

## NURSE ADVISORY GROUP

### CONSTITUTION 2022 - 2025

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Society's Nurse Advisory Group was first established in 2004. The Constitution for 2022- 2025 is laid out below.

#### 2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

2.1 The Group will:

- Advise the Society on matters which influence the care of patients from the perspective of respiratory nursing.
- Undertake specific tasks including:
  - giving advice to the Society on programme content for the Winter and Summer Meetings;
  - when requested, providing faculty members and advice on content for BTS short courses;
  - providing a source of reviewers for Winter Meeting abstracts in their area of expertise;
  - providing advice about emerging and unmet research needs, especially where the Society might be involved in some way in answering clinically significant questions;
  - assisting if requested in the development of relevant audit tools and the collection of data about respiratory services in a planned way linked to the Society's strategic objectives. This area of work falls under the remit of the Quality Improvement Committee;
  - advising on relevant training issues in sub-specialty areas;
  - Advising on workforce issues when requested by the Workforce and Service Development Committee.
- Provide a pool of expert opinion to which the Society can refer when it receives requests for advice and in response to consultations. These responses are generally prepared by the SAGs, at the request of Head Office/BTS Trustees, and sent to the organisations concerned by BTS head office staff.
- Advise the Society on matters which influence the care of patients from the perspective of the respiratory nurse, (including treatment, therapy and procedures; appropriate standards of care and resources; and education and research requirements).
- Be the main channel through which the Society can receive the views of nurse members and through which the Society can send information to members about the areas mentioned above.
- The Nurse Advisory Group will have a pivotal role in communication and linking together the wide range of activities within differing specialist nursing areas as well as generic issues. Such communications work will be conducted through BTS Head Office.

## Method of working

2.2 The work of the core membership of the Group, via its Chair, will involve liaison with the Council and Board of the British Thoracic Society and its relevant Standing Committee(s), and in particular their Chairs and any nurse members. 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.
- The Group will liaise, usually via its Chair or by a delegated member, with the Association of Respiratory Nurse Specialists and other relevant organisations.
- It is important for the Chair and all members of the SAG to note that the function of all Advisory Groups is to advise the Society. **The SAG should not develop new pieces of work without prior discussion and agreement.**
- SAGs have no role in speaking on behalf of the Society, unless specifically requested to do so by the BTS Board of Trustees.

## 3. MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Membership of the Group is structured so that the Society gains advantage from a broad range of members' expertise, while ensuring that the size of the Group is contained.

3.2 The Group has most recently comprised a Chair (or 2 co-chairs) and the 2 nurse members from the Education and Training Committee, plus the 2 nurse members from the Workforce and Service Development Committee. From 2022, the Group will comprise 6 nurses drawn from the wider pool of nurse members within BTS. Recruitment to the Group will be part of the annual call for SAG and Committee members (with the aim of maintaining the group of 6 members going forward). The Group will have access to the list of nurse members on core committees, with whom they can liaise as needed. A brief summary of each committee activities will be collated and presented at the annual open nurse SAG meeting.

3.3 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 in December each year. A rolling replacement system will be established. The only exception is the Chair – elect (appointed in the third year of the Chair's period of service, to allow handover), who will therefore expect to serve for no longer than 4 years. Replacement will be sought by open advertisement.

## 4. STANDING ORDERS

4.1 The Group is required to hold one open meeting for all interested individuals (members /non-members) either at the BTS Winter Meeting/or online prior to the Winter Meeting and, if necessary, and with prior discussion, at the BTS Summer Meeting also. The purpose of these meetings will be to report on developments in the year and receive feedback about:-

- Required educational activities
- Suggested topic(s) for Winter Meeting and Summer Meeting
- Guideline /care pathway development (via SOCC)

- Workforce issues (via the WSDC)
- Resourcing and standards

4.2 In between times, the Society will support one or two meetings of the Group to be held online. 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 as necessary.

4.3 In addition, and on the advice of the Group, the Society (via Head Office) will also set in place a mechanism by which communications can be established for nurse colleagues including those in specific disciplines - paediatric respiratory nurses, TB Nurses and so on.

4.4 The Group will also be asked to review Winter Meeting abstracts (for spoken and poster sessions) in its area of expertise, and suggest other colleagues whose expertise might be used in specific categories.

4.5 BTS head office staff will provide a secretariat service for meetings. This will include assistance with agenda planning, distribution of meeting papers, minute taking at 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 and /or teleconferences; advice about BTS Committees and internal communications; and so on. The Chief Executive will usually attend meetings, ex-officio.

