



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

# Members of the Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances (ACBS): information pack for applicants

Closing date: midday on Wednesday 2 October 2024

Reference no: VAC-EC1858

## Contents

1. Role description and person specification.....	3
2. The recruitment process .....	7
3. The assessment process .....	14
4. Queries .....	16

# 1. Role description and person specification

## 1.1 Role description

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is looking to appoint up to 5 members of the Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances (ACBS). As a member of ACBS you will:

- attend and actively participate in meetings. Meetings are the forum for discussing new applications for approval
- receive copies of all the applications for each product; these are sent out before each meeting in hard copy for all members to review
- act as a rapporteur for particular products and provide a detailed verbal report based on the application, which is then discussed in depth with the rest of the committee. After the discussion, you will work with other committee members to reach a decision and separately you will draft the formal decision for review by the Chair
- be asked for your opinion on applications for changes to products of a minor nature which may be sent to the committee between meetings to expedite decision-making. Approximately 130 of these are received per annum, which are shared between committee members. A Member may be asked for their opinion depending on the product and the nature of the change being requested
- potentially be asked for your opinion on applications for changes of a minor nature which may be sent to the Committee between meetings to expedite decision-making. Approximately 130 of these are received per annum. A Member may be asked for their opinion depending on the product and the nature of the change being requested
- be available to respond to any issues of concern raised by the Chair which may arise between meetings
- represent the committee in discussions with other agencies / industry on matters of borderline substance policy and/or the application process. You will be supported by the Secretariat, the Chair or other committee members in these discussions

## 1.2 Person specification

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) values and promotes diversity and encourages applications from all sections of the community. The memberships of our committees should reflect the population they are there to serve. Committees benefit from

fresh perspectives, and we are always keen to encourage candidates who may be new to serving on committees to consider applying for our roles.

### **1.3 Essential criteria**

To be considered, applicants need to demonstrate they have the qualities, skills and experience to meet all the essential criteria:

- an outstanding record of achievement, personal credibility, and senior level experience within one of the following specialisms:
  - primary care: a GP or other primary healthcare professional
  - metabolic dietitian: knowledge of ketogenic products would be desirable for this role
  - medicines management or prescribing support dietitian
  - paediatric dietetics
  - pharmacist
- an in-depth knowledge of nutritional formulations as appropriate to the post-holder's profession
- knowledge about and practical experience of, using clinical research methodologies / organising clinical trials and interpreting data
- excellent communication skills in all respects including the ability to present complex information in a clear and succinct manner for the Committee meetings
- the ability to quickly assimilate information about new and emerging nutritional / dermatological formulations
- insight into the challenges facing patients in the community / ability to represent the patient viewpoint

### **1.4 Remuneration**

Members are not remunerated. You can claim reimbursement for reasonable travel and subsistence costs which are properly and necessarily incurred on official business, in line with the travel and subsistence policy and rates of DHSC policy.

This is an office holder appointment and does not attract any benefits under any Civil Service Pension Scheme. You will not be eligible for redundancy pay as you are not an employee. No other arrangements have been made for compensation upon the end of your term of appointment because an office holder who is appointed for a limited duration would have no expectation of serving beyond that period.

As this is an office holder appointment, you will not become a member of the Civil Service. You will not be subject to the provisions of employment law.

## **1.5 Time commitment**

Member roles require up to 9 days per year of time commitment.

## **1.6 Location**

Meetings are held in London. Upcoming meetings include 11 November 2024, 11 & 12 March 2025.

Meetings take place in March, July and November and are set 1 year in advance. The July meeting is held in-person in London. The March and November meetings each take place over two half-days via MS Teams.

## **1.7 Tenure of office**

The appointment will be for 3 years.

The possibility of re-appointment for a further term is at the discretion of the Senior Responsible Officer. Any re-appointment is subject to satisfactory annual appraisals of performance during the first term in the post. There is no automatic presumption of re-appointment; each case should be considered on its own merits, taking into account a number of factors including, but not restricted to, the diversity of the current committee and its balance of skills and experience. In most cases, the total time served in post will not exceed more than 2 terms or serve in any one post for more than 10 years.

