



Department
of Health &
Social Care



Chair for the Committee on Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COC): information pack for applicants

Closing date: midday on Tuesday 27 January 2026

Reference no: VAC-EC1871

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1. Role description and person specification

1.1 Role description

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is seeking to recruit a new Chair to the Committee on Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment.

The COC is a Department of Health and Social Care expert advisory committee that provides independent scientific advice to Government departments and agencies on matters concerning carcinogenicity risks to humans and advises the government on whether substances are likely to cause cancer.

The key responsibilities of the COC Chair are as follows:

- provide leadership to the committee to ensure that it works to achieve COC's objectives in a way that reflects the most recent clinical and scientific advice whilst maintaining the highest standards in public life
- establish and manage appropriate subgroups to ensure the delivery of COC objectives
- be responsible for the effective functioning of COC and for communicating the committee's advice
- attend the meetings of the COC and liaise with the Secretariat regarding the agenda and completion of discussion papers prior to the meeting
- reach decisions on any declarations of interest that may be made in respect of items of business
- to lead and facilitate discussion on items coming to the COC and to sum up the conclusions of the discussion accurately and in conjunction with advice from the Secretariat
- contribute to the work of COC sub-groups (including reviewing, synthesizing, and discussing relevant evidence) if the need arises
- assist in drafting appropriate advice for wider dissemination to the public
- approve COC publications (minutes, statements, reports and non-technical summaries)

- support, where necessary, briefings on COC statements and reports to senior staff and advisors at the Department of Health and Social Care, Food Standards Agency or other government departments and agencies
- support, where necessary, in disseminating COC conclusions and statements to wider audiences such as stakeholder groups, the media and the general public

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

All applicants must have a commitment to Public Health issues and Public Service values and be able to demonstrate the following:

- a strong career track record of leadership and relevant, significant achievements at a senior level
- ability to lead a national expert scientific committee or advisory committee where you ensure all views are captured, explored and recommendations reflect the collective opinion of the committee
- sound judgement, with an ability to critically analyse a wide range of complex information to make evidence-based decisions and articulate scientific issues and information clearly, comprehensively and concisely
- excellent communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to gain the confidence of fellow committee members and of the committee's stakeholders

In addition to the above you must be a recognised scientific or medical expert with a track record of national or international achievement relevant to risk assessment for carcinogenicity and chemicals in the environment or food, which may be through:

- expertise in cancer or medical toxicology

- environmental epidemiology relating to cancer
- risk assessment of potential carcinogenicity

1.4 Remuneration

There is no remuneration for this post, however 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 the COC.

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

The role involves a time commitment of three meetings per annum, plus subgroup meetings. Additional time is also required for reading and preparation.

The next upcoming meeting will be held online or in person at either our main office in Oxfordshire or the London Office on 20/11/2025. Please see the details below for the main office address:

UK Health Security Agency
Centre for Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards
Chilton
Oxfordshire
OX11 0RQ

1.6 Tenure of office

The proposed length of term for the new appointment will be for up to 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.

1.7 Accountability

The chair is appointed by DHSC and will be accountable to a senior responsible officer for carrying out their duties and for their performance.

1.8 For a discussion about the role

For further information regarding the role of chair for COC please contact Britta Gadeberg via email on Britta.Gadeberg@ukhsa.gov.uk and coc@ukhsa.gov.uk

1.9 COC role and responsibilities

The Committee on the Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COC) provides independent advice to government departments and agencies on the potential carcinogenicity of chemicals, including those:

- used or proposed to be used as food additives, or used in such a way that they might contaminate food through their use or natural occurrence in agriculture, including horticulture and veterinary practice or in the distribution, storage, preparation, processing or packaging of food
- used or proposed to be used or manufactured or produced in industry, agriculture, food storage or any other workplace
- used or proposed to be used as household goods or toilet goods and preparations
- used or proposed to be used as drugs, when advice is requested by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency
- used or proposed to be used or disposed of in such a way as to result in pollution of the environment

The COC also advises on important general principles or new scientific discoveries in connection with carcinogenic risks, coordinates with other bodies concerned with the assessment of carcinogenic risks and present recommendations for carcinogenicity testing. In addition, it conducts a horizon scanning exercise at regular intervals with the aim of identifying new and emerging issues which have the potential to impact on public health.

Members cover a wide range of expertise, including toxicology, pathology, genetic toxicology, epidemiology, and statistics, and are drawn from academia, industry and independent consultancies. [See the current membership of the COC on GOV.UK.](#)

Members are required to declare all financial interests relevant to the work of the Committee on an annual basis. They undergo an annual review by the Chair.

The Committee reports jointly to the Department of Health and Social Care and the Food Standards Agency. The COC is supported in its work by a secretariat provided by the UK Health Security Agency (on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Care) and the Food Standards Agency. The Secretariat prepares the papers for discussion at the meetings.

2. The recruitment process

2.1 Making an application

Thank you for your interest in the appointment of chair to the Committee on Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COC).

DHSC's Public Appointments team is managing this recruitment campaign.

In order to apply, you will need to provide:

- a CV which 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 - please quote ref: VAC-EC1871 in the subject field.

If you are unable to apply by email, please contact Karen Dinsdale on 0113 254 5625 or Ben Jones on 0113 254 6557.

2.2 Deadline

Applications must be received by midday on Tuesday 27 January 2026.

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 [board or committee'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 2 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 UK. 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 Tuesday 27 January 2026
- shortlisting is mid-February (tbc)
- interviews are early/mid-March (tbc)

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:

- Professor Gareth Jenkins, Chair of Committee on the Mutagenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COM), as panel chair
- Priya Iype, DHSC Risk, Governance and Capabilities Lead, as panel member
- UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), (tbc)
- Ann Gill, 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 Chair to the COC, 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 Karen Dinsdale in DHSC's Public Appointments team via email on karen.dinsdale@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-EC1871.

4.1 If you are not completely satisfied

DHSC 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 Ben Jones via email on ben.jones1@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 the 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.