

## **Society document endorsement policy**

### **Background**

From time to time, the Society is approached with a request to endorse a policy, statement, guideline or other document. These requests typically come from two distinct types of organisation:

- Other professional, scientific or medical organisations, such as learned societies, royal colleges, educational bodies etc
- Commercial organisations

A learned society's name and reputation are valuable assets. The value stems from the confidence that people have in that society, and this is built on the reputation the society has gained through its achievements, its objectivity and its status as a charity. Charity trustees have a duty to make the best use of their charity's assets – in practice this means putting assets to work to the best overall advantage of the charity, whilst safeguarding them against damage or loss of value.

It is thus very important to ensure that the Society does not fall into the traps either of allowing its name to be used inappropriately, nor of holding back the advance of knowledge by withholding support inappropriately.

### **Policy for dealing with requests for endorsement of other organisations' documents**

It is recommended that any request for endorsement be referred to the appropriate committee, usually the Science, Clinical or Nurse Committee. If that committee is in any way uncertain as to whether the request fits with the guidelines below, they may refer it to Council.

Endorsement can only be considered if the following criteria are met:

1. The proposed document will fit within the Society's remit and other policies, strategies and values.
2. The proposed document will meet a need that can be clearly identified and is not currently met.
3. That members and the public would be likely to perceive that the proposed document confers an adequate level of benefit.
4. That the document is not likely to generate complaints or criticisms against the Society or that, if so, this is in a cause that the Society deems worthy of dealing with such criticism or complaint. An example of this might be a document concerned with experimentation on animals.
5. Requests from the commercial industry, the Society must be approached early enough to allow a member designated by the committee to have input to all stages of the development of the guideline or other document. Requests from other professional or scientific bodies may be endorsed post hoc according to the process outlined below.

If these criteria are met, then the committee should proceed according to the following guidelines:

1. A committee member (or another Society member if there is no committee member with a suitable speciality) should be appointed to take the lead. The organisation requesting endorsement will be advised of this and will be told that the Society's name cannot be used until final approval is given.
2. In the case of commercial requests, the designated person must agree to be closely involved in development of the document and must report back to the committee on whether s/he is satisfied with the final outcome, including any reservations about it.
3. In the case of requests from other professional or scientific bodies, the designated person must participate in the development if appropriate, but must at least review the document and report back to the committee on whether s/he is satisfied with the final outcome, including any reservations about it.
4. The final document must then be circulated to the committee, with any commentary, for their approval.
5. Only when this approval is obtained will permission be given to use the Society's name and logo. This will be handled by a staff member. A proof of any document using the Society's name or logo must be submitted to the Professional Affairs Officer for approval before publication.
6. The body producing the document should give written permission for the Society to link to the web document unless there are exceptional circumstances preventing this.
7. A register of such documents will be maintained by the Professional Affairs Officer and will be reviewed from time to time by the relevant committee.