## **1.8 Accountability**

Members are appointed by and are accountable to the department via the Chair for carrying out their duties and for their performance.

## 1.9 For a discussion about the role

For further information regarding the role of the ACBS and the role of Member, please contact Ben Grice via email on [acbs@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:acbs@dhsc.gov.uk) or by telephone on 0113 254 5084.

## 1.10 ACBS role and responsibilities

ACBS is a scientific advisory committee responsible for advising the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on the prescribing of borderline substances in NHS primary care. Borderline substances are nutritional or dermatological products that have been specially formulated to manage certain medical conditions.

The Committee's advice covers two main areas:

- Borderline substances policy. This comprises advice to improve prescribing of borderline substances nationally by considering whole population needs. The committee helps the government to understand when it is appropriate for nutritional products to be prescribed. It analyses data to consider what is being prescribed, when, how much and for how long. The committee considers care pathways, service quality improvement, value for money and the impact and effects of all these on prescribing in community settings.
- Clinical and cost effectiveness of borderline products. The committee reviews product applications from borderline product manufacturers to assess efficacy data, nutritional composition, clinical need and whether the product represents good value for money to the NHS. Products that are approved and recommended by the ACBS are listed in Part XV of the Drug Tariff, which prescribers and service commissioners use to support management of prescribing for patients in the community.

Committee members must be able to contribute advice across a range of relevant specialties at a very high level; for example, existing committee members include amongst their activity's authorship of key texts and membership of/representation of their specialty on international and national bodies. Additionally, members need to be able to deploy a range of more generic skills around information assimilation and presentation, including interrogation and understanding of research findings, communication, insight into the challenges facing both the NHS and patients in the community and the ability to represent the patient viewpoint.

The current membership of the committee and further information is available on [gov.uk](http://gov.uk).

## 2. The recruitment process

### 2.1 Making an application

Thank you for your interest in the appointment of Member to the ACBS.

DHSC's Honours and ALB Public Appointments Unit is managing this recruitment campaign.

In order to apply, you will need to provide:

- a CV that provides your contact details, details of your education and qualifications, employment history, directorships, membership of professional bodies and details of any relevant publications or awards
- a supporting statement setting out how you meet the criteria for appointment as set out in the person specification for the role
- information relating to any outside interests or reputational issues
- diversity information - this allows us to see if there are any unfair barriers to becoming a public appointee and whether there are any changes that we could make to encourage a more diverse field to apply. You can select 'prefer not to say' to any question you do not wish to answer. The information you provide will not be used as part of the selection process and will not be seen by the interview panel

You will also need to:

- tell us if you wish your application to be considered under the Disability Confident scheme
- set out any requests you may have for reasonable adjustments that you would like to the application process (if applicable)

Please provide the information on the last 3 points above on the monitoring form and/or as part of your supporting statement.

Completed applications should be submitted to [appointments.team@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:appointments.team@dhsc.gov.uk). Please quote ref: VAC-EC1858 in the subject field.

If you are unable to apply by email, please contact Ralph Cabrega on 0113 2545481 or Rachael Gingell on 0207 4849424.

## **2.2 Deadline**

Applications must be received by midday on Wednesday 2 October 2024.

The advisory assessment panel reserves the right to only consider applications that contain all of the elements listed above, and that arrive before the published deadline for applications.

In completing an application, please note the following in relation to:

- disqualification from appointment (if applicable)
- conflicts of interest
- standards in public life and ensuring public confidence

## **2.3 Disqualification from appointment**

There are no legislative or disqualification criteria for this role. The role is open to all applicants.

## **2.4 Conflicts of interest**

Before you apply you should carefully consider if you or a party related to you have any interests which could lead to a real or perceived conflict of interest if you were to be appointed.

When you apply you should declare in your supporting statement the details of any relevant interests, highlighting any that you think may call into question your ability to properly discharge the responsibilities of the role you are applying for, or may be perceived as having scope to do so by a reasonable member of the public.

