



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

# Chair of the Committee on Mutagenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COM)

Information pack for applicants

Closing date: midday on 07 December 2020  
Reference no: VAC-1700



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# Section 1 – The Role

## 1.1 Role and Responsibilities of the Chair of the Committee on Mutagenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COM)

### Introduction

Ministers are seeking to make an appointment to the board of COM.

### Role and Responsibilities of the Chair

As a specialist in toxicology or a related area, the Chair will:

- Attend all meetings of COM and liaise with the secretariat regarding the agenda and completion of COM discussion papers prior to the meeting.
- Lead the Committee's discussions through a full understanding of all aspects of COM work, papers and presentations made to COM.
- Chair discussions effectively ensuring that there is adequate expertise available to consider topics put to COM and that all aspects of papers and questions put to COM are fully discussed.
- In conjunction with advice from the secretariat, make decisions on any declarations of interest that may be made in respect of items of business.
- Summarise COM discussions at the meeting and liaise with the secretariat regarding the completion of Committee statement and guidance statements.
- Lead the Committee for any items of business that are handled by post.
- Where necessary, report COM statements and conclusions to the Chief Medical Officer for England and Chair of the Food Standards Agency.
- Where necessary, take the lead in disseminating COM conclusions and statements to wider audiences such as Stakeholder groups, the media and the general public.
- Act as an ex officio member of the Committee on Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COC) which provides advice to the government and government agencies on whether substances are likely to cause cancer.

### Qualities required for the role of the Chair

The Department of Health and Social Care values and promotes diversity and encourages applications from all sections of the community. The boards of public bodies should reflect the population they are there to serve. Boards also benefit from fresh perspectives, and we

are always keen to encourage candidates with private sector experience to consider applying for our roles.

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

## **Essential Criteria**

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.

- track record of effective leadership, and providing advice, independent of government or industry at a national and/or international level
- understanding of committee membership and the role of COM, with the ability to ensure independent scrutiny of the issues that fall within COM's remit
- sound judgement and an ability to guide COM's strategic direction
- excellent communication skills; able to secure the confidence of experts in the field and develop constructive relationships with a range of stakeholders
- sound understanding of genotoxicity, with a track record of achievement in one or more of the following areas of expertise:
  - Development of in vitro (non-animal) methods for the assessment of genotoxic risks from exposure to environmental chemicals.
  - Regulatory expertise – an understanding of the advances in genotoxicity tests and testing strategies used in regulatory settings.
  - Genetic toxicology: experience in the conduct and interpretation of in silico methods, and in vitro, and in vivo tests. An interest in molecular epidemiology would also be of value.
  - Carcinogenesis: able to demonstrate expertise in cancer risk assessment and in the mechanisms of carcinogenesis both genotoxic and non-genotoxic mechanisms.
  - Toxicokinetics and metabolism: expertise in interpretation of data on the disposition, metabolism and toxicokinetics of chemicals and low dose effects especially in relation to genotoxicity testing.
  - Computational toxicology and Quantitative Structure Activity Relationships (QSARs): expertise in the application of computational toxicology and QSARs and their application to genotoxicity.
  - Epigenetics and trans-generational effects: expertise in epigenetics with relevance to genotoxicity endpoints.
  - Reproductive or developmental toxicology: expertise in developmental toxicology and adverse reproductive effects of mutagenic and genotoxic chemicals.

## **Remuneration**

- The COM Chair is not remunerated.

- You may claim travel and subsistence expenses, which are properly and necessarily incurred in carrying out your role and responsibilities as the Chair of the COM, in line with travel and subsistence policy and rates for the COM. A copy of the policy and rates can be obtained from the COM

## **Time commitment**

There are usually three meetings per year plus members are on occasion asked to comment on papers between meetings.

## **Location**

London

## **Tenure of office**

Ministers determine that the length of the appointment will be up to 3 years.

## **Accountability**

This Chair is appointed by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and is accountable to the Secretary of State via a senior Departmental official for carrying out their duties and for their performance.

For further information regarding the role of COM and the role of the Chair please contact:  
Dr Ovnair Sepai

Tel: 01235 825163

Email: [ovnair.sepai@phe.gov.uk](mailto:ovnair.sepai@phe.gov.uk)

## **1.2 Committee on Mutagenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COM) role and responsibilities**

The Committee on Mutagenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COM) advises government on the mutagenicity of chemicals used in pesticides, pharmaceuticals and other products.

COM provides independent advice to government departments and agencies on the potential mutagenicity and genotoxicity of chemicals (whether they are likely to cause mutation in cells), from natural products to new synthetic chemicals used in pesticides or pharmaceuticals. It also advises on strategies and research for genotoxicity testing.

The committee also advises on important general hazards (the inherent property of the substance) or risk (the likelihood of mutagenetic or genotoxic effects occurring after a given exposure) and gives recommendations for genotoxicity testing.

