

COMARE Code of Conduct for Chair, Secretariat, Members, Assessors and Observers

This Code of Conduct is based on the Code of Practice for Scientific Advisory Committees 2011¹.

The Committee

The Committee takes account of the full range of relevant factors to reach a collective conclusion on the subject. The Committee's discussions represent the development of its view and any comments made during this process should not be attributed to individuals. Where a subject will be considered over several meetings, members, assessors and observers may be asked to maintain the confidentiality of the discussion until an agreed Committee opinion is finalised. The Committee's conclusions are not finalised until the publication of a statement or report.

Role of the Chair

The Chair has overall responsibility for the conduct of Committee business, providing leadership with regard to members' responsibilities, public service values, and the roles of observers and assessors. The Chair is the nominated spokesperson for the public or the media regarding all of the work of the Committee.

Role of Committee members

Both expert members and lay members have a collective responsibility for the operation of the Committee. Members are expected to abide by the 'Seven Principles of Public Life'². Members should not respond individually to queries for the Committee. Any queries received on COMARE work and publications should be directed to the Chair and secretariat for appropriate action.

Role of the Secretariat

The primary function of the secretariat is to impartially support the Committee by assembling and analysing information and recording conclusions of meetings. It should advise members on relevant Committee process and procedure.

Role of Assessors

Officials from Government departments and agencies attend Committee meetings as assessors or policy advisors. Officials may also bring particular technical expertise, which may be requested by the Committee on some occasions.

Assessors for COMARE are divided into two distinct groups. Tier 1 assessors comprise of officials responsible for government radiation policy and representatives from radiation regulators and other agencies. Tier 1 assessors are expected to attend every meeting, where possible. Tier 2 assessors are only expected to attend when the agenda requires them to, and they may send written comments, where appropriate, if not attending. All assessors receive all meeting papers.

Tier 1 assessors: DHSC, PHE, DH (Northern Ireland), Scottish Government, Welsh Government, BEIS, HSE, FSA, EA, SEPA, NDA.

Tier 2 assessors: ONR, MHCLG, DforE, FSS, MRC, ISD (NHS Scotland).

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/scientific-advisory-committees-code-of-practice>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life>

Role of Observers

Observers are subject to the same level of confidentiality on meeting matters as members and assessors. This includes refraining from commenting on Committee business on social media.

When invited to attend meetings, observers and/or their organisations are required to respect the workings of the Committee. Observers and/or their organisations must not interfere in the input from meeting attendees or the work of the secretariat in any way which, in the view of the Chair, might hinder the work of the Committee before, during and after the meeting. Electronic recording equipment is prohibited and recording of COMARE meetings is not allowed.

Observers must not attempt to participate in the Committee's discussion. Observers may contribute verbally to the meeting only at the invitation of the Chair. This should be brief and the Chair will allocate the appropriate time.

Observers will be asked to leave a meeting when the Committee discusses items in reserved business (the consideration of material that isn't in the public domain). Such items will generally be discussed at the beginning or at the end of the agenda.

Failure to observe this Code of Conduct may lead to exclusion of observers and/or their organisations from the meeting and from future meetings of the Committee.