

Standards of Care Committee Terms of Reference

Our mission:

The British Society for Allergy & Clinical Immunology (BSACI) is the national, professional and academic society which represents the specialty of allergy at all levels. Its aim is to improve the management of allergies and related diseases of the immune system in the United Kingdom, through education, training and research.

Our Values

Trusted

As professionals and practitioners - We demonstrate integrity and independence in our work

As experts - We are qualified to provide expert opinions and we make decisions based on scientific evidence for the benefit of our patients.

As colleagues - We offer a safe, supportive environment for members to share challenges and learn from each other

Connected

We provide an interface between professions, disciplines and special interest groups in the field of allergy and clinical immunology.

We are an inclusive, responsive society for our members

We ensure that our work is informed by current research and new thinking in our field

We connect with others to increase our impact and influence to bring about change

Forward Thinking

We provide leadership and advocate for change to improve patient care at national, regional and local levels for our specialty

We inspire, develop and implement best practice in our fields of work

We provide specialist education and learning opportunities to support our members' professional development

We drive improvements in clinical management through education, training and research and by collaboration with patient groups, policy makers and other stakeholders.

Objective/Purpose

The British Society for Allergy and Clinical Immunology Standards of Care Committee (SOCC) exists to improve allergy care for patients with allergic diseases. It supports BSACI members who provide that care by:

- developing management guidelines according to a NICE-accredited process
- leading on national audits to demonstrate improved clinical standards
- supporting and overseeing the processes for production of all information for patients and professionals produced by BSACI to ensure consistency and conformity to the highest clinical standards

The committee's main roles and responsibilities are to:

- carry out the strategic aims of the society by developing and publishing NICE accredited guidelines for the management of patients with allergic disease.
- ensure all guideline development conforms to the highest possible standards, especially those of examination and review of the published evidence and consider and implement the best available clinical evidence available from specialists, general practitioners and paediatricians, patients and BSACI members as well as representatives from relevant external organisations.
- ensure that the guideline writing process adheres to the criteria set out by NICE to ensure continuing accreditation.
- ensure that the views of patients and their representatives are actively sought, considered and included at all stages of guideline writing
- ensure that the guidelines are applicable to the society in which we live and are representative of the population. Reference should be made to different groups including, but not restricted to age: paediatric and adult population, gender and ethnic origin
- submit guidelines to the journal *Clinical & Experimental Allergy* for publishing and promote guidelines to all relevant stakeholders.
- update or undertake revision on currently published guidelines to ensure that new research/discoveries and findings are up to date. Updates may be triggered by substantial new

management (drug) developments and/or other new guidelines with specific recommendations that challenge previous BSACI recommendations or at the request of council.

- develop national allergy audits using quality standards in SOCC guidelines in order to demonstrate improvement in clinical outcomes.
- support the development of and have oversight of the drafting, production of all information for patients and professionals produced by BSACI to ensure the highest clinical standards are adhered to and are consistent with all other BSACI documentation.

SOCC members will meet 4-5 times a year to put these objectives into practice. The BSACI supports the work of SOCC by means of expense payments as well as through research assistance and secretarial and organisational support provided by the BSACI Chief Scientific Officer.

The core SOCC membership should consist of:

- The Chair
- Chief Scientific Officer (CSO)
- Two primary care representatives
- One elected council member
- One national Audit Lead
- Two adult allergy/immunology consultant members
- Two paediatric allergy consultant members
- Adult Allergy CNS or Nurse consultant
- Paediatric Allergy CNS or Nurse consultant
- BSACI Trainee Representative
- Adult Allergy Dietician
- Paediatric Allergy Dietician

In order that SOCC is adequately represented at Council meetings, it is recommended that in addition to the Chair, one other member of SOCC is a standing Council member (the Chair being an ex-officio Council member). Adult and paediatric trainees may be represented on SOCC by an elected trainee.

Quoracy is attained when six SOCC members including the Chair and CSO are present. In addition to the core SOCC membership, guideline Writing Group Leads (WGL) may attend the meetings. The BSACI President is an ex-officio member of SOCC and may also attend meetings.

