

The Society's Governance: Proposals for a new Senate and to replace the current Boards with new Strategy Boards



**The British
Psychological Society**
Board of Trustees

The Senate

What are we proposing?

The proposal for a Senate body comes from a desire to give members a stronger voice in setting priorities for the Society – both in terms of deciding our external policy objectives and in shaping our own strategic direction and organisational priorities. We are proposing to reconstitute the Representative Council as a new Senate body where all of the member networks, and thus all members, are represented. This new body would have a new remit that includes:

- Engaging in a process to democratically decide the Society's policy priorities in order to make a greater impact and more effectively allocate human and financial resources.
- Creating a forum for members to hear progress against the strategic plan and to advise on future strategic direction in order to hold trustees and SMT to account
- Becoming a mechanism for networks to report back on their own activities and to foster collaboration.

The Senate would meet twice a year. One meeting would focus on the setting of priorities for externally facing policy work, the other would be a forum for monitoring progress against the strategic plan and discussing the strategic direction of the Society.

It is envisaged that the Senate will play a key advisory role as the Society begins work on the next strategic plan in 2019, although final decisions over strategy rest with the Board of Trustees, who are responsible for setting the direction of the organisation.

The Senate would be constituted of the Chairs of every network, including geographical ones, who would be invited to bi-annual meetings as representatives of their network. An Executive Committee of Senate would be chosen from the members of Senate to complete specific tasks related to the remit of Senate that will be outlined below, the Senate Executive Committee will meet in between meetings.

What are we seeking members' opinions on?

This paper proposes a process whereby each network can submit an evidence-based proposal for an externally facing priority for the Society, which would be considered by others members on its merits alongside proposals from other networks. This democratic member-led process would enable the Senior Management Team to effectively allocate the Society's resources in line with members' wishes. We would also welcome feedback on the accountability dimension of the Senate's remit proposed above.

Defining Policy Priorities

At its General Assembly meeting in October 2016 the Representative Council considered various options for a process whereby the Society could decide its external priorities. Members identified a number of principles which they wanted to promote, including:

- collaboration across the Society
- ensuring a four nation perspectives
- proportionality in any voting mechanism
- an appropriate allocation of sufficient resource across proactive and reactive activities to ensure effectiveness
- policies and proposals should be underpinned by an appropriate evidence base,
- that all members were engaged in the process
- an effective short listing process and a process that was not too time intensive

The Representative Council agreed that proposals should be submitted by all networks (including geographical ones), rather than individual members in order to encourage people to join or engage with relevant networks and to collaborate. They agreed that proposals should contain both a narrative description of how the policy priority would be effective and why it should be done now, as well as specific policy objectives or 'resolutions' that could be measured.

Example proposal.

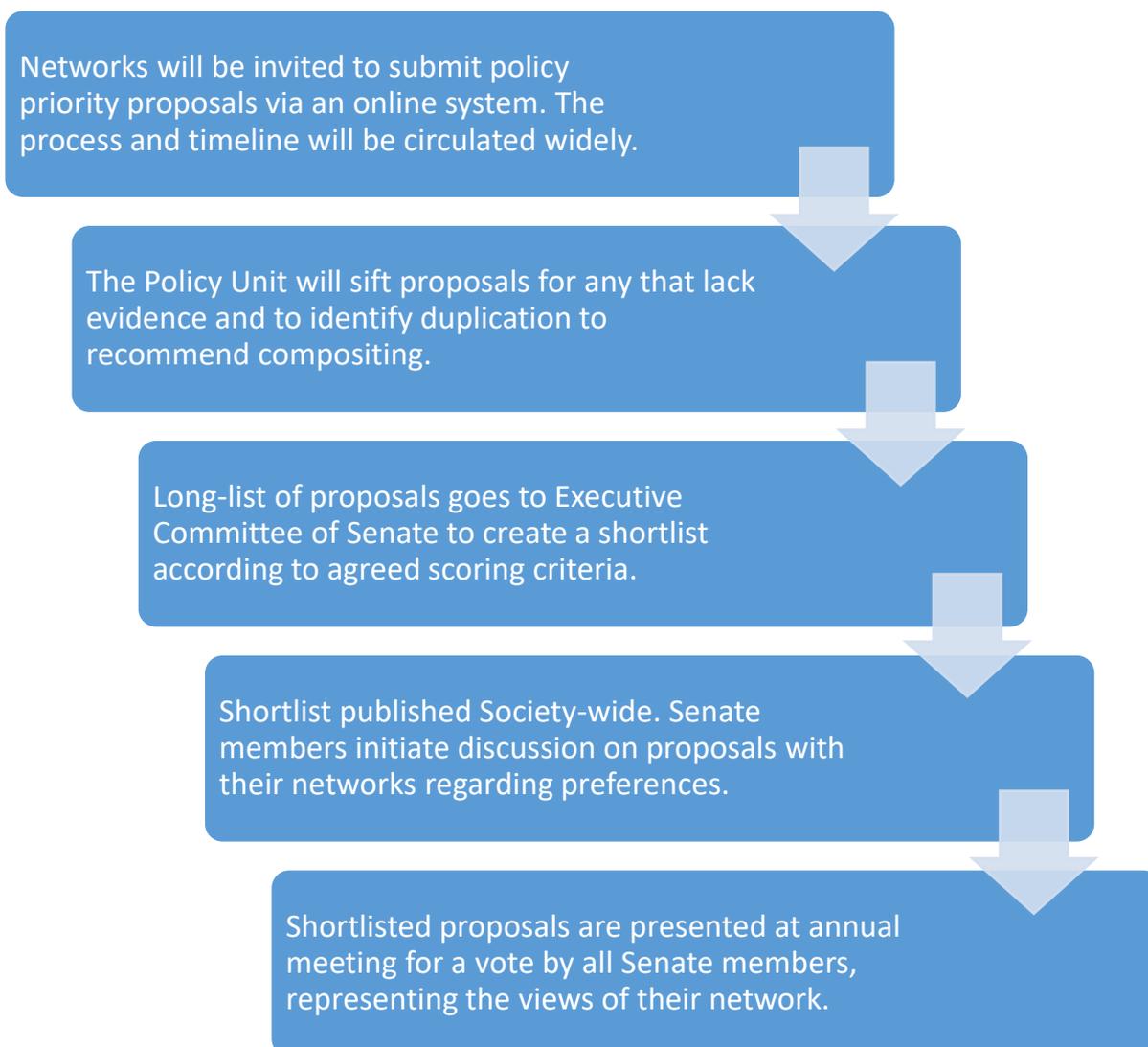
A Psychological Approach to Tackling Obesity. *Recognising the persistent challenge of Obesity across the UK, a health focussed network might collaborate with a geographic network that experiences high levels of Obesity to submit a proposal. The proposal would briefly outline the growing evidence base from relevant areas of the discipline, together with a clear idea of what needs to change. It would state clear objectives – for example a desired change in Public Health England's approach to behaviour change communications and a change in the way the media portrays obesity in relation to BMI - and details of current political opportunities there are to make those changes happen.*

