

SPECIALIST TRAINEES' ADVISORY GROUP (STAG) CONSTITUTION 2025-2028

1. REMIT

- To ensure that the work of the Society fully reflects the needs and views of its members who are doctors in training.
- To advise the Society on matters from the perspective of the Specialist Trainee in respect of education and training, workforce issues, quality improvement, research, and professional and organisational standards.
- To ensure that trainee doctor input is included in the Society's work to improve the care of people with respiratory diseases - including treatment, therapy and procedures; appropriate standards of care and resources; and education and research requirements.
- To be the main channel through which the Society can receive the views of Specialist Trainee members and through which the Society can send information to members about the areas mentioned above.
- The STAG will have a pivotal role in communication and linking together a wide range of activities.
- This will require the core membership of the Group, via its Chair, to liaise with the Council of the British Thoracic Society and its relevant Standing Committee(s), and in particular their Chairs, reporting regularly in a structured way. The Society will provide a structure in which this liaison can take place effectively, using headquarters staff to facilitate effective communication.
- The Chair of the Group will sit on BTS Council, ex-officio.

2. MEMBERSHIP

2.1 Membership of the STAG will be structured so that the Society gains advantage from a broad range of members' activities on other main Committees, and to include the geographical perspective, which is considered to be important by Trustees, while ensuring that the size of the group is contained.

2.2 It is proposed that the maximum number of STAG members does not exceed 12 at any time. A system is in place to allow rolling replacement of members, so that not all leave at once.

2.3 The members will include:

- Chair (who will also serve on BTS Council during the three years in office)
- One member from each of the Standing Committees of the Society
- The ST members of the SAC in Respiratory Medicine (one of whom will be on an academic training route)
- One from each of Scotland, Wales and Northern if none of the above meet this criterion

2.4 All members, however selected and in whatever capacity, will normally serve for a maximum of 3 years from the date of taking up membership, which is usually effective from the Society's Annual General Meeting each year. A rolling replacement system will be established. The selection of the Chair will generally be in accordance with the Society's usual arrangements for selection of Chairs and members of Advisory Groups.

2.5 All members of the STAG should be members of the British Thoracic Society.

2.6 Members can apply to join the STAG by volunteering annually in response to a call for volunteers. This is circulated in the early summer each year to all BTS members. The call for volunteers will clearly state the vacancies that are available; the experience and special interests sought (if any) and the arrangements for selection. If there are more volunteers than places available, selection will be undertaken by the Chair of the relevant Committee and Honorary Secretary supported by the Chief Executive, based on the provision by volunteers of a short CV and supporting statement.

2.7 All members are required to conduct themselves in accordance with the Society's policies and general procedures, and in particular in relation to the policy about relationships with the bio-medical and tobacco industries, and the associated Declarations of Interest (DOI) Scheme (see section following). Members are especially asked to note that efforts should be made to return a completed DOI form each year. If a form has not been completed after a reminder has been given, and certainly before the first meeting (including by Teams) of the year, the member concerned will be asked to withdraw.

2.8 Chairs and members of all BTS Committees, Advisory Groups, sub-Committees and groups which produce BTS Guidelines and other publications should not accept any invitations from bio-medical industry to attend Advisory Boards or other meetings at which they are described as, and/or referred to, as representing BTS in any way. Nor should they solicit invitations in that capacity. It is up to individuals to decide whether to accept an invitation to attend such events, but this will be in an individual capacity only and should be declared under the provisions of the Society's Policy on relationships with the bio-medical industry, through the Declaration of Interests Scheme. If an individual feels any conflict has arisen, they should resign from their BTS position, or the activity in question with immediate effect.

3. STANDING ORDERS

3.1 The STAG is required to hold a general meeting for all interested parties at the BTS Winter Meeting and, if there is sufficient business and it is agreed in advance, another meeting at the BTS Summer Meeting. The purpose of these meetings will be to report on

developments in the year and receive feedback about all areas within its remit, and in particular any “hot topics” that require discussion.

3.2 In between times, the Society will support one or two meetings (in person or via Teams) of the STAG each year. If more meetings are needed a case should be made and approval sought from the Honorary Treasurer, via the Chief Executive, both of whom will consult Trustees if necessary.

3.3 BTS head office staff provide a secretariat service for meetings. This will include assistance with agenda planning, distribution of meeting papers, minute taking and meetings and support with follow up correspondence in relation to actions arising from the meeting. Support is also available to help with organising meeting dates; advice about BTS Committees and internal communications; setting up of web discussion and so on. BTS head office can send out emails to all trainees and/or regional contacts on behalf of the STAG. The Chief Executive will attend ex-officio and other staff will usually attend meetings by invitation. There is no requirement for a “STAG Secretary” post.

4. REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 In matters where the Society’s opinion on training issues in particular is required by external organisations, the Honorary Secretary and/or relevant Committee via the Society’s head office staff will seek the views of the STAG and may ask it to reply on the Society’s behalf, or to contribute opinions as part of an overall BTS response. The STAG may also be called upon to provide individual representative(s) on external bodies when a BTS nomination is sought.

4.2 Each BTS Advisory group will be asked to prepare an annual report for the Board and the chair will be invited to attend the annual meeting of SAG chairs and Board members.

4.3 The STAG will be able, via consultation with the Honorary Secretary/Chief Executive about which is the most relevant Committee, to ask that an item or items be discussed by the appropriate BTS Standing Committee. Similarly, the STAG may be invited to prepare a paper and /or make a presentation for a Standing Committee or Council to inform discussions at any time during the year.

5. CODE OF CONDUCT

5.1 The Society values the contribution of those members who serve on its various Committees and Advisory Groups and Working Parties. Without this service, it would not be possible to carry out the great variety of work that is undertaken which contributes to the raising of standards of care of people with respiratory disease. BTS has a justifiably high reputation for the quality of its activities and the advice it gives to external bodies.

5.2 The Society is also proud to have been a pioneer in a number of areas, including its Declarations of Interest scheme. The probity of our actions is underpinned by a number of policies and procedures which are kept under regular (annual) review.

5.3 To ensure effective functioning of the Declarations of Interest process the Chair should proactively manage declarations from SAG members. This will include:

- Having declarations of interest as a standing item on all meeting agendas;
- Formally asking members whether anything has changed since they submitted their last declaration;
- Formally asking members at the start of each meeting whether there are any agenda items which may cause conflict or in which they have an interest;
- Seeking advice when required from the Honorary Secretary or Chief Executive if there are any concerns about new items mentioned under declaration of interest.

5.4 We ask all members of Committees, Advisory Groups and Working Parties to note and abide by the following policy and procedures documents:

- **BTS and the Biomedical Industry Policy for joint working and funding arrangements and associated Declarations of Interest Scheme. This is reviewed annually by BTS Council and Trustees.**
- **BTS Policy on Inclusion, Diversity and Equality**
- **Endorsement Policy**
- **BTS Information Governance Policy**
- **Complaints procedure**
- **Media access and Communications policy**
- **Travel and subsistence policy (reviewed annually by Honorary Treasurer and Chief Executive)**

Chief Executive
July 2025