Conflicts of interest may include, without limitation, any outside personal or business interests (including direct and indirect financial interests, such as shares in a company providing services to government) or any positions of employment, other appointments or other positions of authority, that you or any party related to you have and which may influence your judgement in performing your public appointment or may be perceived by a reasonable member of the public as having scope to do so. This should include declaring any political roles you hold or political campaigns you have supported.

A 'party related to you' could include, for example (but without limitation), a spouse or partner, a business partner, a close family member or a person living in the same household as you or a close family member.



Many conflicts of interest can be satisfactorily resolved and declaring a potential conflict does not prevent you from being interviewed.

If you are shortlisted, the panel will discuss any potential conflicts with you during your interview, including any proposals you may have to mitigate them, and can record that in their advice to the senior responsible officer. If the senior responsible officer wishes to appoint you, an offer of appointment may be subject to you giving up any unmanageable conflicts of interest. Any interests that are deemed manageable will need to be formally declared and may be published in line with ACBS's organisational policy regarding declarations of Interest.

Failure to declare a potential conflict of interest may become grounds for withdrawing an offer of appointment. If offered the role, you will also be required to make a declaration of interests and to keep the declaration up to date throughout the tenure of your appointment. The requirement to declare interests will also be included in your terms and conditions of appointment. Failure to disclose an interest, subject to the interest and the circumstances, may become grounds during the tenure of your appointment for suspension or termination of your appointment.

## **2.5 Standards in public life and ensuring public confidence**

If there are any issues in your personal or professional history that could, if you were appointed, be misconstrued, cause embarrassment to ministers or the committee, or cause public confidence in the appointment to be jeopardised, it is important that you bring them to the attention of the advisory assessment panel and provide details of any issue in your supporting statement.

This should include declaring in your supporting statement if:

- you are, or have been, bankrupt or you have made an arrangement with a creditor at any point, including the dates of this
- you are subject to a current police investigation
- there are any previous or pending personal conduct issues where:
  - a complaint or personal conduct issue has either been upheld or partly upheld
  - an investigation that relates at least in part to your personal conduct is to take place but it is yet to start, or a similar such investigation is underway, but it is yet to conclude

- a complaint or personal conduct issue is current, but at the time of your application it is yet to be confirmed whether or how it will be investigated further
- there are any possible reputational issues arising from your past actions or public statements that you have made (including through social media and blogs)
- there are any other matters which may mean you may not be able to meet the requirements of the [Code of conduct for board members of public bodies](#)

Alongside your own declaration, we will conduct appropriate checks, as part of which we will consider anything in the public domain related to your conduct or professional capacity. This may include searches of previous public statements and social media, blogs or any other publicly available information. This will be shared with the panel.

The panel may explore any issues you have raised or have been identified in due diligence checks with you as part of assessing your application.

Failure to disclose relevant information requested could result in an appointment offer being withdrawn or the appointment being terminated, as the person appointed to this role will be expected to demonstrate the highest standards of corporate and personal conduct and in line with standards set out in the [Code of conduct for board members of public bodies](#), which includes the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#). As part of agreeing to the terms and conditions of appointment you will be expected to agree to meeting the standards set out in this code.

## 2.6 CV

We recommend you limit your CV to around 2 pages. Please ensure your CV includes:

- your full name, title, home address, preferred contact telephone numbers, personal email address and details of any X (formerly known as Twitter) accounts and LinkedIn accounts, including your Twitter handle or username
- details of your education and qualifications, employment history, directorships, membership of professional bodies and any relevant publications or awards
- contact details for at least 2 referees - one referee should be the person to whom you are or were accountable in your current or most recent appointment or position of employment. Please indicate the relationship of each referee to you. References will be requested for shortlisted candidates prior to interview
- brief details of your current or most recent post and the dates you occupied this role, and any past or present ministerial appointments

## **2.7 Supporting statement**

The supporting statement is your opportunity to demonstrate how you meet each of the criteria set out in the person specification. It will benefit the advisory assessment panel if you can be clear which specific evidence that you provide relates to which criterion. Providing separate paragraphs in relation to each criterion is common practice.

