

BSACI Standards of Care Committee Policy on conflicts of interest

SOCC is expected to achieve and maintain high standards of probity in the way it conducts business. These standards include impartiality, objectivity and integrity. Effective management of conflicts of interest (COI) is integral to the guidance that SOCC publishes, because without it professionals and the public will lose confidence in our work.

Whilst academic COI are inevitable in an expert committee, there should, as far as is possible, be no financial COI, particularly with respect to the committee chairperson. Each member of SOCC should sign a declaration of COI when they join the committee and annually thereafter. Where a further COI arises it should be declared immediately. All declarations of COI will be published online on the open access section of the BSACI website shortly.

A financial COI should preclude any SOCC member from participating in any activity of the committee where that COI is relevant. The chairperson should therefore exclude a committee member from SOCC activity participation if he or she receives any financial benefits or has a major research interest that may be perceived as directly relevant to the documents considered on in development. Only in exceptional circumstances and at the chairperson's discretion will a committee member with a relevant financial COI be included on a guideline writing group. Where an excluded committee member wishes to log an appeal they should do so in writing to the BSACI trustees.

Guideline writing groups can and will comprise of individuals who are not SOCC members; most writing group (WG) members are likely to be BSACI members. All WG members should sign a declaration of COI, and where there is similar financial COI will be precluded from further participation in the relevant guideline development. The responsibility of COI scrutiny and inclusion or exclusion of suitable WG members will be the responsibility of the selected WG lead.

The chairperson of SOCC should be free of any relevant financial COI i.e. no payment received from a commercial organisation that might potentially profit or lose from recommendations made in a guideline currently or in the past 3 years. Further, there are certain interests that preclude a society member from eligibility for the position of the chair of SOCC. These are:

1. Holds a position (even part-time) in or receives payment from a commercial organisation that could be perceived to be specifically compromise the work of SOCC.
2. Hold a senior leadership position in an organisation with overlapping interests with the BSACI.

Approved at October 2021 Council