Department of Health & Social Care

COMEAP
COMMITTEE ON THE MEDICAL EFFECTS OF AIR POLLUTANTS

Members of the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP): information pack for applicants

Closing date: midday on Tuesday 1 December 2026
Reference no: VAC-EC1877

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1. Role description and person specification

1.1 Letter from chair of COMEAP - Professor Anna Hansell

I always look forward to COMEAP meetings, which are highly interesting, involving wide-ranging scientific discussions and invited presentations. Current work has included discussion of the role of air pollution in childhood asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), health implications of non-exhaust emissions from traffic, and the influence of climate change on air quality. It's very satisfying to be able to use my expertise and experience to contribute to policy development and improving public health. As Chair, I'm proud of the carefully considered scientific advice provided by the committee.

1.2 Role description

As a specialist member of COMEAP you will be required to contribute to the discussions of the committee, working alongside other recognised experts assessing the current issues under consideration. Further responsibilities include:

- assist in helping to draft advice appropriate for wider dissemination to policy makers and the general public;
- review and/or prepare of statements, reports and peer-reviewed publications;
- contribute to the work of COMEAP sub-groups (including reviewing, synthesising and discussing relevant evidence) if the need arises;
- show a commitment to Public Health issues and Public Service Values.

1.3 Person specification

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) values and promotes diversity. We encourage applications from talented individuals from all backgrounds and across the whole of the United Kingdom. Our committees are most effective when they reflect the diversity of views of the society they serve.

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

We are seeking applicants with we are seeking applicants with a strong career track record of relevant, significant achievements at a senior level. You must have the ability to

operate effectively on a national expert scientific committee where you can offer advice and constructive challenge and accept challenge from others.

In addition, you must possess sound judgement, with an ability to critically analyse a wide range of complex information and make evidence-based recommendations and be able to demonstrate excellent communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to gain the confidence of fellow committee members and of the committee's stakeholders.

Role specific criteria

In addition to the above candidates must have:

Cardiovascular toxicology/mechanisms of adverse effects

For this specialism, it is essential to have:

- Expertise in the mechanisms underlying adverse effects on the cardiovascular system

It would be desirable to have:

- Specialism relating to air quality and health
- Ability to assess mechanistic evidence
- Experience in evaluating risks to human health from research findings

Indoor air quality

For this specialism, it is essential to have:

- Expertise in indoor air quality
- Experience in health effects of indoor air quality

It would be desirable to have:

- Specialism relating to indoor air quality and health
- Understanding of the factors governing indoor air quality

Policy analysis and economic valuation

For this specialism, it is essential to have:

- experience in evaluating the economic benefits and costs of environmental and/or health policies

It would be desirable to have:

- Specialism relating to air quality and health
- A background in economics

1.4 Status of appointment

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

The appointment of a member will not create any employment or worker's contract or employment or worker relationship between a member and the Department of Health and Social Care. You will not become a member of the Civil Service.

1.5 Remuneration

Members are not remunerated.

You can claim reimbursement for reasonable travel and subsistence costs within the UK which are properly and necessarily incurred on official business in the role, in line with the travel and subsistence policy and rates of the COMEAP. However, these payments will be subject to tax. A copy of the policy and rates can be obtained from the committee.

1.6 Time commitment

Members will usually be required to attend at least the equivalent of 3 full-day meetings per year.

Members of sub-groups on specific topics will also be expected to attend meetings to discuss and progress the sub-group's work. Members with epidemiological, health impact and policy analysis expertise can expect to be invited to join COMEAP's sub-group on quantification of air pollution risks in the UK (QUARK). QUARK usually holds two meetings per year (full- or half-day, depending on the topics under consideration.)

1.7 Location

Full-day meetings face-to-face (London or another location); half-day meetings online using MSTeams).

1.8 Tenure of office

The 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 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 the balance of skills and experience it needs both now and in the future. In most cases, the total time served in post will not exceed more than 3 terms or 10 years.

