

# sacn

## Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition

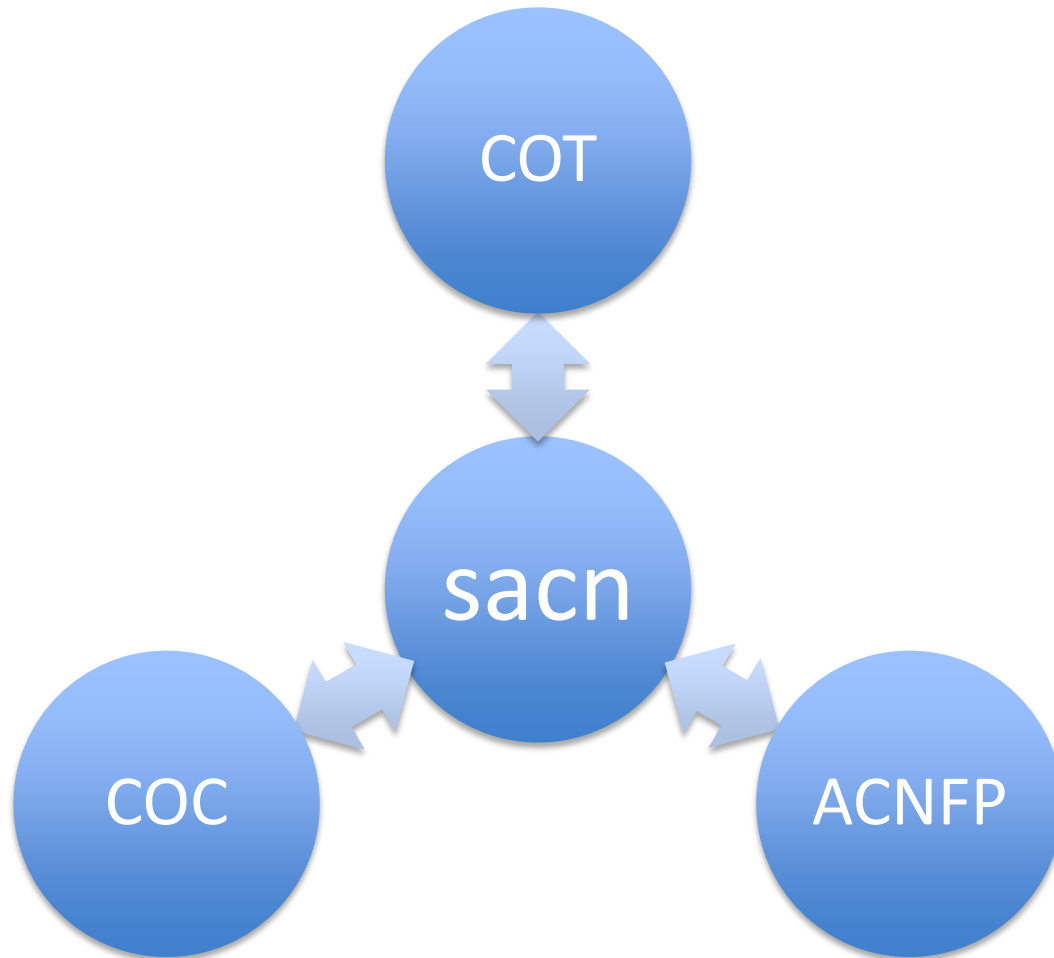
- UK-wide Advisory Committee
- Advises UK Departments of Health (& other Government Departments)
- Independent scientific experts, 2 lay members

# Remit

- Assess risks and benefits of nutrients or dietary patterns or food components and to make dietary recommendations for the UK.
- Identifies and quantifies benefits / risks of implementing recommendations.
- Does not advise on how recommendations are taken forward for policy

**– ie risk assessment not risk management**

# Relationship with other committees: in response to need



# Reasons for items appearing on the agenda



Scoping exercise



Format of evaluation?

Risk assessment or position statement

Report; includes recommendations

Call for evidence



Public consultation



# Case study 1: mandatory fortification of flour with folic acid

- Background (protection against NTDs with FA, USA legislate; NTD incidence falls))
- Process (next slide: included public consultation)
- Recommendations (mandatory fortification, controls of voluntary fortification)
- Government response – none (economic costs?)