Appointment of Chair

The Chair will be appointed for a term of 3 years. Re-appointment will be possible for a further 3 years using the process details below. The Chair will be an ex-officio member of the BSACI council. The person appointed will have a high level of allergy expertise and possess excellent leadership skills. The process of appointing a new Chair will begin with an email to the membership inviting 'Expressions of Interest'. Applicants will be required to send in a CV and letter detailing their experience/expertise in relation to the position to the BSACI Trustees as well as a completed 'Declarations of Interest' form. If there is only one applicant, and the President and outgoing SOCC Chair agree, then that applicant will be appointed to SOCC chair. If more than one application is received the trustees will invite applicants to attend an interview which will be conducted by the President, current chair, a Trustee and the BSACI chief scientific officer. If time allows, the Chair-elect will sit on SOCC and shadow the current chair for 1-2 meetings before taking over.

Appointment process of core members

Once a position becomes available on SOCC or a gap in specific expertise / specialty is identified, an 'Expressions of Interest' email will be sent to the membership by the office inviting volunteers to apply by detailing the experience required in relation to the position. Application is by CV together with a covering letter stating relevant experience, expertise/specialist interest in relation to the vacant position. The Chair and CSO will appoint based on the applications received, and if there are more applicants than positions the Chair and CSO will hold interviews of prospective candidates and appoint the most suitable candidate. Should the Chair and CSO not agree on a candidate then a further interview may be required which will include a BSACI Trustee

Appointing a Guideline Writing Group Lead

Once a new guideline topic has been agreed [see BSACI Guideline Manual for the process of this] the Chief Scientific Officer (CSO) will send out an email to members inviting applicants for the 'Writing Group Lead' (WGL) role, together with details of the new guideline topic and the scope of the guideline as well as expertise required. The application process will then follow that of the core SOCC member but would involve the Chair, two SOCC members and the Chief Scientific Officer in the appointment process. As with all appointments a DOI form must be completed before a formal appointment is offered. The term of office will then follow that of a core SOCC member. However, the term of office may run over the standard three-year term, if the guideline has not been completed. When the guideline has been published the WGL will be required to step down. WGLs can be appointed again for a second consecutive term if their expertise is required in another capacity and the position cannot be

filled by another member. If this is the case, they will be expected to reapply once a call for writing group members goes out and the reason for any re-appointment recorded in the SOCC minutes.

Appointing members of the Guideline Writing Group

The WGL will be responsible for assembling a writing group [full details of the composition of this can be found in the BSACI Guidelines Manual]. The group must involve lay representatives from the outset. The group should include diversity in its membership in terms of different professions and disciplines as well as, where possible, representation from different geographical areas in order to provide a wide range of practice. Each writing group must include at least one core member of SOCC to ensure consistency and conformity of the guideline development process. Other members of SOCC can send in their 'Expressions of Interest' to join the group (if they so wish) if they feel they have the expertise required to join the writing group. The final decision of who is appointed to the writing group rests with the 'Writing Group Lead' and the Chair. Should the Chair and WGL not agree on a candidate, a trustee or another member of SOCC will be invited to the decision making process.

The CSO on behalf of the 'WGL' invite prospective members of the writing group on the proposed guideline. Prospective members will be required to submit a CV and covering letter outlining their expertise in relation to guideline topic. Applicants will be considered by the 'WGL' and the SOCC Chair in relation to expertise and composition needed to assemble the writing group. Each member of the writing group will be required to complete a DOI form before they are officially appointed. BSACI CSO will support the Writing Group and will keep oversight of key milestones to help ensure completion within defined timelines.

Length of Term of Office

Each core SOCC members' term will be for three years. Given the nature of the committee and the expertise required, members may be appointed for a second consecutive term. The reason for reappointment should be recorded in SOCC minutes. Ideally all members should leave after a maximum of six years' membership. Only in exceptional circumstances should the core SOCC member continue for a further year. If this is the case this should be minuted and reported to council as to the reasons why this is required.

The Chief Scientific Officer (CSO) will keep a record of all those on SOCC and the period of time in which they serve. SOCC can seek advice from non-members of areas where there is no expertise within the society.

Declarations of Interest

All SOCC members are required to complete a 'BSACI Declarations of Interest (DOI) Form' prior to joining. Declarations of Interest are a standing item on the agenda at every meeting. It is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure the DOI forms are up to date and reviewed prior to each SOCC meeting.