## 5. REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

5.1 In matters where the Society's opinion 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 Group and may ask it to reply on the Society's behalf, or to contribute opinions as part of an overall BTS response. The Group may also be called upon to provide individual representative(s) on external bodies when a BTS nomination is sought.

5.2 Each BTS Advisory group will be asked to prepare an annual report for the Board. These will be collated by head office and scrutinised in advance by the Honorary Secretary who will decide if any issues need to be pulled out for discussion at the Board or relevant Standing Committee, otherwise the reports will be submitted on the 'information only' section of the Executive Committee agenda.

5.3 The Group 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 Group 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.

5.4 Suggestions about topics for short courses and Winter and Summer Meeting symposia may be made (or requested by relevant Committees) by direct contact between Chairs but in any event will also be prompted at the appropriate time via head office, which provides secretariat functions for Standing Committees.

## 6. CODE OF CONDUCT

6.1 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.

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

6.3 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.

6.34 All members of Committees, Advisory Groups and Working Parties should note and abide by the following policy and procedures documents:-

- **BTS Policy on Biomedical Industries & Commercial Sponsorship and associated Declarations of Interest Scheme.**
- **Endorsement Policy**
- **Media policy**
- **Travel and subsistence policy**

These documents can all be found on the BTS website in the “governance” pages of the section entitled “About BTS” .

Date of production/revision: March 2022  
By: BTS Board

**Date of next review – May 2023**

## PART B

### BTS COMMITTEE CONSTITUTION 2022- 2025

#### TERMS OF SERVICE

1.1 All members, however selected and in whatever capacity, will normally serve for a maximum of 3 years from the date of taking up membership. The term of service is usually effective from the date of the Society's Annual General Meeting each year. The only exception is the Chair – elect. S/he will be appointed in the third year of the Chair's period of service, to allow handover, and will therefore expect to serve for no longer than 4 years, but exceptionally for 5 or 6 years. This will only occur if the Chair-elect is already serving on the Committee at the time of the election (see below).

1.2 Members can join Committees in one of 3 ways:-

- 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 Committee and Honorary Secretary supported by the Chief Executive, based on the provision by volunteers of a short CV and supporting statement.
- When elected to serve on Council, each Council member is asked to select a Standing Committee on which to serve. There is generally no barrier to a Council member joining their Committee of choice, although it may from time to time be necessary to negotiate filling a gap where one exists and the Society has need of additional Council input, and therefore first choice of Committee cannot always be guaranteed.
- By being the nominated representative of one of the bodies mentioned above in the membership list. In this event, the "three year rule" will still apply.

1.3 All members of BTS Committees must be members of the Society unless they have been nominated by an external organisation.

1.4 If a Specialty Trainee sitting on a Committee becomes a Consultant during their period of service, he or she may remain on the Committee for the remainder of their 3 year appointment. However, when their period of office ends they will not be replaced by another Consultant- this will prevent an upward drift in numbers. In the interim another Trainee can be appointed for a three year period at the next annual replacement process so that all Committees have continuous Trainee input.

1.5 If a Committee wishes to involve a member with specific skills, and that person is not therefore likely to be a BTS member; or, if a Committee wishes to vary the membership as outlined above, this MUST be discussed first by the Chair with the BTS Board of Trustees, and agreement of Trustees obtained.

1.6 Every effort is taken to agree dates of meetings one year in advance and notify these to all members as soon as they have been agreed. Dates agreed in advance will only be changed if there are exceptional circumstances, and then at least 8 weeks' notice will normally be given. If a member misses more than 2 meetings in succession, and there are no extenuating circumstances (in relation to sickness absence, for example), then the Society will ask that member to stand down.

1.7 All members are required to conduct themselves in accordance to the Society's policies and general procedures (e.g. for travel expenses), and in particular in relation to the policy about relationships with the bio-medical and tobacco industries, and the associated Declarations of Interest Scheme (DoI) (see below). Members are especially asked to note that efforts should be made to return a completed DoI form before the end of January each year, or prior to the first meeting of the Committee in every calendar year, whichever is earlier. If a form has not been completed after a reminder has been given at that meeting, the member concerned will be asked to withdraw until the information has been provided.

1.8 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.

## **STANDING ORDERS**

### **2.1 Role of the Chair of the Committee**

The Chair of the Committee also serves as a Trustee of the Society during the time s/he is in post. S/he is therefore the main link between the development and execution of the Society's strategic objectives (as summarised in the Strategic Plan) and the detailed work of the Committee.

