oversight of the work and the deliberations of SACN working groups and its subgroup by independent experts and government officials from all 4 UK countries, the SACN main committee and the SACN Chair
- public consultation on a draft report whereby members of the public and other interested parties can input into the report. (Where a full review is not carried out and there is no public consultation, SACN's advice is finalised in open session and papers are published on the committee's website)
- sign off by the SACN full committee and SACN Chair of the draft and final report.

64. Where members carry out research projects funded by organisations with an interest in the work of SACN, the secretariat will seek further information and discussion to determine whether a conflict exists. In addition, the SACN framework for the evaluation of evidence stipulates the need for evidence considered for inclusion in SACN reports and position statements to be, or to be based on, published literature in peer-reviewed journals. This is to ensure that scientific research papers are subjected to independent scrutiny by other qualified scientific experts, and that any concerns about impartiality or bias would have been considered by reviewers or editors before they are considered by the committee. Therefore, any current research project carried out by a member would only be considered under this proviso, and all scientific opinion would need to be backed up by peer-reviewed literature. Should SACN, its working groups or subgroup consider a paper authored or co-authored by a member, this should be borne in mind throughout deliberations and recorded in the minutes. Use of the framework for the evaluation of evidence will ensure appropriate consideration is given to all papers.

65. Members who are invited to Chair SACN working groups do not necessarily need to be expert in the topic being considered.

66. Ultimately, decisions will be made by the SACN Chair, secretariat and/or OHID SRO, as appropriate.

## Annex 1: Travel and Subsistence

Members can claim for travel and subsistence in line with the rates below. Members are kept informed of any changes to DHSC policy which affect them. Expenses must be claimed within 3 months.

Members are encouraged to select the most environmentally friendly mode of transport wherever possible. Typically, this will be public transport, including rail (please refer to diagram of sustainable travel hierarchy below). Members must use standard class travel for rail and air travel tickets. DHSC policy does not permit the use of first class travel. Members are encouraged to book tickets in advance and avoid open returns.

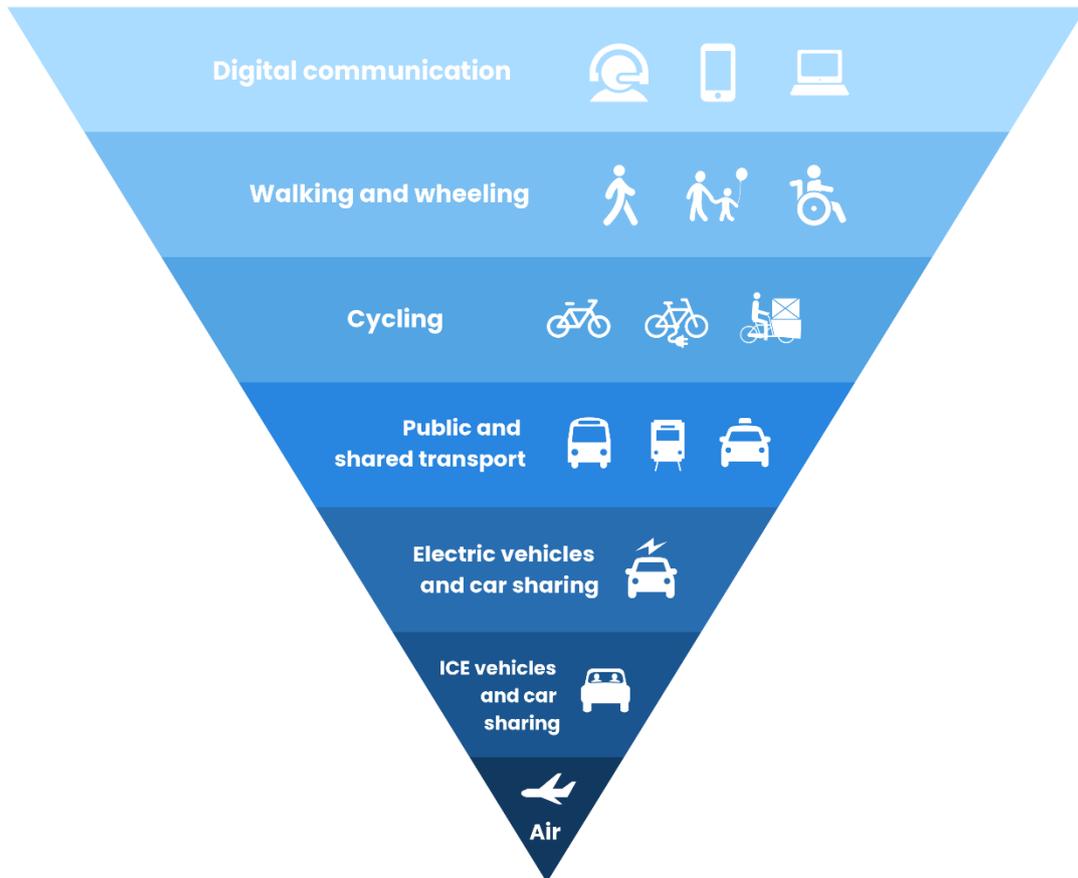
Members who travel regularly on SACN, SMCN or working group business and who are eligible for a railcard (such as Senior, Disabled Persons and the Network Railcard) are encouraged to use the railcard and may be reimbursed the cost of the railcard where it can be demonstrated that they will yield savings to the Department. Please note that this expense recovery is classed as a taxable benefit.

