



# **Lay Member of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN)**

## **Information pack for applicants**

**Closing date: 12 noon on 21 February 2013**

**Reference no: EC13-01**

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## **Lay Member of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition**

### **Overview**

#### **The role**

As Lay Member of this Committee, you will be expected to work effectively with scientific members of the Committee to ensure the Committee's advice addresses the concerns of, and can be understood by, the UK population as a whole.

Applicants for the Lay Member position on SACN must have a good track record of communicating scientific issues to a non-technical audience, experience in the assessment and interpretation of data, and strong analytical skills. Applications are particularly sought from those with experience and expertise in working with expert committees.

For further information on the role of the Lay Member see **Annex A**.

#### **The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN)**

SACN is an UK wide advisory committee that advises UK Health Departments on scientific aspects of nutrition and health. Members are appointed as independent scientific experts based on their specific skills and knowledge and are supported by a secretariat from the Department of Health.

For further information on the role of the SACN see **Annex B**.

#### **Indicative timetable**

Advert:	18 January 2013
Closing date:	12 noon on 21 February 2013
Shortlisting complete:	end of February 2013
Interviews held:	early March 2013

#### **Remuneration**

£160 per meeting.

Remuneration is taxable, and subject to National Insurance contributions, both of which will be deducted at source under PAYE before you are paid.

Those appointed will also be eligible to claim allowances, at rates set centrally, for travel and subsistence costs necessarily incurred on SACN business.

Note: Impact of appointment on people in receipt of benefits. Your appointment may have an effect on your entitlement to benefits. If you are in receipt of benefits you should seek advice from the Department for Work and Pensions.

#### **Time commitment**

Up to 10 days per year, including at least three meetings.

**Tenure of office**

Initial appointment will be for 3 years. The appointment can be renewed at the end of the first period of office subject to consistently good performance. There should therefore be no expectation of automatic reappointment. The maximum total term is 10 years.

**Accountability**

Lay Members are appointed by the Department's Senior Responsible Officer and will be accountable to the Chair for carrying out their duties and for their performance.

**Location of post**

Meetings will be held in London.

**Diversity and equality of opportunity**

We value and promote diversity and are committed to equality of opportunity for all and appointments made on merit.

**Key contacts:**

For information regarding the selection process, please contact:

Samantha Alcock  
Appointments Team  
Department of Health  
Quarry House  
Quarry Hill  
Leeds  
LS2 7UE  
Tel: 0113 254 5845  
Email: [samantha.alcock@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:samantha.alcock@dh.gsi.gov.uk)

For information regarding the role of the SACN and its Lay Member, please contact:

Michael Griffin  
Nutrition Science and Delivery  
Department of Health  
Tel: 020 7210 4018  
Email: [sacn@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:sacn@dh.gsi.gov.uk)

**Please quote reference EC13-01 on all correspondence.**

For further details on how to make an application, please see **Annex C**.

## Appointment of the Lay Member

### Role and responsibilities of the Lay Member

Members will be expected to abide by the “Seven Principles of Public Life” set out in the Cabinet Office guidance “Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies” (2011). The principles of General Conduct set out in that document, should also be borne in mind as good practice by members of Scientific Advisory Committee’s (SACs).

Members of SACs 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.

Members should confirm before accepting an invitation to serve on a SAC 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.

Unless specifically stated otherwise, members of SACs complying with this Code 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. Where members declare an organisation’s views rather than a personal view, they should make that clear at the time of declaring that view.

A member’s role on the SAC should not be circumscribed by the expertise or perspective he or she was asked to bring to that committee. 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 the committee’s method of working is not rigorous or thorough enough they should raise this initially with the chair and subsequently the Departmental Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA) or other relevant senior official. They have the right to ask that any remaining concerns be put on the record.

All members and secretariats should regard it as part of their role to:

- Ensure the sponsoring body and their Ministers (or senior Officials as appropriate) 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.

- 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;

All members should share in the general responsibility to consider the wider context in which their expertise is deployed.

### **Qualities required for the role of lay member**

We are looking for experienced individuals to sit on this high profile Committee, which provides advice and conducts the risk assessments used to inform UK public health policy.

As lay member of this Committee, you will be expected to work effectively with scientific members of the Committee to ensure the Committee's advice addresses the concerns of, and can be understood by, the UK population as a whole.

