



Attending a Health Technology Wales Appraisal Panel meeting

Health Technology Wales (HTW) welcomes public attendance at our Appraisal Panel meetings.

To help you understand how our meetings held in public are run we have compiled some common questions and answers. We hope you find this information useful and it helps you understand how HTW works in striving to meet the needs of the people of Wales in relation to making best use of health technologies within the NHS.

If you have questions during the course of the meeting, please speak to the meeting coordinator in the first instance.

What is Health Technology Wales?

Health Technology Wales (HTW) is a national body working to improve the quality of care in Wales. We collaborate with partners across health, social care and the technology sectors to ensure an all-Wales approach. We are funded by Welsh Government and hosted within NHS Wales, but independent of both.

We assess non-medicine health and care technologies and issue independent, authoritative guidance based on the best available evidence and expertise. We appraise technologies throughout their lifecycle, from innovation to obsolescence.

Our work informs commissioning by NHS Wales and care providers and supports decision makers to make evidence-informed decisions on both technology investments and disinvestments.

Our remit covers any health technology that isn't a medicine, such as medical devices, surgical procedures, psychological therapies, tele-monitoring or rehabilitation. Medicines are assessed within the remit of our colleagues in the All Wales Medicines Strategy Group.



What is the Health Technology Wales Appraisal Panel?

HTW holds up to twelve Appraisal Panel meetings a year.

The Appraisal Panel considers the case for adoption of non-medicine technologies that are referred to HTW for appraisal within the context of NHS Wales, and produces the HTW guidance. The Appraisal Panel also helps us to identify important topics, evaluates the uptake of guidance and facilitates stakeholder engagement.

The HTW Appraisal Panel has around 20 members. Membership includes senior representatives from health boards in Wales, alongside other key stakeholders. Public partners from HTW also sit on the committee to ensure the views of the public are taken into account during decision-making. This wide mixture of backgrounds helps ensure HTW guidance is informed by a broad range of perspectives.

The Appraisal Panel is conducted in English.

For further information about the Appraisal Panel and our Appraisal Process, please see our website: <https://healthtechnology.wales/about/appraisal-panel/>

What information is assessed at the meeting?

The Appraisal Panel meeting is the final part of the HTW assessment process. For each technology being considered, Appraisal Panel members will discuss and consider all of the evidence. This includes: the evidence review product and the views of clinical experts, patient organisations, manufacturers and others submitted during the peer review process. The group will also consider all this information in preparing HTW Guidance.

Public attendance at HTW Appraisal Panel meetings

From November 2019, our meetings are being held in public. This supports our commitment to openness and transparency. We hope that it will help people to understand the way in which we consider evidence before issuing Guidance outlining whether or not, based on the evidence, HTW Appraisal Panel supports adoption of the health technology under consideration in Wales.

There will be space for up to 10 public observers to attend each Appraisal Panel, with a maximum of two people per organisation. If the meeting is oversubscribed, priority will be given to members of the public and patient interest groups, as well as manufacturers of the technology under discussion.

The meeting agenda will be emailed to you five working days before the meeting.



Who can be a public observer?

Public observers are those that can come to watch a HTW Appraisal Panel meeting but are not directly involved in the business of the meeting.

Public observers might include:

- members of the public
- members of the press
- representatives from the pharmaceutical or healthcare industries
- representatives from patient, carer and voluntary sector organisations

Public observers are able to listen to the business of the meeting, except when confidential information is being discussed. However, they are not able to participate in discussions, ask questions or take part in voting, or put their own views to members of the Appraisal Panel.

Who else will be at the meeting?

In addition to the HTW Appraisal Panel members, members of the staff involved in running and supporting the meeting will be in attendance.

With the permission of the HTW Appraisal Panel Chair, the following may also be present:

- Patient or lay experts
- Clinical or technical experts
- Manufacturer or other external representatives
- Other invited observers

When and where are meetings held?

Meetings are held virtually and generally run from 1-4 pm (approximately). However, please ensure you check the details for the specific meeting you wish to attend, as it may sometimes vary for each individual meeting.

If a meeting is cancelled, or the time and/or location of the meeting changes, details of this will be published on the HTW website and we will let you know as quickly as possible.



How can I register to attend an Appraisal Panel meeting?

You can register on the HTW website to attend a meeting up to 20 working days before it takes place. Registration will usually close 10 days before the meeting takes place. Up to 10 places will be available. Where meetings are oversubscribed, HTW may need to limit the number of places we can offer.

We are unable to reserve or block book places to observe Appraisal Panel meetings. Please complete the on-line registration form on the HTW website to request to observe a particular meeting. Please note that it may not be possible to accept late registration requests.

What time should I arrive and what will happen when I arrive at the meeting?

Please join the Teams call promptly, 5 minutes prior to the start of the meeting. Appraisal Panel meetings will not be delayed for late arrivals.

Do I need to stay for the entire meeting?

Committee meetings vary in length depending on the topics being discussed. This makes it difficult to predict how long it will take to discuss each topic and when a meeting will end.

The Chair will outline the agenda for the day at the start of the meeting and may give an indication of when certain topics will be discussed.

The meeting will be split into two parts, with the topics discussed in the first half of the meeting. The second part of the meeting will cover more general committee business and will not be open to public observers.

How long will the meeting last?

The Chair will outline the agenda for the day at the start of the meeting. The presentation and discussion can take up to 60 minutes for each technology, however it is difficult to know how long it will take to discuss each technology or when a meeting will end. HTW Appraisal

Panel meetings are scheduled to run for 3 hours. Depending on the volume of business and discussions, meetings may finish slightly earlier or later.



Do I need to let you know if I am no longer able to attend a meeting I have registered to observe?