COM is an advisory body and has no regulatory status. However, it may provide advice to agencies that have a regulatory role

### **Quote from the current Chair of COM – David Lovell**

“Chairing an expert committee such as the COM is both a great honour and a rewarding experience. It provides the opportunity to ensure that specialist scientific advice is provided to aid Government Departments and Agencies. The Committee is also influential in developing the future international regulatory environment and in shaping how innovative approaches arising from the rapid advances in genetics and molecular sciences are incorporated into protecting public health.”

# Section 2: How to Apply

## 2.1 Making an application

Thank you for your interest in the appointment of the Chair to the COM.

To make an application please email your CV, a supporting letter and completed monitoring forms to:

[appointments.team@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:appointments.team@dhsc.gov.uk) – please quote **ref: VAC-1700** in the subject field.

If you are unable to apply by email, please contact the Appointments Team via the above email address to discuss alternative options.

Applications must be received by midday on 07 December 2020.

In making an application please note the following:

### Supporting letter

The supporting letter 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 you provide relates to which criteria. Providing separate paragraphs in relation to each criterion is common practice. Please write all acronyms in full first.

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 letter.

Please limit your letter to two pages, and type or write clearly in black ink.

### Conflicts of interest

If you have any business or personal interests that might be relevant to the work of COM, and which could lead to a real or perceived conflict of interest if you were to be appointed, please provide details in your Supporting letter.

If appointed, you will also be required to declare these interests on appointment and they will be entered on a register which is available to the public.

## Standards in public life and ensuring public confidence

Given the nature of public appointments, it is important that those appointed as members of public bodies maintain the confidence of the public and Government. If there are any issues in your personal or professional history (including any convictions or bankruptcy) that could, if you were appointed, be misconstrued, cause embarrassment to Ministers or COM 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 letter. In considering whether you wish to declare any issues, you should also reflect on any public statements you have made, including through social media and blogs. Due Diligence may be carried out on any publicly available information and shared with the Advisory Assessment Panel.

The panel may explore any issues you declare with you before they make a recommendation on the appointment.

Failure to disclose such information could result in an appointment being terminated, as those who hold public appointments are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of corporate and personal conduct and are required to subscribe to the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies, as part of agreeing to the terms and conditions of appointment. You can access this document at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/board-members-of-public-bodies-code-of-conduct>

There are also circumstances in which individuals may not be considered for appointment, due to them not meeting certain eligibility criteria for appointment. For further information, please refer to **Section 2.3: Disqualification from Appointment**

If you wish to discuss any queries on conflicts, please see the contacts section.

## CV

Please ensure your CV includes:

- Your full name, title, home address, personal contact telephone numbers (land line and mobile), personal email address and details of any twitter accounts and LinkedIn accounts including your twitter handle/username.
- Similar contact details for two referees who will support your application. One referee should be the person to whom you are/were accountable in your current/most recent appointment or position of employment. Please indicate the relationship of each referee to you. References will be requested for short-listed candidates prior to interview

- Brief details of your current or most recent post and the dates you occupied this role. Please identify any past or present Ministerial appointments.

## Monitoring form

Please complete the monitoring form. Diversity monitoring information will not be seen by the Advisory Assessment Panel assessing your application.

Political activity information is primarily for monitoring purposes only, however if you are shortlisted for interview, this information will be shared with the selection panel. The reason for this is that it is appreciated that such activities may have given you relevant skills, including experience gained from committee work, collective decision-making, resolving conflict and public speaking. If you have had such experience and you consider it relevant to your application for this post, you should also take the opportunity to include it separately in your supporting statement. If possible, you should not, however, identify the relevant political party in your statement.

If you are appointed to this role, please note that any political activity you declare will be published in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

## Guaranteed Interview Scheme

The Department of Health and Social Care operates a Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) for disabled people. The Equality Act 2010 defines a person as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. Under the GIS a disabled candidate will be selected for interview if they meet the essential criteria for the post.

If you wish to apply under the GIS please complete the GIS form and return it with your application.

All applications will be acknowledged by email after the closing date.

For further information regarding the selection process, please contact

Ryan Lloyd

Appointments Team

Tel: 0113 2545929

Email: [Ryan.Lloyd@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:Ryan.Lloyd@dhsc.gov.uk)

**Chair of the Committee on Mutagenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COM)  
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For further information regarding the role of the COM and the role of the Chair please contact  
Dr Ovnair Sepai

Tel: 01235 825163

Email: [ovnair.sepai@phe.gov.uk](mailto:ovnair.sepai@phe.gov.uk)

Please quote reference **VAC-1700** on all correspondence.

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

## 2.2 The Selection Process

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

Timetable:

- Closing date: Midday on 07 December 2020
- Shortlisting complete: 06 January 2021
- Interviews held: TBC

The selection panel will be:

- Morwenna Carrington, Deputy Director, Health Protection Policy as Panel Chair
- David Rhodes, Director of Environmental Public Health (PHE) as Panel member
- Iqbal Singh as an Independent Panel Member

The Independent Panel Member is independent of both the Department of Health and Social Care and COM.

