

ENDORSEMENTS POLICY 2024

The British Thoracic Society (BTS) is often asked to approve or endorse activities and/or publications of external organisations or individuals. This statement aims to summarise our policy in this area to minimise confusion and assist with efficient and effective responses to such requests. The policy is kept under regular review and is congruent with related policies, such as the Society's document about working with Bio-medical industry.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 1. Endorsement usually involves BTS involvement from the outset:** the Society will not normally endorse any activities, statements, publication, links to, or content of, websites and social media sites, or any other materials produced by third parties. We will only offer endorsement if we have been involved/represented in the work involved from the beginning stages and we agree with the final output.
- 2. A national focus only:** the Society will not usually comment on activities and/or publications that have a local, rather than national focus. In this context, national can mean UK, England, Scotland, Wales and/or Northern Ireland. European/international requests would usually be addressed through the Taskforce for lung Health of which BTS is a member.
- 3. Advertising rather than endorsement:** The Society will not support or endorse any training courses or e-learning activities that are provided by a BTS member or any other external non-profit provider. We will publicise the events on the BTS website (in the "other respiratory courses" section), Respiratory Futures website or across our social media ONLY if there is no commercial involvement in the content of the course(s) concerned. Advertisement does not imply endorsement and there is a disclaimer to this effect on the relevant part of our websites. We will not publicise courses run for profit by commercial companies.
- 4. Collaborations:** where collaborative efforts exist these should be subject to annual review by the lead Committee, and a formal recommendation made annually to the BTS Board of Trustees to continue these activities. BTS will not usually enter into activities with sole partners, and never with sole partners from industry.
- 5. Requests for supportive statements** in relation to campaigns and policy work by lung charities and others, including NICE, UK government departments and other non-profit groups should be referred to the Society's Chief Executive. These will be discussed as appropriate with senior clinical colleagues at Board level. BTS will not normally provide such input into statements from industry.
- 6. Branding and permissions:** when the Society does give permission for our logo to be used on any activity or publications and related materials the end user must agree to abide to design /brand guidance provided by us, and to destroy the logo and related materials after use.

7. **Flexibility:** the Society recognises that its response to approaches from non-commercial organisations should 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.

CONFERENCES AND SHORT COURSES

8. **Sponsored symposia:** the Society will not approve any requests for the inclusion of any type of sponsored symposia or related activity in our Winter or Summer Meeting programmes, short courses or e-learning materials. BTS remains grateful to those companies which exhibit at these Meetings but feels the inclusion of sponsored symposia in Meetings is not appropriate.
9. **Speakers from industry:** it is of course important to know what is happening in the broader research and clinical context. If the Society invites a speaker who is employed by a bio-medical company to speak at a conference, their allegiances will be captured and declared as they are for all speakers at all of our events.
10. **Implied support from BTS:** if an organisation states, knowingly or unknowingly, and/or infers that an activity which takes place during the Society's annual conferences (for example, in a nearby venue on an evening before or during a conference) we will ask that a public announcement and apology is made to the effect that the event is not connected with the BTS programme. We will also ask that a message is sent to all participants apologising for the error and/or misleading publicity.
11. **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 should be sought at the planning stage of such events.
12. **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 Chief Executive. The products must be fully licensed for use in the UK and be of clear benefit to people who have respiratory conditions. Exhibiting does NOT imply BTS endorsement for any of the activities being promoted.
13. **Charity Exhibitors at Meetings:** access to these Meetings is 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.

- 14. Inserts into conference bags:** we no longer accept paper or card inserts into conference bags. We have a “virtual conference bag” and charge for displaying material on the BTS Events App. Including materials or logos does NOT imply BTS endorsement for any of the activities being promoted.

OTHER RELATED MATTERS

While not, strictly speaking, totally directly related to endorsements, the Society receives a number of other requests for assistance which are dealt with as follows:-

- 15. Surveys:** Requests are sometimes received by research groups, based in Universities; BTS Advisory Groups, or individual enquirers for access to BTS members for sending out surveys or links to questionnaires. The application procedure for surveys to be offered via the BTS system is overseen by the Society’s Quality Improvement Committee and details are available from the Society’s Head of Clinical Programmes.
- Requests to circulate a link in the BTS e-newsletter to members to surveys conducted by individuals or external organisations are considered by the BTS senior management team on a case by cases basis and need to be:
 - Related to national research, or on behalf of a national respiratory group
 - and/or aligned to BTS strategy
 - and/or in support of national activity (NHSE Long Term Plan, patient safety etc)
- 16. 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: <https://www.brit-thoracic.org.uk/quality-improvement/guidelines/>
- 17.** The Society may be invited to nominate a BTS representative or representatives to act as a member of another organisation’s Guideline group. We may also be asked for formal endorsement of another institution’s Guideline. The Society’s Head of Clinical Programmes is the main point of contact for such requests (the process for this is outlined in the above Guideline Manual) and can be contacted via bts@brit-thoracic.org.uk

Document title: Endorsement Policy	
Version number: 10.4	Author (name, job title): Sally Welham, Chief Executive
Date approved: November 2020	Document status: Approved
Effective date: August 2024	Approved by: SMT
Superseded version: 10.3	Date of next review: May 2025
Staff members permitted to edit this document: Senior Management Team; for approval by BTS Board	