



HEALTH TECHNOLOGY WALES (HTW) TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR)¹

HTW Assessment Group

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Approved By	Assessment Group
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Lead Author	Director, Health Technology Wales
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¹ This is a live document and therefore subject to change. It will be reviewed and updated annually, or sooner if required.

1. PURPOSE AND REMIT

The Assessment Group (AG) will oversee the production of HTW outputs, ensure methodological and scientific rigour in the work of HTW and adherence to agreed HTW processes on behalf of the HTW Appraisal Panel.

2. SCOPE AND DUTIES

Specific responsibilities of the Assessment Group:

- Undertake the topic selection process for HTW and prioritise the work programme, when and if necessary, including horizon scanning and potential topic identification (e.g. Health Tech Connect).
- Meet with topic referrers and agree the research question(s) to be answered.
- Oversee production, the critical appraisal and assessment of evidence ensuring they are in accordance with HTW appraisal processes.
- Agree on stakeholder consultations required.
- Review and quality assure the Evidence Appraisal Reports (EARs) on behalf of the HTW Appraisal Panel.
- Assure HTW Appraisal Panel on methodological and scientific rigour.
- Review consultation comments on the EARs, revise as necessary and present to the HTW Appraisal Panel for review and endorsement.
- Assess whether sufficient evidence exists to progress to Appraisal Panel, and confirm whether a topic should progress to Guidance
- Develop and improve AG processes based on the feedback of participants.
- Act collectively in accepting and agreeing the business of meetings.

Specific responsibilities of individual Assessment Group members:

- Make a full commitment to Assessment Group and the tasks required to achieve the aims set out in the terms of reference.
- Attend all meetings of Assessment Group or to arrange (where appropriate) for a deputy to attend in their place.
- Be responsible for highlighting areas of concern to the Chair.
- Read all meeting papers in advance of the meetings.
- Agree to lead on specific topics and pieces of work, as requested by the Assessment Group Chair.
- Participate in and contribute to AG subgroups as required.

3. DELEGATED POWERS AND AUTHORITY

The Assessment Group is authorised by HTW Executive Group to review and consider activity within its Terms of Reference. It is authorised to obtain information it requires from stakeholders and the Chair of the HTW Appraisal Panel in order to discharge its responsibilities.

The establishment of the Assessment Group will not conflict, duplicate or substitute for the role and responsibilities of the HTW Appraisal Panel.

This Assessment Group will carry out functions delegated to it by the HTW Executive Group and Appraisal Panel.

The Assessment Group is responsible to the HTW Appraisal Panel.

4. MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Assessment Group shall be determined by the HTW Chair and HTW Director.

If a member is unable to attend, comments may be sent in advance by email and / or a named deputy with similar expertise sent in their place.

Voting members may include:

- Assessment Group Chair (HTW Director or Senior Researcher)
- HTW Chair
- Chief Scientist Office (Health, inc. Social Care)
- Cedar
- Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee (WHSSC)
- Healthcare Technology Research / Evaluation
- Academic Health Science Partnership (AHSP)
- Health economics, Swansea Centre for Health Economics (SCHE)
- Evidence Based Procurement Board (EBPB)
- NWSSP Procurement representative
- Surgical Materials Testing Laboratory (SMTL)
- Systematic Reviewer, Academic
- Innovation representative
- Social Care representative
- Public Partners x 2
- Individuals co-opted for advice on specialist subjects
- Clinical representatives x 2

HTW staff will be in attendance as required.

Individuals working in Wales with specific expertise in HTA who can contribute to the work of the Assessment Group may also be considered for membership.

Stakeholders, particularly those referring topic and other experts, will be invited to attend for their own agenda item.

If a member is unable to attend, comments may be sent in advance by email and/or a named deputy with similar expertise sent in their place.

The current membership for Assessment Group is available on the HTW website.

5. MEMBER APPOINTMENTS AND SUPPORT

The membership of the Assessment Group shall be determined by the HTW Director, taking account of the balance of skills and expertise necessary to deliver the Assessment Group remit.

Members shall be appointed initially for a minimum of 18 months before formally reviewing their role on the Group. During this time a member may resign or be removed by the HTW Programme Office. Once established, new members will be added on a staggered basis. Normal appointment lengths will be three years, with the possibility of a second term. No further extensions will be permitted.

Appropriate training and development opportunities will be provided to new and existing members as appropriate.

6. ASSESSMENT GROUP MEETINGS

Quorum

At least 50% +1 of the voting members (or nominated deputies) must be present to ensure the quorum of the Group. If a meeting is not quorate, it will still proceed, but final agreement on decisions must be sought electronically following the meeting.

Frequency of meetings

Meetings will be held monthly (typically on the first Tuesday of each month). Four additional prioritisation meetings per annum may be scheduled to select topics for inclusion on the HTW work programme.

Meetings may be virtual or face to face. Dial-in facilities will be available for members unable to attend in person.

7. RELATIONSHIP & ACCOUNTABILITIES

The Assessment Group shall embed Velindre NHS Trusts corporate standards, values, priorities and requirements, e.g. equality and human rights, through the conduct of its business.

Members will be required to return / review Declarations of Interest annually and notify the Programme Office of any substantive changes within year. Members will also be required to sign a confidentiality agreement, with all meeting papers to be treated as confidential unless published by HTW.

8. CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

The Programme Office will determine which items appear on the agenda in consultation with the HTW Director.

HTW Assessment Group members may also submit items for consideration. Any member wishing to have an item considered for an agenda should notify the HTW Programme Office (healthtechnology@wales.nhs.uk) as soon as possible.

The agenda and papers will be circulated to HTW Assessment Group members at least 5 working days in advance of meetings. The order of business will normally follow the agenda but will finally be determined by the Chair. Tabled papers may be accepted with the express agreement of the Chair and only in exceptional circumstances.

No other business will be discussed at the meeting, unless permitted by the Chair.

Unconcluded items will be carried forward to next meeting or concluded electronically.

An action note from the meeting will be drawn up by the HTW programme office, on behalf of the Chair.

Meetings of the Assessment Group will be recorded for the purposes of creating the minutes / action log. Recordings will be deleted on completion of the relevant business.

9. DECISION MAKING

The decisions of Assessment Group will usually be arrived at by a consensus of those members present. Before a decision to move to a vote is made, the Chair will, in all cases, consider whether continuing the discussion at a subsequent meeting is likely to lead to a consensus.

If required, a formal vote shall be taken and, in the case of an equality of votes, the Chair at the meeting shall have a casting vote.

Only full members of the HTW Assessment Group will have voting rights and the decisions will be determined by a simple majority of those members present at a quorate meeting. Those in attendance, observers and the HTW programme office will have no voting rights.

A Member shall have the right for his/her dissent to be recorded in the minutes.

10. REPORTING AND ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Chair will highlight/escalate appropriate issues discussed when required, to the HTW Appraisal Panel and/or Executive Group as appropriate.

11. CHAIR'S ACTION ON URGENT MATTERS

There may, occasionally, be circumstances where decisions need to be taken between scheduled meetings. In these circumstances, the HTW Director/Chair may deal with the matter on behalf of the Assessment Group. The HTW Director must ensure that any such action is formally recorded and reported to the next meeting for consideration and ratification.

Chair's urgent action may not be taken where the Chair has a personal or business interest in the urgent matter requiring decision.

12. REVIEW

These terms of reference and operating arrangements shall be reviewed annually by the Assessment Group with reference to the Executive Group.