



British Thoracic Society

17 Doughty Street, London WC1N 2PL
T: +44 (0) 20 7831 8778 F: +44 (0) 20 7831 8766
bts@brit-thoracic.org.uk
www.brit-thoracic.org.uk
Registered as a charity in England and Wales No. 285174
Scottish Charity No. SC041209
Company Registration No. 1645201

ENDORSEMENTS POLICY JANUARY 2017

This document covers requests from external organisations for Society endorsement, and/or support of activities and publications; and response to external (government) policy statements and publications

BACKGROUND

The British Thoracic Society is often asked to approve, or endorse, activities and publications of external organisations. This statement aims to summarise the Society's policy in this area for reference by BTS members and external bodies, in order to minimise confusion and assist with efficient and effective response to such requests. The policy is kept under regular review.

WHAT KINDS OF REQUESTS DOES THE SOCIETY RECEIVE?

1. Guidelines

For several years, the Society has been responsible for the publication of **Guidelines** to support good practice in the treatment of lung disease, and there exists a detailed framework in which this work takes place. The BTS Guideline Production Manual outlines the procedure for BTS involvement in Guidelines produced by external organisations and is available on the BTS website at: www.brit-thoracic.org.uk/guidelines.aspx.

The Society may be invited to nominate a BTS representative or representatives to act as members of another organisation's Guideline group. The BTS Standards of Care Committee will approve an individual as a BTS representative on a Guideline group provided that:

- the Guideline topic and outline is deemed appropriate;
- the Guideline methodology and production process is in line with that used by the Society;
- the nominated representative agrees to provide a brief written report to each meeting of the Standards of Care Committee.
- the final draft guideline is presented to the SOCC (with the BTS representative in attendance) for approval.

2. In the case of requests for formal endorsement of another institution's Guideline, the Society would expect to nominate at least one representative member of the Guideline group, and the draft Guideline would be submitted for comment and approval by the BTS Standards of Care Committee in the normal way, before endorsement is confirmed (see above). The Society's Deputy Chief Executive is the main point of contact for requests relating to Guidelines and the Society's Standards of Care Committee is the lead Committee.

3. Educational activities and BTS Winter & Summer Meetings

The Society also organises **short courses** for CME and two major **Meetings** each year. Responsibility for these activities lies with two Standing Committees – the Science & Research Committee (*Winter Meeting*) and the Education and Training Committee (*Summer Meeting*). The Society is sometimes asked if it will include a sponsored session within its Meetings programmes, in the same way as is seen at meetings of the American Thoracic Society or the European Respiratory Society. See also paragraphs 17 and 18, below.

In addition, external organisations or BTS members who have developed **short courses** or e-learning packages ask for the Society's 'seal of approval' on such activities. These will have been planned, but not discussed prior to launch with the relevant BTS Committee. The Society is not able to offer such endorsement in these cases, but will discuss with organisers options such as publicising courses on the BTS website, sometimes in return for reciprocal arrangements relating to course fees for BTS members. It not possible to advertise any courses run by commercial companies. The initial email contact should be with bts@brit-thoracic.org.uk about such matters

4. **Lung Charities and other professional bodies** occasionally seek the views of the Society on a range of issues (for example, smoking cessation, the results of national audits on service provision for people with a particular disease, re-organisation of local services and so on).
5. The **National Institute for Health & Care Excellence**, and other **Government and Department of Health** initiatives and committees seek the views of the Society on a range of issues. While this does not constitute a request for an endorsement, the principle (of providing a considered response which is congruent with BTS general policy) remains important and can be achieved following the undernoted principles and operational principles.

6. The BTS website

The existence of a dynamic BTS website has meant an increase in requests from commercial and non-commercial organisations for links to be made to (and from) the site. The present policy is that, while there is little to be done to prevent external sites referring to the BTS site, the Society's website will only contain references to external sites if they are:-

- non-commercial
- designed to be of assistance to people with lung disease and their families
- *and* there is a disclaimer when the link takes visitors out of the BTS site that the Society is not responsible for, and does not endorse the content of, the linked site.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Requests from non-commercial organisations

7. The Society's response will depend on what the activity or publication is; whether there is time to respond effectively according to the standards set out below; and whether the activity or publication will have a national coverage. However, the Society will not normally endorse or give permission for its logo or a supportive statement to be used on any activity

or publication, teaching pack or audio-visual presentation if this is requested after the work has begun.