Applicants for the lay member position on SACN must have a good track record of communicating scientific issues to a non-technical audience, experience in the assessment and interpretation of data, and strong analytical skills. Applications are particularly sought from those with experience and expertise in working with expert committees.

To be considered, you must be able to demonstrate that you have the qualities, skills and experience to meet all the essential criteria for appointment.

### **Essential criteria**

- Effective communication.
- Ability to weigh issues outside of own specialist area.
- Experience in the assessment and interpretation of data.
- Sound judgement.
- Ability to work in a team environment.
- Effective influencing skills.
- Strong analytical and problem solving skills.

### **Desirable criteria**

- Committee experience.
- Understanding or experience of policy development.

## Eligibility criteria

There are circumstances in which an individual may not be considered for appointment. They include:

- people who have received a prison sentence or suspended sentence of 3 months or more in the last 5 years;
- people who are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order;
- anyone who has been dismissed by an NHS body OR local authority OR public body within the past five years, other than by reason of redundancy;
- in certain circumstances, those who have had an earlier term of appointment terminated;
- anyone who is under a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986; and
- anyone who has been removed from trusteeship of a charity.

Further advice about disqualification for appointment can be provided by contacting Samantha Alcock.

## Conflict of Interests

You should particularly note the requirement for you to declare any actual or potential conflict of interest you may have in carrying out the role of Lay Member. Conflicts may relate to any relevant business interests, positions of authority or other connections with organisations relevant to the business of the SACN.

Please specify if you are a civil servant, employed by one of the Department's Executive Agencies. This may be following structural changes as part of the recent health and care reforms. Although we do not wish to prevent employees of the Department's Executive Agencies applying for posts, we need to be aware of any potential conflicts of interest.

If you are aware of any potential conflicts prior to your appointment you should raise these during the process of your application. If an issue arises following your appointment you should ensure that you alert the Department's senior officer, to whom you will be accountable for your performance.

## Standards in public life

You will be expected to demonstrate a commitment to and an understanding of the value and importance of the seven principals of public life. All successful candidates will be asked to subscribe to *the code of practice for scientific advisory committees (CoPSAC)*; you can access this document at:

<http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/BISPartners/GoScience/Docs/C/11-1382-code-of-practice-scientific-advisory-committees.pdf>.

**Diversity and equality of opportunity**

We value and promote diversity and are committed to equality of opportunity for all and appointments made on merit.



### **SACN role and responsibilities**

SACN is an UK wide advisory committee that advises UK Health Departments on scientific aspects of nutrition and health. Members are appointed as independent scientific experts based on their specific skills and knowledge and are supported by a secretariat from the Department of Health.

### **Terms of Reference**

SACN's remit is to provide advice on scientific aspects of nutrition and health with specific reference to:

- Nutrient content of individual foods and advice on diet as a whole including the definition of a balanced diet, and the nutritional status of people.
- Monitoring and surveillance of the above.
- Nutritional issues which affect wider public health policy issues including conditions where nutritional status is one of a number of risk factors (e.g. cardiovascular disease, cancer, osteoporosis and/or obesity).
- Nutrition of vulnerable groups (e.g. infants and the elderly) and health inequality issues.
- Research requirements for the above.

SACN's Subgroup on Maternal and Child Nutrition advises on scientific aspects of nutrition of women of reproductive age, infants and children as are referred to it by the main committee or Health Departments.

SACN to date has provided the scientific advice to underpin some key DH policies such as the link between salt and blood pressure, folic acid fortification, optimal duration of breastfeeding and the appropriate age of weaning of breastfed and formula fed infants, new growth standards for infants and young children. SACN to date has produced the following reports:

- Folate and Disease prevention.
- Salt and Health.
- Advice on Fish Consumption: Benefits & Risks.
- Review of Dietary Advice on Vitamin A.
- Update on Vitamin D.
- Update on trans fatty acids and health.
- The Nutritional Wellbeing of the British Population.
- Application of the WHO Growth Standards in the UK.

- Iron and Health.
- The influence of maternal, fetal and child nutrition on the development of chronic disease in later life.
- Dietary Reference Values for energy.

**Current Work programme includes:**

- Carbohydrates and Health.
- Review of dietary recommendations for Vitamin D.
- Review of complementary and young child feeding.
- Selenium and Health.
- Iodine status of the UK population.

## Making an application

### Overview

Lay Member of the SACN is a Department of Health appointment. The Department of Health will manage the recruitment process in a way that is open and fair to all applicants and the appointment will be made on merit.

