

## Working with SMC as a public partner

### Role, remit and responsibilities.

#### About Scottish Medicines Consortium

The Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC) is the part of Healthcare Improvement Scotland that provides advice to NHSScotland about the value for patients of every newly licensed medicine. SMC reviews new medicines that have received a licence from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) or the European Medicines Agency (EMA). We also review new formulations of, and new ways to use, established medicines. Before a medicine can be prescribed routinely in Scotland, it has to be accepted for use by SMC. Our advice helps the health service plan for the quick, uniform introduction of beneficial treatments across NHSScotland.

SMC is a committee of around forty clinicians, NHS board representatives, the pharmaceutical industry and three Healthcare Improvement Scotland public partners, all of whom have a vote. This wide mixture of backgrounds helps ensure decisions are made from a broad perspective. The SMC Committee meets in public.

When considering a new medicine the committee looks at:

- how well the medicine works
- which patients would benefit from it
- whether it is as good or better than medicines the NHS already uses to treat the particular condition, and
- whether it is good value for money.

Understanding the experiences of patients, their families and carers is a key element in our decision making process. It is important for SMC Committee members to fully understand how

a new medicine impacts the quality of life of patients and carers. This enables them to make a fully informed decision on whether or not to recommend a new medicine.

Patients, members of their families and carers can provide unique knowledge about what it's like to live with a condition. They can explain advantages and disadvantages of medicines that may not be available in the published literature or quality of life measures.

The SMC Public Involvement team works in partnership with patient groups to gather this information through our patient group submission process.

### **Your role as an SMC public partner**

As an SMC public partner you are a full voting member of the SMC Committee, who as a member of the public, uses your judgement on the value of a new medicine to NHSScotland.

You are required to vote on every medicine that is considered - that could be everything from a new treatment for a minor condition to a medicine for a terminal illness. You reach your decisions based on the evidence presented to you by the submitting pharmaceutical company, patient groups and clinicians, and there can be anything from around one to three hours of reading per medicine in advance of each monthly meeting, with an average of six medicines being considered each month. The meeting itself is a chance to discuss any issues before you arrive at a decision.

One public partner also attends each Patient and Clinician Engagement (PACE) meeting on a rotational basis, to provide public scrutiny of the PACE process.

Each public partner is also a member of the SMC's Public Involvement Network (PIN) Advisory Group, together with four patient group partners, some SMC team members and an SMC Committee member. This group helps SMC to continuously improve how patients, carers and members of the public are involved in our work.

### **How you reach decisions**

When you make a decision on a medicine, you consider the clinical and economic data provided by the pharmaceutical company, along with evidence submitted by patient groups. You look at how well the medicine works, which patients would benefit from it, whether it is as good or better than medicines that are already in use in Scotland and whether it's good value for money. Value for money doesn't simply mean how much a medicine costs, it's about looking at all the extra benefits it can bring compared to currently available treatments, things like quality of life and the amount of extra life that may be gained by patients using the new medicine, or if

using it would mean fewer trips to the hospital to receive the medicine, something that can benefit both patients and the NHS.

You also have to think not only about the patients that will potentially be treated with the medicine, but about every patient the NHS treats: making an expensive medicine, with unclear benefits, available for routine use could potentially disadvantage other patients. Because NHSScotland has limited resources, you have to make sure every medicine we look at benefits patients and is an acceptable use of those resources.

### **Required skills**

- the ability to take in and understand information quickly and effectively
- the ability to express ideas concisely and ask challenging questions
- the ability to share your views clearly and sensitively from a public perspective
- sound judgement and ability to weigh evidence in order to reach an objective and impartial conclusion, and
- the desire and willingness to work as part of the SMC Public Involvement team.

### **Required Knowledge and Experience**

- a general interest in improving patient experience of healthcare
- an understanding of the potential impact of inequalities on health, and
- experience of participating in committees or formal meetings.

### **Commitment**

Required to attend each monthly SMC Committee meeting which take place over an afternoon on the first Tuesday of each month, in Glasgow. Significant preparation time is also required for reading SMC meeting papers.

PACE meetings take place over an afternoon on the second Tuesday of each month. Public partner attendance is rotational; therefore there is a requirement to attend approximately four afternoon's meetings per year.

The PIN Advisory Group meets three times each year, in Glasgow, and all three public partners are required to attend this meeting.

There may be the opportunity to attend external events, such as conferences and training events, to promote the role of a public partner working in SMC. This is not a core requirement, will be subject to your availability, and in line with the requirements of the SMC public involvement work programme.

The SMC public partner role has a **three year term**.

### **Training and support**

Public partners have a comprehensive induction programme, which includes spending time with relevant members of the SMC team, shadowing existing public partners and attending relevant meetings over the course of around two months, before starting your role. You will receive guidance on how to manage any declarations of interest regarding specific medicines. We will also provide you with an introductory training session in both health economics and clinical assessment.

You will be fully supported by the SMC Public Involvement team, and are encouraged to seek support if you feel unable to carry out a task or need to discuss any aspect of your role. We will seek to provide any additional training, as required, and you will not be expected to do anything that you feel unable to.

All meetings are held in accessible premises and individual access and support needs will be met accordingly. You should notify the SMC public involvement co-ordinator of individual needs in order to make appropriate arrangements.

### **Contact:**

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