2.2 The Chair is responsible for the direction, conduct, moving forward and completion of Committee business, both during Committee meetings and between the meetings. In this task s/he is supported by the Society's staff (who provide a full secretariat service) and other members. A Deputy Chair post is not required and will not be approved. BTS Committees cannot have a Deputy Chair, Honorary Secretary or other nominal post).

2.3 The Chair will approve the Committee agenda and draft minutes, which are prepared by BTS staff. S/he will also prepare and/or commission papers from others and will chair the formal meetings of the Committee and any ad-hoc meetings and teleconferences.

2.4 While BTS staff can draft follow up correspondence and deal with queries arising from the work of the Committee on an operational level from day to day, it is anticipated that the Chair will provide advice on content and professional issues involved and, in particular, deal

with peers and external organisations in relation to all areas where clinical leadership is required.

2.5 The Chair has an important role in ensuring that Declaration of Interest forms from all Committee members are scrutinised and any issue of concern discussed with the individual concerned and/or the Honorary Secretary. S/he must also ensure that at the beginning of each meeting members are asked to declare any additional recently-acquired interests, and is expected to exercise judgement in the conduct of Committee business in the event of any potential conflicts of interest.

2.6 Succession planning for the Chair of the Committee will take place as follows. In the spring of the year when the Chair's 3 year term in office is due to end, the Society will advertise that a vacancy for the Chair of that Committee will be coming up. A job description will be available. Members of the Committee plus any other member of the Society will be invited to apply. All applicants will be required to send a short CV and a statement outlining why they are interested in the position and what they feel they can bring to the post. Applicants will be shortlisted (if necessary) and interviewed by two of the five Officers (one of which will usually be the Honorary Secretary), supported by the Chief Executive. The panel's decision will be shared with the Officers' Group for ratification and made known to the successful candidate so that the Chair-elect can spend the remainder of the year before taking up post shadowing the incumbent and receiving information and training about being a Trustee of the Society. The appointment will also be reported to the next scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees.

2.7 Before a Chair is appointed, s/he will be asked to submit an updated Declaration of Interest form, if this is not already available. This will be submitted to the Chair of the Board of Trustees and Honorary Secretary for approval before the appointment is confirmed.

#### 2.8 **Frequency and conduct of meetings of the Committee**

The Committee will normally meet no more than four times a year, in a hybrid format, at the Society's headquarters building in London and via Teams. Members are able to attend either in person or virtually and can claim travel expenses when attending in person.

2.9 Trustees recognise that it may be necessary from time to time to plan an additional meeting in any year when anticipated business demands this. This would not normally be a problem, except that short notice may result in poor attendance, and it is important to give at least 8 weeks' notice. For urgent/timing dependent issues that might arise which do not justify a full agenda, the Society's constitution allows business to be conducted by teleconference. This can be organised at no cost to Committee members or their employers. This paragraph does not contradict paragraph 1.6 above).

2.10 Travel expenses for attendance at Committee meetings in London will be reimbursed in line with BTS expenses policy.

2.11 The Committee secretary (BTS staff member) will draft an agenda and discuss with the Chair no later than 3 weeks before the date of the meeting. The agenda and papers will be circulated to all members no later than 7 days (and preferably) 10 days before the meeting takes place. It is not good practice, and will not normally be possible, to table papers at



meetings, especially those that contain detailed information except at the discretion of the Chair, and taking into account circumstances involved. Authors of papers are therefore asked to submit in time according to the date given by the secretariat.

2.12 A draft minute, including named action points, will normally be produced within 7-10 days of the meeting to be agreed by the Chair and then sent to members as an aide-memoire for those who may have been asked to carry out actions, or for the information of those who were not able to attend.

2.13 The nature of the work of this Committee requires that individual members may be called upon to review documentation and provide comments in advance of Committee meetings or in between meetings. Guidance on the work required is provided and the workload shared across the Committee as equitably as possible.

#### 2.14 **Sub-Committees and ad-hoc groups**

Because the Society has a comprehensive network of Specialist Advisory Groups which act as expert advisors in specific disease/therapy areas, it is not generally permitted for Standing Committees to establish any sub-Committees and/or working parties and ad-hoc groupings. Any proposals that this ruling is relaxed must be discussed and agreed by the Board in advance.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

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



- BTS Policy on Biomedical **Industries & Commercial Sponsorship and associated Declarations of Interest Scheme**. This is reviewed annually by BTS Council and Trustees.
- **Endorsement Policy**
- **Complaints procedure**
- **Media policy**
- **Travel and subsistence policy** (reviewed annually by Honorary Treasurer and Chief Executive)

Chief Executive  
May 2022

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