



Healthcare  
Improvement  
Scotland

**Evidence**  
Advice, guidance  
and intelligence



# Public Partner Role Description

## Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC)

### About SMC

The Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC) is the part of Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) 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. 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 Committee has around 25 members, made up of clinicians, NHS board and pharmaceutical industry representatives and **three** HIS Public Partners, all of whom have a vote. This wide mixture of backgrounds helps ensure decisions are made from a broad perspective. SMC Committee meetings are held 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 condition.
- 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.

Further information about SMC can be found here: [www.scottishmedicines.org.uk/about-us/](http://www.scottishmedicines.org.uk/about-us/)

## Role and Responsibilities

- As a full voting member of the SMC Committee, you are required to vote on every medicine that is considered.
- 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 three 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.
- 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.

## Commitment Involved

Public Partners are required to attend each monthly SMC Committee meeting which takes place over an afternoon on the first Tuesday of each month. Significant preparation time is also required for reading SMC meeting papers. It is estimated that around twelve hours is required to both prepare and attend this meeting per month.

PACE meetings take place over an afternoon, usually 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. It is estimated that around five hours is required to both prepare and attend each afternoon of meetings.

The PIN Advisory Group meets three times each year, and all three SMC Public Partners are required to attend this meeting.

The SMC Public Partner role has a **three year term**. A second term may be offered if mutually agreeable and in meeting with SMC requirements.

## Skills, Knowledge and Experience Required

No formal qualifications are necessary, but it may help if you have some of the following:

- 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.

- The desire and willingness to work as part of the SMC Public Involvement Team.
- A general interest in improving patient experience of healthcare.
- An understanding of the potential impact of inequalities on health.
- Experience of participating in committees or formal meetings.

## Training and Support

All HIS volunteers are provided with an induction programme, which includes corporate induction and equality and diversity awareness training. You will also receive an introductory session about the work of the Evidence Directorate.

SMC Public Partner induction includes spending time with relevant members of the SMC team, shadowing other SMC Public Partners, and observing relevant meetings, before starting your role. You will also be required to complete a five part online SMC training module, which covers SMC remit and process and provides an overview of the key concepts of health technology 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 required training and you will not be expected to do anything that you feel unable to.

## Virtual Meetings

All SMC meetings are currently being held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We will ensure you have both the correct hardware and software to join meetings virtually and you will receive training guides on how to participate in meetings remotely. You will also be provided with a 'Virtual Meetings Protocols & Etiquette Guide' and the SMC team will be available to help you, if required.

## Declarations of Interest and Confidentiality

All committee members and SMC staff are required to make a full declaration of interest on appointment and annually thereafter, in accordance with our code of practice on declarations of interest. Members are also required to declare relevant interests at meetings, regardless of whether those interests have previously been declared to SMC.

Please observe confidentiality in respect of all information shared with you in relation to SMC processes and take steps to ensure it is not breached, therefore please ensure that all information is treated in the strictest confidence and confidentiality is always maintained and adhered to.

## Expenses

HIS will reimburse Public Partners for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses as a result of your volunteering. We try to limit out-of-pocket expenses by offering Public Partners train warrants in advance of journeys or booking overnight accommodation where necessary. For those who are

entitled to concessionary train travel, and prefer to pay for their ticket themselves, expenses can be claimed. Any expenses forms should be submitted no more than three months after an event.

## Contact Details

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