Please inform the meeting co-ordinator as soon as possible if you are unable to attend the meeting. There are a limited number of public places available to attend meetings and by sending your apologies with as much notice as possible your place can be given to someone else.

Can children attend meetings?

Children under the age of 16 cannot attend meetings.

Will papers be provided for public observers to follow the meeting?

Topics to be covered will be emailed to you 5 days before the meeting. Background information about the topic being discussed will also be emailed to you.

You will be supplied with an information pack containing an agenda and copies of the brief Topic Exploration Report for each technology. These documents should not be shared with other people and you should delete them after the meeting. This is because there may be confidential information contained in the paperwork which are not final documents and the detail within them may be subject to revision following the Appraisal Panel meeting.

Because other papers run to many pages and often contain confidential information (commercial, academic or otherwise), and in some cases information of a personal and sensitive nature, we are not able to provide these for public observers.

All public observers will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement when attending the HTW Appraisal Panel.



Will I be able to listen to all the discussions?

HTW is fully committed to holding its meetings in public and we would like as much of the meeting as possible to take place with the public present.

However, there may be occasions when some of the information the Appraisal Panel needs to discuss is confidential. If it is, then all public observers will be asked to leave the meeting while these discussions take place.

Information classed as confidential includes confidential academic or policy work, patients' and lay experts' personal testimonies (if this is what the patient or lay expert has requested) and information that is called 'commercial in confidence'. This means that public disclosure of this information could have an impact on the commercial interests of the particular company or the academic interests of a research or professional organisation, or the policy interest of the government.

Public observers will also be asked to leave the meeting when final discussions confirming the guidance take place.

The meeting will be split into two parts, with the topics discussed in the first half of the meeting. The second part of the meeting will cover more general committee business and will not be open to public observers.

Can I talk to members of the Appraisal Panel?

The role of HTW Appraisal Panel members is to make an independent assessment of the evidence. It is very important that no one tries to influence an individual member during the meeting, during breaks or outside the meeting on any topics that are under discussion. If you have any questions the HTW Appraisal Panel meeting coordinator will be able to help you.

Can I talk to the external experts who present evidence to the committee meeting?

Again, we ask public observers to address any questions they have to the meeting coordinator in the first instance rather than approach the external experts directly.

The external experts are volunteering their time to attend committee meetings. They have to spend time preparing what they are going to say to the committee and are very focused on the business in hand. In addition, patient experts, lay members and service users can find meetings stressful as they disclose their personal experience of a particular illness or condition. The role of the experts is to give the committee their professional view about an illness or condition and the treatment or intervention being considered and it is important that no one tries to influence an individual expert.



Can I take notes at the meeting?

You may take notes, but the use of laptops or other electronic devices to record the meeting is not allowed. Minutes of the meeting will be circulated once approved by the group.

Audio and video recording, photography and the use of social media during the meeting is not allowed. Anyone seen to be recording/broadcasting during a meeting will be asked to leave immediately.

Can I quote or report what is said at a meeting?

This is a public meeting and what members say can be quoted after the meeting. We rely on a full and frank exchange of views to carry out our work and members of the group will debate the evidence thoroughly. We ask the public to respect that it is important that members are able to speak freely without concern that they may be misquoted or that what they have said is taken and reported out of context.

Can I use social media during the meeting?

Live reporting of meeting proceedings is not allowed as it may carry a significant commercial risk. If you are found to be broadcasting the proceedings via any media you will be asked to leave.

Can I conduct a research study on the meeting and/or HTW Appraisal Panel?

If you have registered to attend a meeting, and also wish to conduct a study on the meeting and/or HTW Appraisal Panel processes, please contact the meeting coordinator. You will need to provide details on the purpose and context of your study, the information you plan to gather during the meeting and this will then be passed to the HTW Director for consent. You will be informed of HTW Appraisal Panel's decision by email. If it is not possible for you to conduct your research study you will still be able to observe the meeting, however you will not be allowed to conduct any research at the meeting. If you no longer wish to attend the meeting, please inform the meeting coordinator as soon as possible to allow your place to be offered to someone else.



What will happen if a public observer tries to disrupt the meeting?

We expect that everyone who comes to a meeting will respect the work of the group and will not cause any disruption. If anyone causes a disruption, the meeting will be stopped and the Chair may insist that the individual leaves before restarting.

We may also restrict public observers who cause a disruption from attending any future meetings.

Are there regulations for members of the media registering to attend a meeting?

A member of the HTW communications team will attend meetings when members of the media are present and provide a briefing. For media enquiries, contact Diana Milne at HTW.

Requests for media interviews should be made through the HTW communications team. Any other requests will automatically be refused. Media interviews with HTW staff or committee members are unlikely to take place immediately after the meeting, due to previously booked arrangements. However, the HTW communications team will endeavour to identify a time to suit both parties at a later date.

Will the Guidance be announced at the meeting?

No. HTW Appraisal Panel aims to finalise its Guidance during the meeting. However, on occasion, HTW Appraisal Panel members may request to consider the draft advice again. The Appraisal Panel's final Guidance will not be made public until the Guidance is published on our website. This is because paperwork relating to the meeting does not represent final Guidance and will be updated following the meeting.

When will the final HTW Appraisal Panel advice be published?

HTW Appraisal Panel Guidance is published on the website, approximately 4 weeks after the meeting in which it was considered. Until that time meeting discussions and drafts are confidential. HTW Appraisal Panel Guidance is then disseminated across NHS Wales.

Feedback and evaluation

You will receive an online survey link following the meeting, asking for your opinions on the experience of observing the HTW Appraisal Panel. We encourage you to provide honest feedback to help us review, develop and improve this process.

If you have any other questions regarding attending the HTW Appraisal Panel meeting, please don't hesitate to get in touch via healthtechnology@wales.nhs.uk