

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON  
ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE AND  
HEALTHCARE ACQUIRED INFECTIONS**

**Code of Practice for Members**

# CODE OF PRACTICE FOR MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE AND HEALTHCARE ACQUIRED INFECTIONS

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Advisory Committee on Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare Acquired Infections (ARHAI) is a non-statutory advisory non-Departmental Public Body. It is a non-executive advisory committee to Ministers for the Department of Health. Its terms of reference are:

" to provide practical and scientific advice to the Government on strategies to minimise the incidence of healthcare associated infections and to maintain the effectiveness of antimicrobial agents in the treatment and prevention of microbial infections in man and animals. In making recommendations, the committee will take into account the relevant work of other expert groups in the human and veterinary fields".

2. In line with Government policy on standards in public life, openness and accountability, the ARHAI Secretariat have drawn up the following Code of Practice which members are expected to follow in carrying out duties associated with the ARHAI.

## PUBLIC SERVICE VALUES

3. Members of the ARHAI must, at all times:
  - observe the highest standards of **impartiality, integrity** and **objectivity** in relation to the advice they provide and to the management of this public body;
  - be **accountable** for their activities and for the standard of advice they provide for Ministers. The Ministers of the sponsoring Department are answerable to Parliament, and the public more generally, for the policies and performance of the ARHAI, including the policy framework within which it operates; and
  - act in accordance with Government policy on **openness**, and comply fully with the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information and any relevant legislation on disclosure of information

## STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE

4. ARHAI members are expected to:
  - follow the Seven Principles of Public Life set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (see [Annex A](#)), as they apply to service on the ARHAI;

- comply with this Code of Practice, and ensure that they understand their duties, rights and responsibilities, and that they are familiar with the functions and role of the Committee and any relevant statements of Government policy;
- not misuse information gained in the course of their public service for personal gain or for political purpose, nor seek to use the opportunity of public service to promote their private interests or those of connected persons, firms businesses or other organisations; and
- not hold any paid or high-profile posts in a political party, and not engage in specific political activities on matters directly affecting the work of the Committee. When engaging in other political activities, members should be conscious of their public role and exercise proper discretion. These restrictions do not apply to MPs, local councillors or to Peers in relation to their conduct in the House of Lords

## **TERMS OF APPOINTMENT OF ARHAI MEMBERS**

5. The Appointments Commission, on behalf of the Department of Health Ministers, makes appointments to the ARHAI. Terms of appointment usually range from 1-3 years. Appointments may be terminated at a member's request, in the event of unsatisfactory attendance at meetings, if their conduct is out of keeping with this Code or at the Appointments Commission's discretion.
6. Appointment to the ARHAI is on a voluntary basis and fees are not payable. However, members may claim travel and subsistence allowances at standard HPA rates, as given in [Annex B](#).

## **ROLE OF MEMBERS**

7. Members of the ARHAI have collective responsibility for the operation of the Committee. They should engage fully in the collective consideration of issues, taking account of the full range of relevant factors, including any guidance issued by the sponsor Departments or the responsible Ministers.

## **ROLE OF THE CHAIRMAN**

8. The Chairman has particular responsibility for providing effective leadership on the issues above. In addition, he/she is responsible for ensuring that the minutes of meetings, produced by the Secretariat, and any reports to Ministers accurately record the decisions taken and, where appropriate, the views of individual Committee members have been taken into account. The Chairman will indicate that the minutes of meetings accurately reflect proceedings by "signing-off" once the Committee has agreed them.

## **ROLE OF THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN**

9. The Deputy Chair is responsible for chairing committee meetings and providing leadership if the Chairman is unavoidably absent.

## **ROLE OF THE SECRETARIAT**

10. The Secretariat is provided by the Health Protection Agency (HPA). The HPA Secretariat function has been delegated by the Department of Health. Communications between the Committee and Ministers will generally be through the Secretariat, except where it has been agreed that an individual member should act on the Committee's behalf. Nevertheless, any Committee member has the right of access to Ministers on any matter that he or she believes raises important issues relating to his or her duties as a Committee member. In such cases, the agreement of the rest of the Committee should normally be sought.
11. The Secretariat is responsible for ensuring that the Committee does not exceed its powers or functions. It should also ensure that the Freedom of Information Act 2000 is complied with, and any complaints are dealt with appropriately.

