

**THE ANNUAL DECLARATION OF INTERESTS SCHEME 2025/26
OPERATING PROCEDURES**

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1.1 BTS is a charitable professional organisation, open to public scrutiny. This being the case, all its activities must be free from commercial or personal interests, particularly in relationship to respiratory strategy and Guidelines.

1.2 BTS subscribes to the three crucial public service values which underpin the work of the health service. These are accountability, probity and openness². This Policy should be read in conjunction with “BTS and Biomedical Industries Policy: joint working and funding relationships”.

2. Scope

2.1 This Policy covers the following individuals:

- Chair and Trustees of the Society;
- All employees and associates of the Society;
- Members of the Society who sit on BTS standing Committees, Guideline Committees, Quality Standards Groups, Clinical Statements Groups and Specialist Advisory Groups (SAGs) and other ad-hoc Committees that may be convened by BTS;
- Clinical, patient or other experts who are invited to attend/participate in BTS Committee meetings, irrespective of whether they are members of the Society.

3. Definitions

3.1 The term “Biomedical industry” includes:

- Companies, partnerships or individuals involved in the development, manufacture, promotion, sale or supply of products used in medical practice, including (but not limited to) pharmaceutical products, biomedical equipment and devices.
- Companies, partnerships or individuals involved in the development, manufacture, promotion, sale or supply of products or services which are advertised, promoted or marketed as contributing to the promotion or maintenance of good health.
- Trade associations representing companies involved in the above.

4. Types of Interest and Participation in Meetings

4.1 The following is intended as a guide to the types of interest that should be declared. If a Member has an interest which is not outlined below, but that interest may influence or be perceived to influence their role/advice then this should be declared.

4.2 *Personal Interests*

Those involving a payment to the member personally – for example:

- (i) Consultancies: includes any regular or occasional payment in cash or in kind for consultancy, directorships, or other position with a biomedical company undertaken within the 12 months prior to the declaration being made, or planned but not yet undertaken.
- (ii) A retainer payment from a company to an individual for ongoing work;
- (iii) Fee paid work: includes work commissioned by a healthcare company for which payment is made in cash or kind undertaken within the 12 months prior to the declaration being made, or planned but not yet undertaken.
- (iv) Shareholdings: includes shares or other beneficial interests in a healthcare company that are held by the individual or for which the individual has legal responsibility (child or relative).
- (v) Expenses and hospitality: includes expenses provided by a healthcare industry for travel and accommodation for attendance at scientific and educational meetings which have been undertaken in the 12 months prior to the declaration being made, or planned but not yet undertaken.

4.3 *Non-Personal Interests*

Those involving payment which benefits a department for which a member is responsible, but is not received by the member personally – for example:

- (i) Fellowship: held by the member which is endowed by a biomedical company;
- (ii) Support from a biomedical company by way of:
 - a grant: for running of a unit or department for which the member is responsible;
 - a fellowship or grant: provided to sponsor a post or member of staff in the department for which the member is responsible;
 - sponsorship of a post
 - a commission for research work or advice: provided by staff in the department for which the member is responsible
 - sponsorship of equipment.

4.4 A summary of the description of the types of interest and the implications for the meeting are attached at Appendix 1.

5. Confidentiality

5.1 Members of Guideline Committees and other working group will be expected to maintain confidentiality about work conducted in line with section 6.7 of the Policy on BTS and the Biomedical Industry; joint working and funding arrangements.

6. Annual Completion of the Declaration of Interest Form

6.1 It is a requirement of the Society's Declaration of Interest Policy that all members of BTS Committee and Groups confirm that they have read the BTS Policy document: 'BTS and Biomedical Industries: joint working and funding relationships' and complete an annual Declaration of Interest (DOI) form online. The content of the online form is included at Appendix 2. This policy was first approved at the AGM in December 2000, and has been reviewed and updated annually. It is available on the BTS website [Governance Documents and Policies | British Thoracic Society | Better lung health for all \(brit-thoracic.org.uk\)](https://www.brit-thoracic.org.uk/governance-documents-and-policies).

6.2 Members of Committees and Groups, relevant staff and associates will be asked to declare that they have read and understood the BTS policy document on working with the Biomedical industry and that they wish their declared interests to be recorded and published on the BTS website. They will also be asked to confirm that they are aware that failure to declare relevant interest(s) may result in them being required to stand down from the Committee/Group concerned. Those completing the online declaration will also be asked to confirm that they have no current involvement in the tobacco industry, or any involvement over the past 10 years.

6.3 The Honorary Secretary, assisted by senior staff, will review each return before these are posted on the BTS website. Similarly, the Chair of each Committee or Group will be asked to review all returns for that group when they are first published. If there are any concerns, these will be discussed between the Hon. Secretary and the Chair(s) concerned, and contact made with an individual(s) if required to discuss these concerns. If concerns remain, the situation will be referred to the Officers' Group of the Board of Trustees for an opinion.

6.4 Individual returns are available for the current year on the BTS website. The returned information will be held by the Society, and will be available for scrutiny for the duration of the individual's membership of the relevant Committee or Group (or, in the case of a Guideline, Quality Standards or Clinical Statements Group for as long as the Guideline remains current).

6.5 Declarations of Interest (DoI) will be a standing agenda item each meeting of the Committee. Receipt of returns and updates will be minuted and members will be asked at each meeting for any relevant updates to the annual form. The Chair of each Committee must have read all returns before the first meeting of the year takes place. All other members are encouraged to do the same. Until a DoI form has been returned, the member concerned will not be able to speak or vote at the Committee meeting(s).

6.6 If the Chair of a Committee feels that the balance of interests on the Committee has become uneven, this should be brought to the attention of the Honorary Secretary and the Chair of the Board of Trustees, and in such an unlikely situation, an individual may be asked to step down.

6.7 Before an appointment is made to any of the following positions, the individual concerned will be asked to complete a DoI form online if there is not already a return for the year in question, so that there is no ambiguity from the outset about any of their interests and the role they will be selected to perform:-

- Chair of the Board of Trustees
- Honorary Secretary
- Honorary Treasurer
- Chairs of any of the main ("Standing" Committees- i.e. other Trustees, except for President, President-elect and lay Trustee)

- the Chair of a Guideline group, Quality Standard Group, Clinical Statement Group or Steering group for a BTS activity (such as the Registry/MDRTB CAS)

6.8 If an enquiry is received from any source about a potential Conflict of Interest by an Officer, Chair of a Committee or the staff of the Society, the enquirer will be asked to make the request in writing to the Honorary Secretary of BTS who will follow it up with the Chair of the Committee and the individual member concerned. A response will be given within a reasonable period.

6.9 Members of all Committees are asked to complete the online form by **mid-January 2025 at the latest**, earlier if there is a meeting of a Committee on which they serve before that date

6.10 If a form has not been received before the Spring meeting of each Committee or the first meeting, whichever is earlier, the member will be asked to either complete the form on the day, or stand down temporarily until a form is received.

6.11 A member of a Committee or Group can update the content of their annual form at any time by contacting BTS head office to request that the online form is unlocked for editing. The updated form should be submitted and published following scrutiny by the Honorary Secretary.

7. Enquiries and Review

7.1 Queries should be addressed to the Chief Executive in the first instance. sally.welham@brit-thoracic.org.uk

7.2 This Policy will be reviewed annually.

Professor Andres Floto
Honorary Secretary

November 2024

*Date of initial production: 2000
Reviewed and updated annually.*

Date of last revision: November 2024 for implementation in 2024/25