



Members of the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP)

Information pack for applicants

Closing date: Midday on Thursday, 18 January 2024
Reference no: VAC-1842

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Section 1 – The Role

Message from the 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. Examples of recent subjects covered are indoor air pollution, microplastics in air and updating the public advice provided by the government's Air Quality Information System. It's very satisfying to be able to use my expertise and experience to contribute to improving public health. As Chair, I'm proud of the carefully considered scientific advice provided by the committee."

1.1 Role description and person specification

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is seeking to recruit up to 7 new expert members and up to 2 new lay members to the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP).

COMEAP is a DHSC expert advisory committee that provides independent scientific advice to Government departments on the effects on health of both outdoor and indoor air pollutants.

Role and Responsibilities of a Specialist Member

The key responsibilities of specialist members are as follows:

- To contribute to the discussions of the committee, working alongside other recognised experts to assess the detailed scientific data under consideration;
- To assist in helping to draft advice appropriate for policy makers and the general public;
- To contribute to the work of COMEAP sub-groups (including reviewing, synthesising and discussing relevant evidence) if the need arises; and
- To show a commitment to Public Health issues and Public Service Values.

Roles and Responsibilities of a Lay Member

The lay members of COMEAP will contribute to the discussions of the committee, working alongside recognised experts who are assessing the scientific material under consideration. A lay member will not need to be a technical expert. They will be expected to assist in identifying questions which might be posed by non-experts and to help ensure that COMEAP's advice is accessible to the general public. They may be also asked to contribute to other discussions, for example to identify priorities, from the public's perspective, for the committee's future work programme.

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.

Applications for specialist roles must demonstrate:

- excellent communication skills, sound judgment and sensitivity, together with a strong team approach;
- excellent analytical skills and the ability to articulate scientific issues and information clearly, comprehensively and concisely;
- a commitment to Public Health issues and Public Service Values.

It would be desirable to have:

- experience of committee membership;
- a willingness to be involved in the preparation of statements, reports and peer-reviewed publications;
- evidence of participation in your specialty at an international level.

For specialist roles, COMEAP is looking for high calibre candidates in the following specialty areas who are recognised experts in their field, ideally with a record of achievement at national and / or international level. If potential applicants feel that they do not meet these criteria but would be interested in contributing to the work of COMEAP, they are encouraged to register their interest in being considered for associate membership by requesting an application form from the COMEAP Secretariat (via air.pollution@ukhsa.gov.uk , indicating in the email subject box: "COMEAP Associate Member application form request").

1) Epidemiology (two posts)

For this specialism, it is essential to have:

- Expertise in environmental epidemiology

It would be desirable to have:

- A qualification in medicine or public health;
- Specialism relating to air quality and health;
- Ability to evaluate risks to human health from research findings

2) Toxicology

For this specialism, it is essential to have:

- Expertise in toxicology

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

3) Health Impact Assessment

For this specialism, it is essential to have:

- Expertise in quantifying the public health burden of risk factors and predicting the health benefits of policies to reduce them

It would be desirable to have:

- Specialism relating to air quality and health;
- A background in epidemiology

4) 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

5) Respiratory or cardiovascular clinical expertise

For this specialism, it is essential to have:

- A relevant medical qualification;
- On-going clinical responsibilities (respiratory or cardiovascular)

It would be desirable to have:

- An active interest relating to air quality and health;
- An understanding of the information needs of healthcare professionals and patients

6) Indoor air quality

For this specialism, it is essential to have:

- Expertise in indoor air quality preferably relating to health effects;

It would be desirable to have:

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

7) Lay Members (up to two posts)

Lay Members are expected to have:

- an interest in the links between environmental factors and health

It would be desirable to have one or more of the following:

- A particular interest relating to air quality and health;
- An understanding of how scientific evidence is used to inform policy;
- An understanding of the processes by which policy and legislation are developed;
- Knowledge relating to health or environmental inequalities;
- An awareness of relevant civil society stakeholders;
- An ability to contribute to committee discussions;
- An ability to articulate the public's interest in air quality and health;
- Experience of making scientific information accessible to the public, for example by developing explanations using non-technical vocabulary.

Remuneration

- Members are not remunerated.¹
- You may claim travel and subsistence expenses, which are properly and necessarily incurred in carrying out your role and responsibilities as a member of COMEAP, in line with travel and subsistence policy and rates for the Committee and the civil service more generally. A copy of the policy and rates can be obtained from COMEAP.