Challenges: controversial (adverse effects of high FA); emotive (NTD as outcome); safe upper limit for folate may be exceeded; existing fortification of some foods;

1991: clinical trials show folic acid reduces recurrence of NTDs



1992: DH recommends women planning a pregnancy take FA supplements



1992+ voluntary fortification of breakfast cereals introduced



1998: USA & Canada introduce mandatory fortification



2002: COMA (SACN) agree not to recommend mandatory fortification



2004: USA report effects on NTDs



2004: health ministers ask SACN to reconsider recommendations



2006: SACN undertakes further review



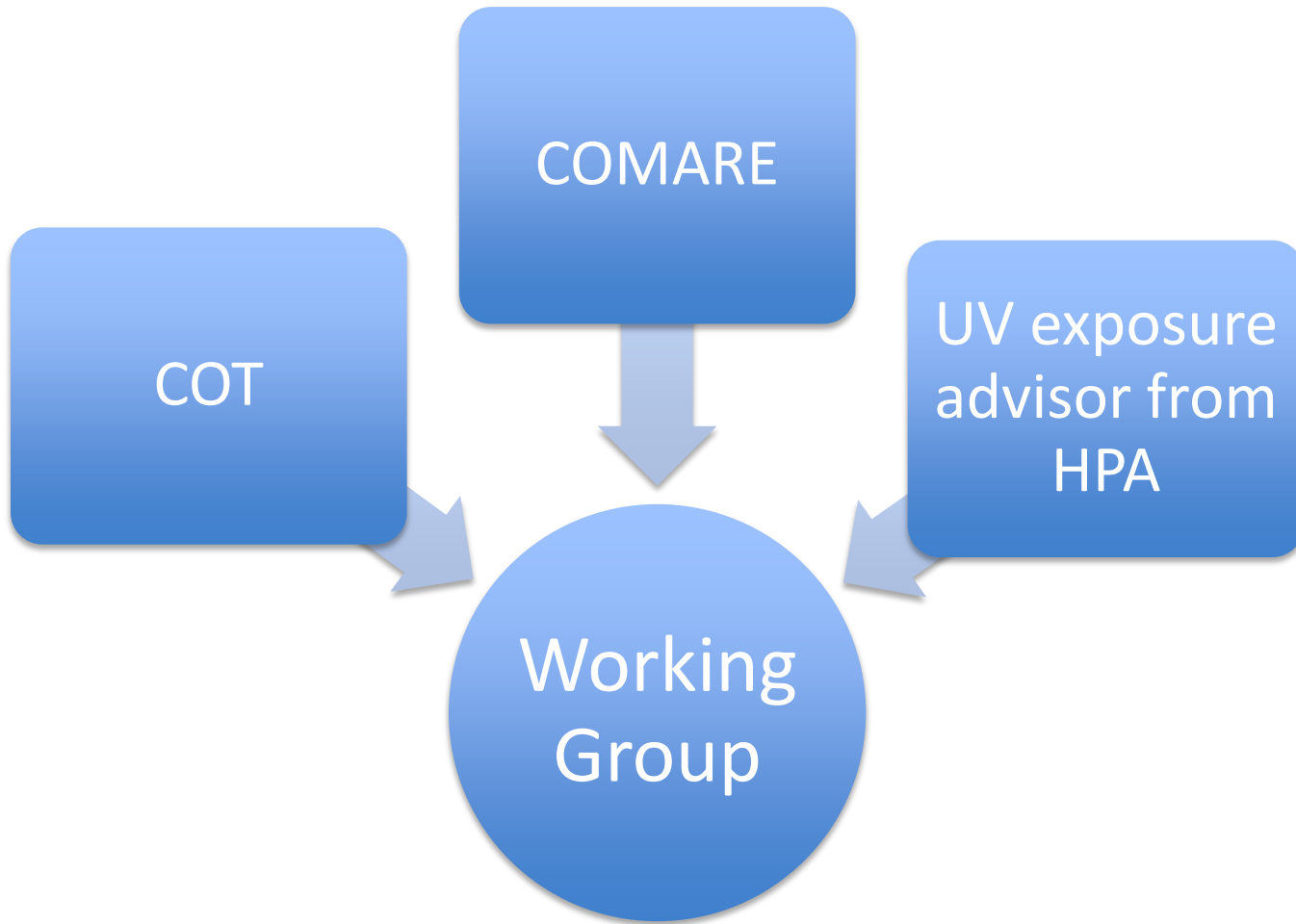
2006: SACN recommends mandatory fortification

# Case study 2: vitamin D review

- Background: DRVs limited to infants & elderly; supplement advice to pregnant/lactating women, infants. Evidence for low status in UK popn. Solar exposure essential. Full risk assessment needed.
- Process so far: Vit D working group in place. Call for evidence. Review underway.

Challenges: intense lobbying; rickets, infant deaths, emotive; relatively long time-frame; complexity of subject; incomplete evidence-base; toxicity of vitamin D at high doses





# Case study 3: repeal of flour regulations

- Background
- Process
- Recommendations to Defra