1.9 For a discussion about the role

For further information regarding the role of a member for COMEAP please contact Alison Gowers via email on Alison.Gowers@ukhsa.gov.uk.

1.10 COMEAP role and responsibilities

COMEAP provides independent advice to government departments and agencies on how air pollution impacts on health. Its members come from a range of specialist fields such as air quality and atmospheric science, toxicology, physiology, epidemiology, statistics, clinical practice and policy analysis. There are also two lay members, who help ensure that the public can access and understand the committee's work.

COMEAP seeks to follow the Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees (CoPSAC), further information can be found at: Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees and Councils: CoPSAC 2021 - GOV.UK

2. The recruitment process

2.1 Making an application

Thank you for your interest in the appointment of members to COMEAP.

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

In order to apply, you will need to provide:

- a Curriculum Vitae (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 (see section 2.6 for further details)

- a supporting statement setting out how you meet the criteria for appointment as set out in the person specification for the role (see section 2.7 for further details)

AI must not be used to provide misleading information. While technology can be used in your application, for example to assist with structure, we value authenticity, and your statement setting out your suitability for the role should be made personally by you. If you are offered an interview, you should be prepared for the Advisory Assessment Panel to discuss your statement and career history with you in detail.

As part of the monitoring form, you will also need to:

- provide information relating to any outside interests or reputational issues

- provide equality information - this allows us to assess if there are any unintended barriers to applying to become a member of a committee 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 Advisory Assessment Panel. 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)

Completed applications should be submitted to appointments.team@dhsc.gov.uk – please quote ref: VAC-EC1877 in the subject field.

If you are unable to apply by email, please contact Ralph Cabrega on 0113 2545481.

2.2 Deadline

Applications must be received by midday on 1 December 2026.

The Advisory Assessment Panel reserves the right to only consider applications that contain all of the elements you have been asked to provide, and which are listed above, and that the applications arrive before the published deadline.

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

- disqualification from appointment
- conflicts of interest
- standards in public life and ensuring public confidence

2.3 Disqualification from appointment

In line with the Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees, generally, government officials should not be appointed as members of Scientific Advisory Committees (SACs) as it may lead to a conflict of interest and could compromise the perceived independence of the SAC.

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. If you are in doubt full disclosure is advised. Please refer to the Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees for further information.

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.

Interests may include, (without limitation), any outside personal or business interests, any direct or indirect financial interests (such as shareholdings or share options in individual companies), or any positions of employment, other appointments or other positions of authority, that you or any party related to you have (and you ought reasonably to be aware of) and which may impair or influence your judgement in performing your 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/partner, a business partner, a close family member or a person closely connected to you in some other way, for example, they live in the same household as you.

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 Advisory Assessment 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 officer who is responsible for making the appointment. If the senior official 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 COMEAP's 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 of appointment. Failure to disclose an interest, subject to the interest and the circumstances, may become grounds during the tenure of your appointment for the 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 the issue/s 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 reference checks. These will be shared with the Advisory Assessment Panel.

The Advisory Assessment Panel may explore any issues you have raised or have been identified 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 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 2 pages. Please ensure your CV includes:

- your full name, title, home address, preferred contact telephone numbers (land line if applicable, and mobile), personal email address

- 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.

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. Equality information

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.

Equality information

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

We collect information 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 recruitment 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 ensure applicants with disabilities and/or, long term conditions, covered under both the Equality Act 2010 (England, Scotland & Wales) and Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Northern Ireland) are not substantially disadvantaged when applying for committee appointments.

