



Protecting and improving the nation's health

Call for lay members for PHE Screening research advisory committees

We are looking for individuals living in England to become lay members of the research advisory committees (RACs) for the:

- [NHS bowel cancer screening programme](#)
- [NHS breast screening programme](#)
- [NHS cervical screening programme](#)

Public Health England (PHE) coordinates the RACs.

What are the screening RACs?

The [NHS population screening programmes](#) encourage well designed research that addresses important new questions that will inform, guide and improve the screening programmes and benefit the future care of the whole population.

The screening programmes use data for a number of purposes including to evaluate the effectiveness of screening and to invite the eligible population. This is done in compliance with [patient confidentiality](#). Frequent requests are received to access this data for use in further research, audit or evaluation studies. Members of the RACs consider requests from researchers to access data for further studies, with the aim of enabling re-use of the data in ethically acceptable research.

Requests to carry out studies requiring access to screening programme participants are also regularly received. Members of the RACs review the risks and benefits of each proposal for the screening programme and participants, as well as the public interest in carrying out the study. Based on this assessment, the RACs decide whether to support the research.

The RACs each currently have up to 20 members with clinical, scientific, technical, and research ethics expertise in addition to representation from PHE and NHS England. We now wish to appoint up to 2 lay members for each committee.

What will the role involve?

As a lay member you will be expected to:

- attend and actively participate in RAC meetings up to 4 times per year
- prepare for meetings by reading any paperwork as required
- offer your views on research applications as a member of the public with a focus on the interests and involvement of patients and the public
- participate in other RAC projects and activities as agreed

Committee meetings are currently held remotely on Microsoft Teams and last 2 to 3 hours.

Face to face meetings lasting 4 hours are usually held in:

- Birmingham (breast RAC)
- alternately Sheffield and London (cervical RAC)
- alternately London, Sheffield and York (bowel RAC)

Further information about the committees can be found on the [NHS population screening: data requests and research](#) webpage.

What are we looking for?

We are looking for up to 2 lay members who are not directly involved in clinical practice or medical research. Applicants should have:

- an interest in one of the cancer screening programmes
- good communications skills, enthusiasm, reliability
- ability to maintain a neutral/objective stance and to listen, add value and challenge appropriately
- access to appropriate technology (such as a computer or tablet) for email and remote meetings.

It would be desirable to have:

- an understanding of health research
- an interest in [health inequalities](#)
- experience of reviewing scientific papers or applications
- knowledge of research ethics

What will we offer?

Reimbursement for all reasonable travel and subsistence costs for attendance at face to face meetings in line with PHE policy (valid receipts must be provided).

How to apply

If you are interested in joining an RAC, then please send a short statement (up to 250 words or a half page of A4) explaining:

- which committee you are interested in joining
- why you are interested in being part of the committee
- what you feel you can contribute.

Please email your statement to screening.research@phe.gov.uk by 2 July 2021.

Please use the subject line 'RAC lay member application' on your email and indicate which committee you are interested in joining (bowel, breast or cervical).

If you have any questions or want more information, please contact Jess Tarrant, RAC team leader, at screening.research@phe.gov.uk.

What happens next?

We will acknowledge receipt of all applications.

Statements will be reviewed by the secretariat and selected applicants will be invited to a short interview (telephone, Skype, or Microsoft Teams). We will contact all those who have sent a statement to inform them whether they have been selected or not.

After the interview, up to 2 individuals will be invited to become lay members of each committee for an initial period of 3 years.