| <b>Day subsistence: Period of absence</b>                               | <b>Rate (maximum actual receipted expenditure)</b> |
|---|--|
| <b>Away over 5 hours</b> (one receipted meal*)                          | £5.00  |
| <b>Away over 5 hours, and ongoing at 8pm</b> (two receipted meals*)     | £15.00   |
| <b>Away over 10 hours</b> (two receipted meals)                         | £10.00   |
| <b>Away over 10 hours, and ongoing at 8pm</b> (three receipted meals*)  | £20.00   |
| <b>Away over 15 hours (and ongoing at 8pm)</b> (three receipted meals*) | £25.00   |

\* claiming for alcohol is not allowed

| <b>Mileage: standard rates for all engine sizes</b>            | <b>Rate</b> |
|--|-------------|
| Car: on the first 10,000 business miles in the tax year        | 45p         |
| Car: on each additional mile over 10,000 miles in the tax year | 25p         |
| Motorcycle   | 24p         |
| Bicycle  | 20p         |

## Sustainable travel hierarchy



Energy Saving Trust (2021): [An introduction to the sustainable travel hierarchy.](#)

## **Annex 2: The Seven Principles of Public Life**

### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

### **Integrity**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

### **Objectivity**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

### **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

### **Openness**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

### **Honesty**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

## Annex 3: Declarations of Interest pro forma

- For new declarations, please complete the pro-forma below. Please complete the sections for personal and/or non-personal interests as appropriate.
- Guidance is provided in chapter 9 'Handling Declarations of Interest'.

### Name of member:

### Personal interests

**Company/organisation:** please state

**Nature of interest:** (please state e.g. consultancy/shareholdings/other fee paid work/charity work/active advocacy)

**Financial:** Yes/No. (please state e.g. honoraria received; shareholdings) Value of shares over £5,000: Yes/No; travel or subsistence reimbursed etc (*Amount received per annum over £5,000: Yes/No*)

**Subject matter:** (e.g. advising on X, Y, Z)

**Dates:** (e.g. 2021 to 2022)

### Non-personal interests

**Company/organisation:** please state

**Nature of interest:** (please state e.g. research/grants/other funded work/fellowships/collaborations)

**Financial:** Yes/No. (please state e.g. PhD student funding/research funding etc) *Amount received per annum over £5,000: Yes/No*

**Subject matter:** (e.g. research on effects of X on Y)

**Dates:** (e.g. 2019 to 2020)