8. The Society will not normally comment on activities and/or publications that have a local, rather than national focus.
9. If the Society is being asked to endorse a publication or position statement, or provide a supportive statement, the request should be channelled to the Chair of the Board of Trustees via the Chief Executive. The Chair will either make a reply directly; take advice of Honorary Officers and Chief Executive; suggest which member/Committee should be asked to deal with it; or ask that it be referred for discussion to the BTS Board of Trustees. In any event, the Board of Trustees (the Society's Trustees) will receive a report at each meeting on what has been approved in the Society's name.
10. Where the Society is asked by a member to support or endorse a training course being established locally, it will not normally do so (see paragraph 3, above).
11. Where collaborative efforts exist (for example, the joint BTS/ARTP certificate and training courses), these should be subject to annual review by the lead Committee, and a formal recommendation made to the Board of Trustees to continue these activities.
12. Requests for supportive statements in relation to campaigns and policy work by lung charities and others, plus requests from NICE and other government departments will be dealt with as in paragraphs 4, 5 and 9, above.
13. The policy relating to the BTS website remains as stated in para. 6
14. The Society recognises that its response to approaches from non-commercial organisations needs to be flexible, and will not always fit easily into the response framework outlined above, but it hopes that the general policy as outlined here will be of assistance. Requests of this nature should be addressed in the first instance to the Society's Chief Executive.

Requests from commercial organisations

15. The Society will NOT endorse or give permission for its logo or a supportive statement to be used on any activity or publication, teaching pack or audio-visual presentation if this is requested after the work has begun.
16. The Society *may* consider requests for involvement in the production of materials provided these are made before work is begun. The channel for these requests will be via the Chief Executive to the appropriate The Board of Trustees will require to have sight of any proposals that are approved in principle by its Standing Committees – as it meets six times each year, it should be possible to provide a fairly timely response to most requests of this nature.
17. The Society will not approve any requests for the inclusion of any sponsored symposia or related activity in its Winter or Summer Meeting programmes. BTS remains grateful to those companies which exhibit at these Meetings but feels the inclusion of sponsored

symposia in Meetings is not appropriate. Sponsorship for the Society's short courses should normally NOT be from sole sponsors.

18. The Society is aware that some companies organise pre-meetings before the Summer and Winter Meetings, but participation by BTS will be limited to oversight of the proposed programme to advise if any clashes exist with the main event, and companies must not advertise or infer that the event has been planned with the assistance of the Society. Mailing lists will not be supplied to companies to invite delegates to attend such meetings.
19. Sole sponsorship of events (BTS short courses in particular) is not permitted. The Society prefers that such courses are not sponsored, but more than one company should be present in the event that sponsorship is deemed necessary. The advice of the Society's Chief Executive and Chair of the relevant Committee should be sought at the planning stage of such events.

OTHER MATTERS

20 Mailing Lists

The Society does not sell or otherwise make available its mailing lists to external enquirers. Similarly, it is not possible to include leaflets with any BTS mailings.

21 Surveys

Requests are sometimes received by research groups, based in Universities, or individuals enquirers for access to BTS members for surveys and so on. The application procedure for surveys is overseen by the Society's Quality Improvement Committee and details are available from the BTS Deputy Chief Executive. This process also covers requests from BTS members and Specialist Advisory Groups.

22 Approved Commercial Exhibitors

The Society operates a system whereby commercial companies who wish to exhibit at Meetings must first ask to be placed on the Approved Exhibitors list. This is done by sending details of the company and its products to the Honorary Secretary c/o the Society's headquarters address. Once the details have been read and a judgment made about their suitability for exhibit, the company is placed on the list. This system will be reviewed in 2017-18. Subsequently, invitations to exhibit at each Meeting are sent to all approved exhibitors at the same time and places are allocated on a strictly first-come/first served basis. Queries about this process should be addressed to the Chief Executive in the first instance. Exhibiting does NOT imply BTS endorsement for any of the activities being promoted.

23 Charity Exhibitors at Meetings

There is currently a list of around 15 voluntary organisations and registered charities who have expressed a wish to exhibit at the Society's Meetings. Access to these Meetings is also granted on a first-come/first served basis, and numbers attending each Meeting depends on the space available. Organisations are not charged an exhibition fee, although they are asked to make a small payment towards the cost of refreshments and to observe the Society's requirements in relation to use of the space and health and safety and related regulations. Exhibiting does NOT imply BTS endorsement for any of the activities being promoted.

24 Inserts into conference bags

The BTS Winter Meeting attracts enough delegates to permit the provision of a conference bag. Because of our concern for the environment, we no longer offer a conference bag that is full of paper and card leaflets and other materials from industry. We do, however, offer a “Virtual conference bag” on each Meeting website. Commercial companies are charged £1 per delegate per document and charities are charged 10p per delegate for each separate insert.

January 2017

Reviewed by Chief Executive.