

# Chair's Introduction

The COT is a committee of independent experts that provides advice to the Food Standards Agency, the Department of Health and Social Care and other Government Departments and Agencies on matters concerning the toxicity of chemicals in food, consumer products and the environment.

Most of its members are appointed as scientific and medical experts on the basis of their special knowledge and expertise. In addition, two non-specialist members of the committee are appointed for their broader knowledge of consumer affairs.

Members are required to follow the Code of Conduct for Scientific Advisory Committees. As part of this, they must declare any potential conflicts of interests, and depending on the nature of such conflicts, they may, at the Chairman's discretion, be excluded from the discussion and formulation of the Committee's conclusions and recommendations in relation to relevant agenda items.

The COT is supported in its work by a secretariat provided by the Food Standards Agency and Public Health England. The secretariat has scientific expertise that enables them to provide members with comprehensive background information and briefing papers that inform the decision-making processes of the Committee.

Rev Prof Lesley A. Stanley MA PhD ERT FBTS