Recruitment to AfN Investigation, Professional Conduct and Appeals Panels

Information for UKVRN Panel Member Applicants

The Association for Nutrition (AfN) wishes to appoint and maintain a ‘pool’ of independent (lay) members and UKVRN Registrants to act as panellists on its Investigation, Professional Conduct and Appeals Panels.

An honorarium will be paid and travel and subsistence reimbursed according to the AfN Expenses Policy.

To apply please submit:

- An up-to-date CV (max 2 pages of A4)
- A covering letter and/or supporting statement describing how you meet the requirements of the person specification (max 2 pages of A4) and confirmation of eligibility to serve
- Name, address and contact details for two referees.

Applications should be submitted to professional@associationfornutrition.org

Applications must be received by 10am on Monday 8th May 2017

Only successful applicants will be contacted.
About the Investigation, Professional Conduct and Appeals Panels

The AfN investigate complaints about the conduct of UKVRN Registrants in accordance with our guidance on handling complaints and allegations. Please note these procedures are currently under review. It is anticipated revised procedures will be approved by early summer 2017, and we expect to reappoint panellists to the assessor panel under the new procedures shortly after.

Investigation Panel Under our current procedures the powers and duties of the Investigation Panel is undertaken by the sub-committee of Registration Committee. At present it is this sub-committee which conducts the initial investigation and establishes if there is a case to answer. In the future this role will be undertaken by the Investigation Panel. The Investigation Panel will comprise of three panel members including least one independent (lay) member and at least one UKVRN Registrant from the same register area as the person against whom an allegation or complaint has been made.

Professional Conduct Panel is established by the Registrar when an initial investigation into a complaint or allegation about the professional conduct, competence or health of a UKVRN Registrant establishes there is a case to answer. The Professional Conduct Panel is normally composed of three panel members including at least one independent (lay) member and a UKVRN Registrant from the same register area as the person against whom an allegation or complaint has been made. Under the new procedures this panel will be called the ‘Fitness to Practice Panel.’

Appeals Panel is established when an appeal is made against any appealable decision of AfNs Registration committee or panels.

The Investigation, Professional Conduct and Appeals Panels are usually held in London.
About the Role

Members of the panels are required to consider argument, distil facts and ask questions necessary to reach a conclusion on cases which are brought to them by the AfN. They should be able to analyse complex information, follow procedures and guidelines to arrive at sound, defensible judgments.

Members are selected on a rotation to serve on panels, having regard to availability and potential conflicts of interest.

Investigation Panels, once established under the new procedures, will consider allegations and declarations of health and prior conduct referred to it by the Registrar and determine whether there is has a case to answer. Meetings of the Investigation Panel are not open to the public.

Professional Conduct Panels considers allegations or declarations relating to health or prior conduct matters referred to it by the Investigation Panel. The panel have the power to impose interim orders and sanctions, if the decision of the Panel is that the relevant person’s fitness to practise is impaired. Meetings of the Professional Conduct Panel are not open to the public.

Appeals Panels are normally composed of three members, with a majority of lay members. One member will be a UKVRN Registrant.

Members of Investigation, Professional Conduct and Appeal Panels have the following duties:

- consider papers relating to cases for which the member is appointed, as provided by the AfN;
- consider and take into account evidence, information, representations and advice in connection with cases;
- make impartial and objective assessments of such evidence, information, representations and advice;
• make determinations and apply powers given under the rules and terms of reference impartially and objectively;
• inform the AfN as soon as reasonably practicable if conflict of interest arises from the circumstances of the case which may adversely affect the ability to consider the case impartially and objectively; and
• treat as confidential any information, facts or circumstances which become known to the member in connection with any application, hearing or appeal which they are selected to consider.

Terms of Appointment

The term of service for a Panel member is normally three years, subject to annual re-appointment. Members are be eligible for reappointment for two subsequent term (or a total of nine years) and then for subsequent terms provided that at least one year shall have elapsed between the expiry of three consecutive terms and the beginning of the third.

Members of panels are required to:
- Participate actively and responsibly
- Help ensure that the Panel fulfils its role according to the procedures, by taking part in discussions and questioning of evidence and making decisions.
- Participate in and help ensure that the Panel fulfils its responsibilities in monitoring activities undertaken on its behalf.
- Always uphold AfN’s core values of trust and honesty, ethical behaviour, integrity, high standards, quality and professionalism.
- Act as ambassador for AfN by actively promoting our core messages when in relevant and appropriate situations.

An honorarium will be paid to members of panels at a set rate, currently £280 per panel meeting. The honorarium acknowledges the panel member’s preparation, training, contribution, feedback and follow-up. Travel and
subsistence expenses will also be reimbursed according to our expenses policy, a copy of which can be provided.

**Time Commitment**

Meetings of the Panel will normally take place in London during office hours (8.30-18.30). Panel will normally require about half a day’s preparation/reading time/ follow up and one day’s attendance, although this may vary. Additional time may be required to follow-up/ feedback. The number of panels a year vary and no guarantee can be given as to the number of days a year a panel member might be required, if at all.

**Eligibility**

In accordance with the Association for Nutrition and Rules, eligibility as a Registrant Panel Member is restricted to persons who are not disqualified or declared unfit from being a trustee or company director or disqualified under item 43 of AfN Articles of Association. For UKVRN Registrant Panel Members, you must hold active UKVRN Registration throughout appointment to this position and during any periods in which investigations /meetings/ hearings occur. You must not yourself be the subject of an AfN investigation during any periods in which investigations/ meetings/ hearings occur nor have had any sanctions applied to your registration following an AfN investigation.

Panel members cannot be a member of AfN Council, main committees, sub-committees, assessor panels or working groups or otherwise involved in the governance of AfN.
Person Specification

Essential Criteria

Successful candidates must be able to demonstrate the following:

1. A commitment to protecting, promoting and maintaining the health, safety and wellbeing of patients and public.

2. The ability to look forward, see the bigger picture and make balanced decisions in an open, collaborative and constructive manner.

3. The ability to challenge and question constructively, with a sense of collective responsibility.

4. An understanding of the contribution and impact made by voluntary regulation of Registered Nutritionists, the furtherance of nutrition science and the fostering professional expertise in the UK and overseas.

5. An understanding and commitment to good governance and to the Nolan Principles of public life.

Desirable Criteria

The Registrar is seeking candidates with skills or experience in one or more of the following areas:

1. Experience of participating in investigation hearings, fitness to practice proceedings, adjudication, complaints or appeals in the public, private or voluntary sector.

2. Experience of chairing investigation hearings, fitness to practice proceedings, adjudication, complaints or appeals in the public, private or voluntary sector.
Competencies for panel members

1. **Intellectual Flexibility** – able to analyse complex information, following procedures and guidelines to arrive at sound, defensible judgments.

2. **Personal Qualities** – high level of probity, integrity, objectivity and fairness, ability to maintain confidentiality, commitment to equality and diversity

3. **Credibility** – ability to display across and beyond the nutrition profession

4. **Influencing and Communicating** – can influence and persuade others using evidence and well-reasoned arguments; able to test and probe constructively to achieve best outcomes for AfN and its regulatory functions.

5. **Effective Team Working** – understands and maintains the separation between executive and adjudicative functions, actively seeks differing views of others and respects those views, builds constructive relationships to work effectively as a team.