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

12. It is important to avoid any danger of members of the ARHAI being influenced, or appearing to be influenced, by their private interests in the exercise of their public duties. All members should, therefore, declare any personal or business interests relevant to the work of the ARHAI which may, or may be perceived (by a reasonable member of the public) to influence their judgement. This should include, as a minimum, payments to members personally and payments to the relevant part of the organisation for which a member works. Members should be aware of their responsibility not to be seen to allow their judgement to be influenced in considering receipt of any gifts or hospitality offered in the exercise of their public duties.
13. If members feel that there are interests, outside the scope of this Code, which could be perceived as influencing their work in relation to the ARHAI, for example the personal or business interests of close family members (personal partners, parents, children, brothers and sisters and the personal partners of any of these) they should declare those or approach the Secretariat for advice.

### **Declarations of interests at meetings**

14. A declaration of any interest should be made at any Committee meeting where it relates specifically to a particular issue under discussion. The Secretariat will record this declaration in the minutes (whether or not a member also withdraws from the meeting). It may not be appropriate for

members to participate in the discussion or determination of matters in which they have an interest, and may be asked by the Chair to withdraw from the meeting.

### **Register of interests**

15. The Secretariat is required to publish an up-to-date register of members' interests. Members should notify the Secretariat immediately of any changes to their entry.

### **HANDLING OF ARHAI PAPERS**

16. All ARHAI papers are potentially disclosable under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, and can be made available to interested outside individuals on request. All papers will be classified either 'Open' or 'Closed'.
17. Certain information may be exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. A list of examples of where information may be withheld, and most likely to be relevant to ARHAI, is provided as [Annex C](#).
18. The full minutes of all ARHAI meetings are also potentially disclosable. Reports of discussions will not normally be attributed to individual members, but members may request that statements be attributed in certain instances (see paragraphs 8 and 13 above). Requests for disclosure will be dealt with by the Secretariat as they arise. Members should inform the Secretariat of any issues with regard to minutes of meetings where they feel that certain information should not be disclosed.

### **RELATIONS WITH THE MEDIA**

19. The Secretariat with the Department of Health Press Offices will usually be responsible for handling media enquiries about the ARHAI and its work. Members who are approached directly by the media with enquiries relating to ARHAI business should contact the Secretariat in the first place, for advice on handling.
20. Members may, in the course of their work, address conferences and seminars, or have other speaking arrangements at which the media are present. In these circumstances, members should take care to make it clear that they are speaking in a personal capacity and not as a member of the ARHAI.

### **PERSONAL LIABILITY OF ARHAI MEMBERS**

21. The cabinet office 'Model Code of Practice for Board Members of Advisory Non-Departmental Public Bodies (see pages 27-34 of publication) states that: *"Legal proceedings by a third party against individual board members of advisory bodies are very exceptional. A board member may be personally*

*liable if he or she makes a fraudulent or negligent statement which result in a loss to a third party; or may commit a breach of confidence under common law or criminal offence under insider dealing legislation, if he or she misuses information gained through their position. However, the Government has indicated that individual board members who have acted honestly, reasonably, in good faith and without negligence will not have to meet out of their own personal resources any personal civil liability which is incurred in execution or purported execution of their board functions. Board members who need further advice should consult the sponsor department.”*

## THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

### **Integrity**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

### **Objectivity**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for awards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

### **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

### **Openness**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interests clearly demands.

### **Honesty**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interests.

### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

## TRAVEL EXPENSES AND SUBSISTENCE\*

\* Based on Chapter 9, Section 4 (Business Expenses) of the Health Protection Agency: Finance Handbook (updated:7 April 2009)

1. You are entitled to claim travelling expenses and subsistence in line with the conditions below.

### Travel expenses

2. Details of the method of travel should be given on the claim form. Receipts, tickets, ticket numbers or other proof of purchase are required for all claims for public transport travelling expenses. If for any reason, tickets etc. are no longer available, an explanatory note should be provided with the claim form.
3. The full cost of travel as a consequence of attendance at committee meetings will be reimbursed. You are asked to use the most economical method of transport available.
4. Mileage allowances for travel by private car will be paid at a rate of 40p per mile.
5. The Health Protection Agency will not accept any liability in the event of any accident, damage, injury or death, or in respect of risks not covered by your own insurance policies.
6. In case of urgency, receipted costs in relation to taxi fares and any reasonable gratuity may be claimed where no public transport is reasonably available.

