



Department of Health & Social Care

Minutes – Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances

10 March 2025 | Department of Health and Social Care, 39 Victoria Street, London

Attendees:

Alison Smith (AS) – Chair	Emily Walters (EW)
Charlotte Ellerton (CE)	Anne Daly (AD)
Clare Denning (CD)	Sarah Britton (SB)
Ghazala Yousuf (GY)	Amit Arora (AA)
Lauren McVeigh (LM)	Jas Khambh (JK)
Ian White (IW)	
Charlotte Howard (CH)	

Apologies:

Stuart Lakin (SLk) -see note
Andrea Hilton (AH)
Stephen Lewis (SL)

1. Introductions and apologies

Apologies are listed above. Following a long service to the ACBS committee, Stuart Lakin has stepped down.

2. Committee staff announcement.

resigned in January 2025 to start a new career. In his absence the committee enters an interim period of no permanent secretary in post. A new post holder has been appointed, awaiting DHSC clearance.

3. Meeting format

Due to the absence of a permanent secretary the committee decided to utilise the meeting to discuss concerns around guidance on fibre and protein content of ONS.

4. Products containing fibre

- EW shared a paper providing definitions of fibre. There is some retained EU legislation regarding product claims 'source of fibre' and 'high fibre'. Currently proposed document relates to products for adults. Input from the British Dietetic Association (BDA) Paediatric Specialist Group is required if paediatric products are going to be included.

- It was also noted that efficacy of fibre content is not convincing.

- Currently there is no consistency in cost of products containing fibre compared with directly equivalent products which do not contain fibre.

[REDACTED]

- Detail on fibre content of all products assessed by the committee in the last 7 years can be found on the ACBS portal. Data on products approved prior to that will need to be requested from the manufacturer.

5. **Products containing protein**

- SB shared a document illustrating comparisons of protein contents of different products related to how they are most likely to be prescribed (2 per day). There is some retained EU legislation regarding product claims “high protein” and “source of protein”.
- Concerns raised about absorption potential if more than 20g protein provided by a single bottle. This concern is supported by research.
- Evidence currently suggests animal protein is absorbed more effectively than plant protein, and that this is particularly important for older adults. [REDACTED]
- Discussion that prescribers find products can be hard to differentiate, and ‘look-a-like sound-a-like’ (LASA) errors occur frequently, causing real concern if very high protein containing products are accepted onto the Drug Tariff by ACBS and prescribed by mistake.
- Discussion of the apparent disconnect between industry understanding of how products should theoretically be used in practice and the reality of how they are actually prescribed and used in primary care.

- [REDACTED]

6. [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]
 - [REDACTED]

AOB

No other urgent matters were raised.

Table of actions

Action		Responsible	
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