The Governance Code on Public Appointments requires all Advisory Assessment Panel members to declare any political activity within the last five years. All panel members have declared that they have not taken part in any political activity within the last five years.

After the closing date for applications:

- The Department of Health and Social Care may commission a pre-assessment of candidate applications which would 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. The pre-assessor and the panel are reliant on the information you provide in your CV and supporting letter to assess whether you have the skills and experience required. Please ensure that you provide evidence to support how you meet all the essential criteria. It is the responsibility of the panel to determine who it believes best meet the criteria for the role, and who will be invited to interview.
- Interviews dates are to be confirmed.
- The Advisory Assessment Panel will select for interview only the strongest applicants who it feels have demonstrated that they best meet the criteria set out in the person

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

- If you are invited to interview and if you 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 Appointments Team will email to let you know whether you have been invited to be interviewed. It is our intention that interviews will take place in a central London location
- If invited to interview, the Advisory Assessment 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 Advisory Assessment Panel will also explore with candidates any potential conflicts of interest or any other issues arising from candidate's personal and professional history which may impact on an appointment decision (see section 2.1 for further details).
- Candidates who the panel believe are 'appointable', will be recommended to Ministers who will make the final decision. Ministers may choose to meet with shortlisted candidates, before or after interview, 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.
- If you are successful, you will receive a letter from Ministers appointing you as the Chair of COM, which will confirm the terms on which the appointment is offered
- **please note that due to the volume of applications that are received it is not possible to routinely provide feedback to those not shortlisted for interview**
- if you apply under the GIS 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
- If you are unsuccessful at interview, you will be notified by the Appointments Team. 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. Following interviews, the letter which confirms the outcome of the appointment process will provide the details of who you may approach for feedback on your interview and application, if you so wish
- For further information on how we will manage the personal information that you have provided to us through your application, see **Section 2.4**

## Queries

For queries about your application, please contact Ryan Lloyd on [Ryan.lloyd@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:Ryan.lloyd@dhsc.gov.uk)

## Standards in public life

You will be expected to demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct. All successful candidates will be asked to subscribe to the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies, you can access this document at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/board-members-of-public-bodies-code-of-conduct>

## Governance Code on Public Appointments

The Governance Code on Public Appointments, published by the Cabinet Office, sets out the principles that should underpin all public appointments. The Governance Code can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-code-for-public-appointments>

## The Commissioner for Public Appointments

The regulation of public appointments against the requirements of the Governance Code is carried out by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Commissioner provides independent assurance that public appointments are made in accordance with the principles set out in the Code. The Commissioner is appointed by the Queen and is independent of the Government and the Civil Service. Further about the role of the Commissioner is available from: <http://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk>

## 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 Sally Brough-Hirst in the Department of Health and Social Care by emailing [Sally.Brough-Hirst@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:Sally.Brough-Hirst@dhsc.gov.uk)

If after receiving a comprehensive response from the Department you are still concerned, you can write to the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Please contact:

The Commissioner for Public Appointments  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London SW1A 2HQ

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Tel: 0207 271 8938

Email: [publicappointments@csc.gov.uk](mailto:publicappointments@csc.gov.uk)

## 2.3 Eligibility Criteria

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

1. persons who have received a prison sentence or suspended sentence of 3 months or more in the last 5 years
2. persons who are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order, or a debt relief order or interim debt relief order under Schedule 4ZB to the Insolvency Act 1986
3. persons who have had an earlier term of appointment with a health service body terminated on the grounds:
  - that it was not conducive to the interests or good management of the body that the person should continue to hold office
  - that the person failed to attend a meeting of the body on three consecutive occasions
  - that the person failed to declare a pecuniary interest or withdraw from consideration of a matter in respect of which the person had a pecuniary interest
  - of misconduct or failure to carry out the person's duties
4. anyone who is under a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986; or
5. anyone who has been removed from trusteeship of a charity.

Further advice about the Eligibility Criteria can be provided by contacting Dr Ovnair Sepai on 0113 254 5929.

## 2.4 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 Department of Health and Social Care 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. However, panels may review the political activity response at the interview stage. This in no way acts as a bar to appointment. Further information on this is provided in the attached Monitoring form.

The Commissioner for Public Appointments regulates and monitors appointments to public bodies to ensure procedures are fair. The Department of Health and Social Care is required by the Commissioner for Public Appointments to retain information about the people who apply for public appointments within his remit and make this information available to him for audit purposes, if requested to do so. Information you provide in your application may therefore be made available to the Commissioner for Public Appointments and the

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Commissioner's auditors on a confidential basis to help fulfil either the Commissioner's formal complaints investigation role or for audit purposes.

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