

# UKNHCC

UK Nutrition & Health Claims Committee

**First Meeting  
UKNHCC  
18 May 2021  
Microsoft Teams meeting**

**Minutes**

**Meeting held in closed session**

**Attendees**

**Chair**

Professor Susan Fairweather-Tait

**Members**

Dr Robert Boyle

Professor Judith Buttriss

Dr Francesca Crowe

Professor Alison Gallagher

Professor Marina Heinonen – agenda items 4 to 6

Emeritus Professor Anders Sjödin

**Secretariat (PHE)**

Ms Haley Bell

Dr Adrienne Cullum

Dr Jennifer Garry

Miss Celia Sabry-Grant

**Official Observers**

Ms Alison Black (Welsh Government)

Mr Chika Edeh (Food Standards Scotland)

Mr Stephen Hendry (Food Standards Scotland) - agenda items 4 to 6

Ms Kerry Gribbin (Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland)

Ms Debby Webb (Department of Health and Social Care)

**Agenda item 1 - Welcome, introductions and oral declaration of interests**

1. The Chair welcomed members and observers to the first official meeting of the United Kingdom Nutrition and Health Claims Committee (UKNHCC), which was held virtually due to COVID-19 related national lockdown in England and other travel restrictions. Apologies were received from Professor Harry McArdle.

2. Members were informed that Professor Marina Heinonen would be joining later.
3. Celia Sabry-Grant was welcomed as a new member of the secretariat.
4. Members were asked to declare any changes to their declarations of interest since the last meeting.
5. Dr Francesca Crowe informed members of a new grant she received from National Institute for Health Research for research on complex multi morbidity and unpaid consultancy work with Policy Matters advising on testing vitamin D levels in primary care.
6. Dr Robert Boyle informed members of his consultancy work with the Food Standards Agency on a systematic review of dietary exposures and autoimmune diseases, previously not declared and newly appointed membership to Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) Subgroup on Maternal and Child Nutrition (SMCN).

**Action:** Secretariat

#### **Agenda item 2 – Meeting notes of previous meeting for agreement (UKNHCC 21-04)**

7. Members were invited to comment on the meeting notes from the follow up to the induction meeting held on 23 March 2021. A member suggested adding page numbers to the notes. The meeting notes were subsequently agreed. It was noted that as these relate to the Committee induction, they would not be published on the UKNHCC website, on Gov.uk.

**Action:** Secretariat

#### **Agenda item 3 - Matters Arising (SACN 21-08)**

8. The secretariat summarised matters arising, and actions taken since the previous meeting.
9. The secretariat updated members on plans to publish the status of applications on the UKNHCC website, on Gov.uk, including details of the stop the clock process. Members were also updated on discussions to ensure there are sufficient links between other relevant UK Scientific Advisory Committees and UKNHCC. Members were in agreement.
10. The secretariat informed members that a suggested citation for the UKNHCC opinion on the UKNHCC website, on Gov.uk, would be included in the scientific opinion once published.

**Action:** Secretariat

11. Members were informed that the Health Improvement Directorate at PHE (which includes UKNHCC Secretariat) will be moving to the [Office for Health Promotion](#) (OHP), which will sit within the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). Members were assured that the scientific risk assessment function would continue. SACN and UKNHCC were expected to remain unchanged and members would be kept updated.
12. The Chair invited Official Observers to provide updates in addition to the circulated government update (SACN 21-08). The Official Observer from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) informed members that there were no additional updates, however an update on folic acid supplementation was expected soon.
13. The Official Observer from Food Standards Scotland (FSS) informed members of the recent Scottish election and that formal appointments were to be made on 18 May 2021 and sworn in on the 19 May 2021.
14. The Official Observer from Welsh Government informed members of a new Deputy Minister for mental health and wellbeing. Delivery in some areas had been paused due to parliamentary elections but is now being taken forward with the Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales strategy. Permission had been granted to consult on actions to improve the food environment in Wales. Other developments included the launch of a prediabetes programme and two new healthy weight pathways in June, one for children and one for adults.
15. The Official Observer from the Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland informed members that the current First Minister is due to step down and there would be an election for a new First Minister. The changes would have no effect on the Health Minister.

**Agenda item 4 – 001UKNHCC Article 13(5) Health claim application- Lutein, zeaxanthin and meso-zeaxanthin and visual performance. *Applicant: Alliance Pharmaceuticals Ltd.***

16. The secretariat reminded members that the application under review had been received on 6 April 2021 after validity check from DHSC and that the claim was within the scope of UKNHCC and no information was missing.
17. Members presented and discussed their assessment of characterisation of the food and the claimed effect, using the evidence submitted by the applicant and assessed what was pertinent to substantiate the claim.
18. An overview of the data submitted related to the claim application was presented and discussed by the Committee. The Committee reviewed the characterisation of the food, a combination of lutein, meso-zeaxanthin and zeaxanthin, the proposed claimed effect which relates to improved visual performance and discussed beneficial physiological effects and outcome measures appropriate to the claim. The studies submitted for scientific substantiation of the claim were

also discussed relating to study design, methodological issues such as differences in statistical methods proposed in study protocols compared to the methods reported by study authors, and risk of bias.

19. The Committee discussed the characterisation of the food, and the proposed claimed effect. It was agreed that a scientific opinion should be drafted and circulated to the Committee for feedback.

**Action:** Secretariat

#### **Agenda item 5 – Follow-up on UKNHCC processes (UKNHCC 21-05a-b)**

20. The Committee discussed and shared feedback on the process for assessing applications and suggested additions to the documentation for completing assessments.

**Action:** Secretariat

21. The Secretariat updated members on the progress on the draft Framework for Evaluation of Evidence Submitted for the Substantiation of Nutrition and Health Claims and invited the Committee to comment.

22. The Committee discussed evaluating risk of bias within the evidence submitted and the merits of different risk of bias tools. Members agreed an overview on the use of risk of bias tools during the next Committee meeting would be useful.

**Action:** Secretariat and Committee

23. Members discussed the opportunity for additional experts to advise the Committee where needed. The secretariat informed members that where appropriate, experts can be co-opted onto the UKNHCC for particular applications or areas of expertise. It was agreed that the Committee should consider whether additional expertise is required when dossiers are received. The secretariat would identify an expert in study methodology and statistics to be co-opted onto UKNHCC.

**Action:** Secretariat

24. A member asked whether there would be a public consultation on scientific opinions published. The secretariat informed the Committee that the UKNHCC will publish the opinion on Gov.uk. The applicant or members of the public can make comments within a 30-day period via the DHSC mailbox.

#### **Agenda item 6 – AOB**

25. The Chair reminded members that the next Committee meeting would be held virtually on 16 July 2021.

26. The secretariat informed members that a poll would be sent to members after this meeting to check availability for UKNHCC meetings in 2022.

27. The secretariat asked the Committee to provide feedback on their preferred start and finish times and the meeting duration.

**Action:** Committee

28. The secretariat reminded members that the opinion would be shared upon completion of a first draft and would invite comments and feedback from the Committee at that time.

29. The Chair closed the meeting, thanking the secretariat and Committee.

**Meeting close**