The selection panel will make recommendations to the Department of Health Senior Responsible Officer on candidates they believe are 'appointable'. Taking into account feedback from the panel, the Senior Responsible Officer will make the final decision on who they believe best meets the criteria for the roles and will make the appointments.

### How to apply

All applicants are required to complete an application form. This is available online by visiting the DH website: [www.dh.gov.uk/appointments](http://www.dh.gov.uk/appointments) and searching for the vacancy EC13-01.

Alternative formats such as braille, large print and tape versions of this information pack and the application forms are available from:

Samantha Alcock  
Tel: 0113 254 5845  
Email: [samantha.alcock@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:samantha.alcock@dh.gsi.gov.uk)

If you wish to submit a paper copy of your application, or one in an alternative format, please send to:

Samantha Alcock  
Appointments Team (Room 2E29)  
Department of Health  
Quarry House  
Quarry Hill  
LEEDS  
LS2 7UE

All applications will be acknowledged by email and you will be contacted again after the closing date.

The Appointments Team must receive your completed application form **before 12 noon on 21 February 2013**.

## **Your personal information**

Your personal information will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. You will not receive unsolicited paper or electronic mail as a result of sending DH any personal information. No personal information will be passed on to third parties for commercial purposes.

When we ask you for personal information, we promise we will:

- only ask for what we need, and not collect too much or irrelevant information;
- ensure you know why we need it;
- protect it and insofar as is possible, make sure nobody has access to it who shouldn't;
- ensure you know what choice you have about giving us information;
- make sure we don't keep it longer than necessary; and
- only use your information for the purposes you have authorised.

We ask that you:

- provide us with accurate information; and
- inform us as soon as possible of any changes or if you notice mistakes in the information we hold about you.

If you apply for a post, we will share some of the information you provide with the members of the selection panel for the post to which you applying, so that your application form and CV can be assessed.

Panel members are identified in the section below on "How we will handle your application". The 'monitoring information' you provide will not be used in the selection process and will therefore not be shared with the selection panel assessing your application at this stage.

## **How we will handle your Application**

We will deal with your application as quickly as possible and will advise you of the likely timetable at each stage. After the closing date for applications:

- your application and CV will be assessed to see whether you have the expertise required at the appropriate level for the post for which you have applied. We will rely on only the information you provide on your application form and CV to assess whether you have the experience required. Please ensure that you provide evidence to support how you meet all of the essential criteria;
- the selection panel will be chaired by Elizabeth Woodeson, DH Senior Official and will also comprise Dr Alison Tedstone, Department of Health, Head of SACN Secretariat, Dr Ann Prentice, Chair of SACN and Chris Dearsley an External Panel Member;

- if you are invited to interview but are unable to attend on the set date then an alternative date can only be offered at the discretion of the panel;
- your application may be “long-listed”, subject to the volume of applications received, before it is passed to the shortlisting panel for consideration. You should be aware that in this situation, your application might not be considered in full by all of the panel;
- we anticipate that by end February 2013 the panel will have decided who will be invited for interview;
- the panel will select the people who have demonstrated that they best meet the essential criteria. If there is a strong field of candidates the panel may then look at who in addition meets any desirable criteria for the role in order to differentiate between those who would otherwise be of similar merit;
- we will write to let you know whether or not you have been invited to be interviewed. It is our intention that interviews will take place in a central London location;
- please note that due to the volume of applications we receive we are unable to provide feedback to those not shortlisted for interview;
- if invited to interview, the panel will question you about your experience and expertise and ask specific questions to assess whether you meet the criteria set out for the post;
- candidates who the panel believe are ‘appointable’, will be recommended to the Department of Health’s Senior Responsible Officer who will make the final decision;
- if you are successful, you will receive a letter from the Department of Health’s Senior Responsible Officer appointing you as a Lay Member of SACN; and
- if you are unsuccessful, you will be notified by the Department of Health Appointments Team. The letter will provide the details of who you may approach for feedback on your application.

### **Queries**

For queries about your application, please contact Samantha Alcock **on 0113 254 5845**.

### **If you are not completely satisfied**

DH will aim to process all applications as quickly as possible and to treat all applicants with courtesy. If you have any complaints about the way your application has been handled, please contact Jacky Cooper in the Department of Health by emailing [Jacky.Cooper@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Jacky.Cooper@dh.gsi.gov.uk)