Members will not be added to any email distribution list nor be able to attend meetings until the DOI form is received. The DOI Form shall be updated if necessary at each SOCC Meeting by the Chair and by the Lead of the writing group and updated reactively throughout the year should any conflicts of interest arise. The Chair and WGLs must not have any conflict of interest in relation to the guidelines under consideration. Conflicts of interest declarations will be retained and are available on request.

SOCC members should not accept support from industry to attend meetings in a BSACI official capacity where members are referred to by their BSACI title. However, it is the decision of individual members whether to accept industry support in their individual capacity or not. Industry support must be declared, and permission sought from the SOCC Chair in order to be able to contribute to the area where the perceived COI exists.

Confidentiality Agreement

This agreement covers all those who have sight of documents, or are party to discussions, relating to the development of guidelines before public consultation. SOCC members are required to sign this agreement.

Standards of Care Meetings

SOCC meetings are held either in person at the BSACI Headquarters in London or virtually via Zoom. It is envisaged that most meetings in future will be virtual to allow members resident long distances from London to participate more frequently. At least one meeting each year will be in person. It is expected of SOCC core members to participate in the majority of meetings. To facilitate attendance and/or participation the dates of meetings will be decided well in advance (preferably at the last meeting of the year for the next year), the day of the week of the meeting will be rotated and no less than 8 weeks' notice should be given of any change in the meeting date. Members with a poor record of attendance, in the Chair's assessment, may be removed from the Committee.

Members who have to travel some distance to the meetings should book their travel as far in advance as possible to ensure they obtain the cheapest fare. Standard travel expenses will be reimbursed for

those attending the meeting by completing a BSACI Travel Expenses form (which can be found in the members areas of the website www.bsaci.org) and sending their scanned receipts to accounts@bsaci.org

The SOCC is supported by the BSACI Chief Scientific Officer. One of the roles of the CSO is to draft agendas with the Chair which will be sent out no less than 2 weeks before each meeting. Further agendas and papers will be circulated no less than one week before the meeting to ensure members have enough time to read these. Papers received after this time (especially detailed papers) may only be tabled at the discretion of the Chair or as an appendix at the end of the minutes.

The CSO will record and draft minutes at each of the SOCC meetings. Minutes and actions will be drafted and sent out within three weeks of the meeting. SOCC minutes will be reviewed, corrected, approved and signed at each meeting. Minutes will be stored for a minimum of 10 years.

BSACI office staff can help support the work of BSACI committees from an operational level, however it is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure they provide advice and expertise on professional issues and clinical leadership with peers and external organisations when required to do so.

Members will be called upon in between SOCC Meetings to read and submit various documentation as and when necessary and to respond to requests and to make comments and alterations to various documentation, this must be undertaken within the timeframe given.

Chair of committees/groups serve on BSACI Council as the link between the two, executing the society's strategic objectives.

The development of other documentation - Non BSACI NICE Accreditation Documentation (NBNAD):

Part of SOCC remit is to have oversight with regards to the development of non-guideline documentation. This is to ensure BSACI conforms to the highest clinical standards possible and provides consistent information when developing BSACI documentation/information/guidelines etc. Any process should actively support members in developing such material. A proposal to develop non-guideline documentation must first be approved by council via the BSACI Council Proposal Form which can be found [here](#). 'BSACI Council Proposal Form'. Such proposal would normally be supported by a specific

sub-committee, and the chair for the relevant sub-committee should liaise with the chair of SOCC from the outset to ensure collaborative working and final sign off.

These could include the following, however the list is not exhaustive;

- Good Practice Papers
- Position Papers
- Statements
- Actions Plans
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- Patient Information Leaflets (PILs)
- Reports
- Website material (ie Allergy management Section of website)
- Patient Q & As

When submitting documentation for SOCC review members should allow at least 4 weeks from time of submission to enable SOCC enough time to review and feedback comments. Comments will be emailed to the submitter in a table format with actions that are required. The submitter is required to return the table within 4 weeks to the CSO with details of what actions have been undertaken, this will then be reviewed by SOCC. Comments tables will be held at BSACI Head Office. The process by which non-guideline documentation is developed can be found on the BSACI website.

As SOCC sign off of any material from BSACI is required, in the unlikely event that SOCC and the relevant sub-committee cannot agree on a final version of documentation then BSACI will send an EOI out to the membership and the BSACI President together with BSACI Ethics Lead will appoint three members (who are currently practising medicine) to review the information and agree a position for moving forward for council consideration. Council decision will then be final.

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