We aim to create an accessible and supportive experience that allows every applicant to demonstrate their full range of talents and perspectives and work closely with applicants to ensure that any necessary reasonable adjustments are in place to remove any barriers. This can include changing the recruitment process to enable people who wish to apply to do so. Some examples of changes are:

- ensuring that application forms are available in different or accessible formats (for example, large print)
- making adaptations to interview locations including hybrid arrangements
- allowing candidates to present their skills and experience in a different way
- giving additional detailed information on the assessment process in advance to allow candidates time to prepare themselves
- arranging support such as British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters or allowing support workers
- making provision for support animals to attend where possible

When you apply you will have the opportunity to request reasonable adjustments to the application process in this section of the form. If you have any questions or want to discuss your application in confidence, you should contact Choose an item. on Choose an item. in the Department of Health and Social Care Public Appointments team as early as possible.

Disability Confident scheme

We are a member of the Government's Disability Confident scheme. We use the Disability Confident scheme symbol to show our commitment to good practice in appointing disabled people. The scheme helps us to recruit and retain the expertise of these applicants, supporting their journey into leadership roles in public life.

As part of the scheme, the panel will aim to offer an interview to those who meet the essential criteria for the role, set out in the advertisement, and who have asked that their application be considered under the scheme. If a high volume of applications is received, the panel will ensure that a proportionate number of interviews are offered to disabled applicants that meet the minimum criteria, rather than all of those candidates.

Indicating that you wish your application to be considered under the scheme will not prejudice your application. By 'essential criteria' we mean that you must provide evidence which demonstrates how you meet the level of competence required under each criteria. This does not mean that all disabled applicants are entitled to an interview. If you have any questions or want to discuss your application in confidence, please contact Ben Jones on Ben.Jones1@dhsc.gov.uk in the Department of Health and Social Care Public Appointments team as early as possible.

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 1 December 2026
- shortlisting is on 15 December 2026
- interviews are on 27 and 28 January 2027

3.2 Advisory Assessment Panel

Advisory Assessment Panels are chosen by the senior responsible officer to assist them in their decision-making. They include a departmental official and an independent member. For competitions recruiting non-executive members of a committee (apart from the chair), the Advisory Assessment Panel will usually include a representative from the committee, normally the Chair.

Advisory Assessment Panels perform a number of functions, including undertaking sifting, carrying out interviews and assessing objectively who meets the published criteria for the role. It is then for the senior responsible officer to decide who to appoint to the role.

The Advisory Assessment Panel will include:

- Professor Anna Hansell - Chair of COMEAP
- Simon Reeve - Deputy Director Public Health System and Workforce DHSC
- Ruth Chambers as an Independent Panel Member

3.3 Assessment

At the shortlisting meeting the Advisory Assessment Panel will assess applications against the published criteria. It is the responsibility of the Advisory Assessment Panel to determine who it believes best meet the criteria for the role, and who should be invited to interview. As referenced earlier, if you have applied under the Disability Confident scheme, the panel will aim to offer an interview to those who meet the essential criteria for the role.

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 other candidates who have been unsuccessful at the shortlist stage.

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/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 Advisory Assessment Panel.

The Advisory Assessment Panel will meet again to interview candidates and determine who meets the essential criteria and is therefore appointable to the role. They may share the opening question with you in advance to allow you to prepare your answer. During the interview, they 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 Advisory Assessment 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 Advisory Assessment 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.

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.

In some circumstances, the senior responsible officer may choose not to appoint any candidates and re-run the competition.

3.4 Offer of appointment

If you are successful, you will be contacted by officials to inform you of the offer and to ask you 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 a member of COMEAP, which will confirm the terms on which the appointment is offered.

4. Queries

For any queries about your application status or the selection process, please contact Ralph Cabrega in DHSC's Public Appointments team via email on 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-EC1877.

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 ben.jones1@dhsc.gov.uk .

4.2 How we will 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

DHSC will process personal data relating to you in accordance with the Department of Health and Social Care data protection policy at DHSC privacy notice - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

If you apply for a post, we will share some of the information you provide with the members of the Advisory Assessment Panel for the post to which you are applying, so that your CV and supporting letter can be assessed.

The equality 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.