Please also set out details regarding any potential conflicts and/or reputational issues (see above guidance on conflicts of interest and standards in public life).

Please ensure your full name, the role to which you are applying and the corresponding reference number for the post are clearly noted at the top of your statement.

Please write all acronyms in full first, limit your statement to 1 pages and type or write clearly in black ink.

We may commission a pre-assessment of candidate applications which will then be provided to the panel for consideration and to inform the shortlisting process. By applying, you are agreeing to your application being shared with another party for pre-assessment. It is the responsibility of the panel to determine who it believes best meet the criteria for the role, and who should be invited to interview.

You must inform the department if, during the application and assessment process, your circumstances change in respect to any information that has been or should have been provided by you in your application.

## **2.8 Monitoring form**

Please complete in full and return the monitoring form with your CV and supporting statement.

The form is split into sections, covering:

1. Disqualification, conflicts and standards in public life
2. Diversity data
3. Reasonable adjustments
4. Disability Confident scheme

## **Disqualification, conflicts and standards in public life**

The form asks to you to confirm and declare any potential issues and directs you to provide further detail in your supporting statement. Further guidance on these topics is set out earlier in this information pack.

## **Diversity data**

We encourage applications from talented individuals from all backgrounds and across the whole of the United Kingdom. Boards of public bodies are most effective when they reflect the diversity of views of the public they serve.

We collect data about applicants' characteristics and backgrounds so that we can make sure we are attracting a broad range of people to these roles and that our selection processes are fair for everyone. Without this information, it makes it difficult to see if our outreach is working, if the application process is having an unfair impact on certain groups and whether changes are making a positive difference.

The data you provide is used to produce anonymised management information about the diversity of applicants. You can select 'prefer not to say' to any question you do not wish to answer.

The information you provide will not be seen by the advisory assessment panel.

## **Reasonable adjustments**

We are committed to making reasonable adjustments to make sure applicants with disabilities, physical or mental health conditions, or other needs are not substantially disadvantaged when applying for public appointments. This can include changing the recruitment process to enable people who wish to apply to do so.

Some examples of adjustments are:

- ensuring that application forms are available in different or accessible formats
- making adaptations to interview locations
- allowing candidates to present their skills and experience in a different way
- giving additional detailed information on the assessment process to allow candidates time to prepare themselves
- allowing support workers, for example sign language interpreters
- making provision for support animals to attend

When you apply you will have the opportunity to request reasonable adjustments to the application process in this section of the form.

### **Disability Confident scheme**

DHSC values diversity and is committed to equality of opportunity for all and the appointment of disabled people. We are a member of the [Disability Confident scheme](#), which helps recruit and retain disabled people. All candidates who apply under the Scheme for one of our appointments and who meet all the essential criteria, will be offered an interview. Indicating that you wish your application to be considered under the scheme will in no way prejudice your application.

To be eligible for the Disability Confident scheme you must have a disability or long-term health condition, which could be physical, sensory or mental and must be expected to last for at least 12 months. You do not have to be registered as a disabled person to apply under this scheme.

If you wish to apply under the scheme, please ensure you complete this section of the monitoring form.

## **3. The assessment process**

We will deal with your application as quickly as possible and will advise you of the likely timetable at each stage.

### **3.1 Planned timetable**

The planned timetable is as follows:

- closing date is midday on Wednesday 2 October 2024
- shortlisting is on Thursday 24 October 2024
- interviews are on Monday 4 November 2024 and Tuesday 5 November 2024

### **3.2 Advisory assessment panel**

Advisory assessment panels (AAPs) are chosen by the senior responsible officer to assist them in their decision-making. These include a departmental official and an independent member. For competitions recruiting non-executive members of a committee (apart from the chair), the panel will usually include a representative from the public body concerned.

