

## Executive Chair conflict of interest

Professor Fiona Watt took up position of Executive Chair of the Medical Research Council (MRC) on 1 April 2018. She also continues in three other roles:

- i) Director, Centre for Stem Cells & Regenerative Medicine, King's College London (KCL) (paid: one day/week) (ongoing), and MRC grant-holder;
- ii) Vice President Non-Clinical, Academy of Medical Sciences (AMS) (unpaid) (to 27 November 2018);
- iii) Member, Medical Advisory Board, Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI), Virginia USA (honorarium) (ongoing; this activity to be carried out as part of KCL employment)

and in addition:

- iv) Professor Watt is expected to serve as the MRC representative on the Board of Trustees of the Francis Crick Institute (from 1 October 2018)
- v) Professor Watt is married to Sir Jim Smith (Director of Science, Wellcome).

Fiona's appointment was made in open competition following an open advertisement in July 2017

The appointment was subject to a pre-appointment hearing by the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee on 31 January 2018.

Her appointment was confirmed by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

Professor Watt and the MRC are committed to managing all real, potential or apparent conflicts of interest with integrity, impartiality, honesty and openness.

While Fiona's dual roles with various other organisations and the MRC are in many ways an asset, robust policies and procedures are in place to manage potential conflicts.

Measures in place include:

- Three of the MRC grants that Fiona currently holds are not due to end while Fiona is MRC Executive Chair. Unless there is a major change in circumstances, Fiona will not apply for any more MRC, or wider UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), grants during her tenure as MRC Executive Chair. Fiona will absent herself from all MRC and any UKRI discussions and meetings that relate to funding or funding proposals involving KCL.
- She will not be able to have access to papers and minutes relevant to these items.
- All prospective decisions specifically concerning KCL which would normally involve the Executive Chair, will be referred in the first instance and at the earliest opportunity to the Senior Independent Member on the MRC Council, who will decide in consultation with MRC Management Board members, as appropriate; or, if necessary, with the UKRI CEO.
- Where discussions/decisions concern the university sector or scientific strategy broadly, Fiona will discuss with the Senior Independent Member on the MRC Council the extent to which the KCL conflict is material and how closely she should be involved, on a case-by-case basis.
- With respect to her roles with the Academy of Medical Sciences, the Francis Crick Institute, and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, if any conflicts arise (on either side), these will be managed, for example by Fiona declaring her interest and not taking part in discussions, including possibly by leaving the room.
- With respect to her marriage to Sir Jim Smith, all of Fiona's formal discussions with Wellcome will be with the Director, and not with Jim.
- Minutes of meetings will clearly record where Fiona had a potential conflict and the action taken.

18 July 2018