Time commitment

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

Dates for meetings in 2024:

- 31 January 2024 (London)
- 25 April 2024 (morning, virtual)
- 20 June 2024 (morning, virtual)
- 17 October 2024 (morning, virtual)
- 20 November 2024 (full-day, face-to-face)

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.)

Location

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

Tenure of office

The Department of Health and Social Care senior responsible officer determines that the length of the appointment will normally be up to 3 years.

¹ An exception may be made in the case of individuals who might otherwise be financially disadvantaged by participating in committee activities, for example sole traders

Accountability

Members are appointed by the Department of Health and Social Care and are accountable to the Department via the Chair for carrying out their duties and for their performance.

For a discussion about the role

For further information regarding the role of the Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants and the role of a member please contact:

Name: Alison Gowers or Karen Exley

Tel: 01235 825147 or 01235 825415

Email: Alison.Gowers@ukhsa.gov.uk or Karen.Exley@ukhsa.gov.uk

1.2 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, and policy analysis. There is also a lay member, who helps 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: [Scientific advisory committees: code of practice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/281422/Scientific_advisory_committees_code_of_practice_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

Section 2: The recruitment

2.1 Making an application

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

The Department of Health and Social Care's Honours and ALB Public Appointments Unit is managing this recruitment campaign.

In order to apply, you will need to provide:

1. A **Curriculum Vitae** 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
2. A **supporting statement** setting out how you meet the criteria for appointment as set out in the person specification for the role.
3. Information relating to any **outside interests or reputational issues**.
4. **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.
5. **Disability Confident** – please state if you wish your application to be considered under the disability confident scheme.
6. **Reasonable adjustments** - set out any requests you may have for reasonable adjustments that you would like to the application process (if applicable).

Please provide the information at points 3-6 above on the relevant form, or as part of your supporting statement.

Completed applications should be submitted to appointments.team@dhsc.gov.uk – please quote **ref: VAC-1842** in the subject field.

If you are unable to apply by email, please contact Ben Jones on 0113 2546557

Applications must be received by **midday on Thursday, 18 January 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 firstly note the following in relation to:

- Disqualification from appointment
- Conflicts of interest
- Standards in public life and ensuring public confidence.

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/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 COMEAP 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.

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:
 - i) a complaint/personal conduct issue has either been upheld or partly upheld
 - ii) 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
 - iii) a complaint/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. You can access this document at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/board-members-of-public-bodies-code-of-conduct>

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.

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.
- Details of your education and qualifications, employment history, directorships, membership of professional bodies and any relevant publications or awards.
- Contact details for at least two referees. 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, and any past or present Ministerial appointments.

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 two 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.

Monitoring form

Please complete in full and return the Monitoring form with your CV and Supporting Statement.

The form is split into sections, covering:

- A – Disqualification; Conflicts; and Standards in Public Life.

- B – Diversity
- C – Reasonable Adjustments
- D – Disability Confident

Section A - 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.

Section B – Diversity

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 and this is an important part of the Government’s levelling up agenda.

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.**

Section C – 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 Section C of the form.

Section D - Disability Confident Scheme

The Department of Health and Social Care values and promotes diversity and is committed to equality of opportunity for all and to the appointment of disabled people. We are a member of the Government's Disability Confident Scheme. We use the Disability Confident Scheme symbol, along with other like-minded employers, to show our commitment to good practice in appointing people with a disability. The Scheme helps recruit and retain disabled people.

As part of implementing the Scheme, we guarantee an interview to anyone with a disability whose application meets all the essential criteria in the person specification for the role and who has asked that their application is considered under the Scheme. Indicating that you wish your application to be considered under the Scheme will in no way prejudice your application.

What do we mean by a disability?

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 Section D of the Monitoring form.

2.2 The Assessment Process

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

Planned timetable

- Closing date: Midday on Thursday, 18 January 2024
- Shortlisting: 5 February 2024
- Interviews: 6 and 8 March 2024

Advisory Assessment Panel

Advisory Assessment Panels (AAP) 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.

AAP's 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:

- Simon Reeve, Deputy Director, Public Health Systems and Workforce Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, as Panel Chair
- Anna Hansell, Chair of COMEAP, as Panel Member
- Ian Chell as an independent panel member

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 e-mail) 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 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 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.

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 a Member of COMEAP, which will confirm the terms and conditions on which the appointment is offered.

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.

Queries

For any queries about your application status or the selection process, please contact Ben Jones in DHSC's Honours and ALB Public Appointments Unit:

Email: Ben.Jones1@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-1842.

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 Ben Jones by emailing Ben.Jones1@dhsc.gov.uk

2.3 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.

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