AAPs perform a number of functions, including agreeing an assessment strategy with ministers, undertaking sifting, carrying out interviews in line with the advertised criteria and deciding objectively who meets the published selection criteria for the role before recommending to the senior responsible officer which candidates they find appointable. It is then for the senior responsible officer to decide who to appoint to the role.

The panel will include:

- Alison Smith, Chair of ACBS, as Panel Chair.
- Kathryn Glover & Helen Lovell, DHSC Deputy Director of Medicines Regulation & Prescribing, as Panel Member.
- Professor Alan Boyd, Former President of the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Medicine, as an Independent Panel Member.

### **3.3 Assessment**

At the shortlisting meeting, the panel will select for interview only the strongest applicants who it feels have demonstrated that they best meet all the criteria set out in the person

specification. However, if you have applied under the Disability Confident scheme and you meet all the essential criteria, then you will also be invited for interview.

If you apply under the Disability Confident scheme and you are not shortlisted for interview, we can provide a summary of the assessment of your written application, if you choose to request feedback. However, we regret that due to the volume of applications received, we are only able to offer feedback to candidates who have been unsuccessful at the interview stage.

After shortlisting, you will be advised (by email) whether you have been shortlisted. Those shortlisted will be invited to an interview. Interviews will be conducted either face-to-face, in central London or by video or teleconference. We will confirm arrangements to shortlisted candidates in due course.

If you are invited to interview and are unable to attend on the set date, then an alternative date can only be offered at the discretion of the panel.

The panel will meet again to interview candidates and determine who meets the essential criteria and is therefore appointable to the role. The panel may invite you to make a brief presentation at the start of the interview and will go on to question you about your skills and experience, including asking specific questions to assess whether you meet the criteria set out for the post. The panel will also explore with you any potential conflicts of interest or any other issues arising from your personal and professional history which may impact on an appointment decision (see section '2.1 Making an application' for further details).

Details of the panel's assessment of interviewed candidates are provided to the senior responsible officer, including whether they have judged a candidate to be appointable to the role. It is then for the senior responsible officer to decide who should be appointed. In some circumstances, the senior responsible officer may choose not to appoint any candidates and re-run the competition.

The senior responsible officer may choose to meet with candidates before making a decision. Candidates should therefore be prepared for a short time gap between interview and a final appointment decision being made. Candidates who have been interviewed will be kept informed of progress.

Once the decision on the appointment has been made, interviewed candidates will be advised of the outcome of their application, including whom they may approach for feedback, if they wish. We appreciate it takes a lot of time and effort to apply for roles, and prepare for and attend an interview, and that feedback is a valuable part of the process.

### **3.4 Offer of appointment**

If you are successful, you will be contacted by officials to inform you of the offer and to confirm if you would be willing to accept. If you would, then you will receive a letter from the senior responsible officer appointing you as Member of ACBS, which will confirm the terms and conditions on which the appointment is offered.

### **3.5 Announcement**

The appointment will be announced, and the announcement will include the length of your appointment, time commitment and any remuneration for the role. We would share a draft announcement with you before it is made.

## **4. Queries**

For any queries about your application status or the selection process, please contact Ralph Cabrega in DHSC's Honours and ALB Public Appointments Unit via email on [ralph.cabrega@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:ralph.cabrega@dhsc.gov.uk).

If you choose to apply, we would like to thank you in advance for your time and effort in making an application.

All applications will be acknowledged by email after the closing date. If you have not received your application ID reference number within 3 working days of the advertised closing date, please contact us quoting reference VAC-EC1858.

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

The Department of Health and Social Care 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 Rachael Gingell via email on [rachael.gingell@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:rachael.gingell@dhsc.gov.uk).

#### **4.2 How we manage your personal information**

Your personal information will be held in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation. You will not receive unsolicited paper or electronic mail because of sending DHSC 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
- only use your information for the purposes you have authorised

We ask that you:

- provide us with accurate information
- 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 are applying, so that your CV and supporting letter can be assessed.

The diversity information you provide will not be used in the selection process and will therefore not be shared with the advisory assessment panel assessing your application at any stage.