

**SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE
MEDICAL IMPLICATIONS OF LESS LETHAL WEAPONS (SACMILL)**

Annual Report

Financial Year 2015/2016

1. Introduction.

The Scientific Advisory Committee on the Medical Implications of Less-Lethal Weapons (SACMILL) provides independent advice to Ministers of Her Majesty's Government on the medical aspects surrounding the use of less-lethal weapons (LLWs).

SACMILL took over this role in March 2012, when it assumed the responsibilities of its predecessor committee, DOMILL.¹

2. SACMILL Committee Structure

SACMILL comprises:

- a. A Main Committee comprising the Chair, independent members, and *ex-officio* members from the MOD and Home Office.
- b. A Technical Sub-committee comprising the Chair and independent members. There are no *ex-officio* members present at meetings of the Technical Committee; this ensures the integrity and impartiality of discussions, maintaining the independence of their advice. The role of the Technical Committee is to discuss and prepare appropriate and timely medical statements relating to LLW.
- c. The Chair of SACMILL, the Executive Officer and the Secretary make up an Executive Sub-Committee, which addresses routine matters outside of main Executive and Technical Committee Meetings. Normally the Secretary and Chair will execute this on behalf of the members, but may co-opt members as required.

3. Committee membership

The membership of SACMILL is made up of an independent Chair and members drawn mainly from the medical, academic and public sectors, selected to provide an appropriate balance of lay and medical expertise on the committee. All independent members are appointed in accordance with the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA) code of practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies. Members of SACMILL are appointed on a personal basis, not as representatives of a particular profession, employer or interest group, even when they may be members of other bodies.

The Chair and independent members are appointed by the Secretary of State for Defence for a fixed term in line with the composition and requirements of the committee, which should not exceed four years (chair) or three years (other independent members). The Chair and members may be re-appointed for a further term or terms, but the total period of service may not exceed 10 years.

4. Meetings of the Committee.

During the year ending April 2016, the following committee meetings were convened:-

¹ Defence Scientific Advisory Council Sub-Committee on the Medical Implications of Less-Lethal Weapons (DOMILL).

- The SACMILL main committee met on 23rd September 2015 and 9th March 2016.
- The SACMILL Technical Committee also met *in camera* on 2015.
- A meeting of the SACMILL Executive Committee took place on 9th September 2015 by teleconference.

5. Matters considered by the committee.

The principal business of the committee during this year related to considerations of the safety of Less Lethal Weapons (e.g. Taser, impact rounds, water cannon) employed (or under consideration) by the Police Services of the UK. During the year ending April 2016, several requests for medical advice were received and one formal assessment in the form of an advisory letter was issued by SACMILL.

Amongst other matters considered, the Committee was asked specifically by the Home Office to provide advice on the medical implications of the coroner's verdict in the Jordan Begley case, in which the jury had decided that a Taser discharge was amongst several stressors which resulted in Mr Begley's death. The preliminary results of this consideration were communicated to the Surgeon General in the same month.

The Committee was also tasked to provide a medical assessment for the new Taser X2 prior to its formal adoption as a replacement for the current X26 Taser device. This will form a part of the work for the forthcoming year.

6. Chair's comments.

The panel met on a regular basis this year to consider requests for medical advice. Individual members of SACMILL also attended public engagement meetings, advised and provided input into the process whereby the medical effects of Tasers are recorded and, in line with their mandate, met on several occasions with the Home Office Public Order Unit, Dstl, CAST and representatives of the IPCC.

As the period of service of two members of the panel came to an end in March 2015, a recruitment process was initiated to fill these vacancies. Sifting meetings and Interviews were held in October and November 2015 and 3 appointments were subsequently made to bring the panel to full strength.

After due consultation with the Surgeon General and the Secretariat, the Chair was offered the opportunity to remain in post for a further period.

7. Nolan Principles.

During the execution of their duties, all members of the SACMILL panel acted in accordance with the Government's *Code of Practice (COP) for Scientific Advisory Committees* (December 2007) and the *Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies* (June 2011).

8. Point of contact.

The Surgeon General's Secretariat in the MoD is the official point of contact for all queries concerning SACMILL.

9. Budgetary matters.

As an Advisory NDPB, SACMILL does not employ staff nor incur expenditure on its own account. The budget for this committee is handled by the Surgeon General's office of the MoD.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'RJ Flower', with a horizontal line underneath it.

RJ Flower (Chair) May 2016.