### Subsistence

#### *Day Subsistence*

7. An allowance may be paid to Committee members when absent from home on Committee business for more than five hours, when appropriate refreshments have not otherwise been provided. The rates payable are detailed below.

#### DAY SUBSISTENCE RATES

Period of absence	Rate
Meal allowance (5 or more hours away)	£5.00*
Meal allowance (more than 10 hours away)	£10.00*
Meal allowance (more than 10 hours away and return after 7pm)	£15.00

\*indicates flat rate, receipts not required



8. When making claims for day subsistence, the relevant period should be calculated from the time of the start of the journey to the meeting to the time of arrival home or at other final destination.
9. Day subsistence claims will be reduced or not payable if a meal or meals are provided by the Health Protection Agency at no cost to members. For example, no subsistence would be payable for an attendance of more than 5 hours but less than 10 hours if a meal had been provided at no cost to members. For periods of more than 10 hours, subsistence would be payable at the lower (more than 5 hours rate) if one meal had been provided at no cost to members. However, if two meals had been provided, no subsistence would be payable.

*Night subsistence*

10. If an overnight stay is necessary, actual receipted costs will be reimbursed up to the rates set out below:

**OVERNIGHT ABSENCE**

<b>Period of absence</b>	<b>Amount (actual receipted expenditure up to the rate of, unless otherwise indicated)</b>
Bed and breakfast (outside M25)	£80.00
Bed and breakfast (inside M25)	£100.00
Evening meal allowance	£22.50
Overnight incidental expenses allowance	£5.00*

\*indicates flat rate, receipts not required

11. Receipted costs for bed and breakfast under a commercial arrangement may be paid at a higher rate when appropriate (e.g. no accommodation is available at the usual rates). Payment of an allowance under this arrangement is at the discretion of the Agency and should be authorised by the Secretariat before the expense is incurred.
12. For overnight stays in non-commercial accommodation (i.e. with friends or relatives), one meal will be claimable, with the provision of receipts, at the evening meal allowance rate of £22.50.

**Claiming business expenses**

13. Other business costs in connection with committee work such as car parking fees, toll fees, official telephone calls, postage etc. will be reimbursed in full against receipts.

**Deputising expenses/financial loss allowance**

14. Deputising expenses can be claimed to reimburse the cost of employing a person to provide cover or substitution while the Committee member is engaged on Committee business. Claims must be accompanied by certified documentary evidence of the cost of cover.
15. Alternatively, Committee members may claim a financial loss allowance to reimburse actual loss of earnings (excluding casual overtime earnings) resulting from undertaking Committee business. All claims must be accompanied by certified documentary evidence of actual loss of earnings.
16. The maximum amount payable under these provisions is £278 per day.

**EXAMPLES WHERE ARHAI PAPERS OR INFORMATION CONTAINED IN ARHAI PAPERS MAY BE EXEMPT FROM PUBLIC DISCLOSURE**

1. The **Freedom of Information Act 2000** allows exemption from disclosure of:
  - Information which would harm national security, defence or international relations;
  - Information which relates to formulation of government policy;
  - Information which would prejudice law enforcement and legal proceedings;
  - Information intended for future publication;
  - Personal information;
  - Commercial interests;
  - Information given in confidence;
  - Information whose disclosure is prohibited by law.
  
2. Further exemptions are contained in the **Environmental Information Regulations 2004** as follows:
  - confidentiality of proceedings;
  - personal data;
  - information given in confidence (i.e. where the provider was not and could not have been placed under a legal obligation to supply the information);
  - information whose disclosure could harm the environment;
  - international relations, national defence or public security;
  - legal proceedings;
  - commercial confidentiality or intellectual property rights.