The Structural Review group agreed roles for the Policy Unit and the Senate Executive in shortlisting proposals. The Policy Unit will manage the process. It will receive the proposals initially to carry out an initial sift for duplication and to check that each proposal is evidence based. Where there is duplication, the Policy Unit will recommend that the relevant networks composite their proposals to strengthen them.

All Senate members, as representatives of their network, should have a say in selecting from the submitted proposals, but that it is unrealistic to expect every member of Senate to read every proposal submitted by networks. As this is a new process it is hard to gauge how many proposals will be received. It will therefore be necessary for the Senate to have an Executive Committee to shortlist the proposals that will be shared with all members. The shortlisting process will be transparent and based on pre-agreed criteria.

It is important to note that not all policy priorities will be selected – we are anticipating that only one will be chosen as the main priority each year, with the possibility of two additional priorities as secondary objectives. This means some networks will put a lot of effort into preparing their proposals only to be unsuccessful at the voting stage. While this is unfortunate, it is necessary to allow the Society to prioritise and allocate resources effectively.

We are recommending that the following model be adopted for the selection of Society priorities via a Senate.



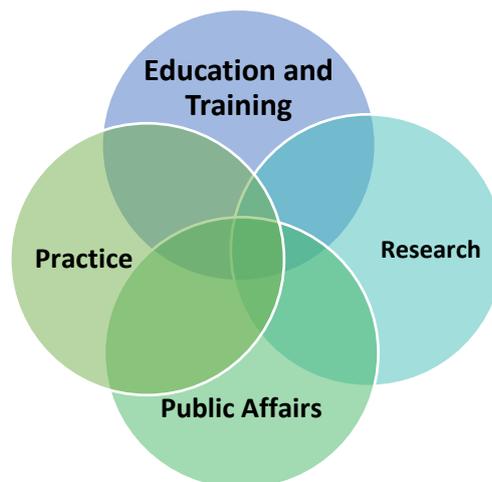
Following this process the chosen priorities will be allocated to the relevant Board and a strategy to achieve the objectives will be devised by the relevant BPS Department, working with an expert group of members in a Task and Finish group.

How will the Change happen?

Formal changes to Representative Council involve changes to our Statutes. However in the meantime the Policy and Communications Department will be designing an online pro-forma for submitting policy priority proposals, establishing a timeline for the process and agreeing scoring criteria for the shortlisting process. A communications plan will be prepared so that networks have plenty of time to prepare.

The composition of Senate is dependent on finalising proposals around networks, which will be outlined in phase 2 of the Structural Review consultation. Once that is agreed, members of the Senate will be invited to put themselves forward for the Executive Committee, which will be chaired by the President. The Executive Committee will be appointed through a process of selection for some key posts (e.g. devolved nation representatives) and voting for ordinary members.

The BPS Strategy Boards: Proposed Remits



What are we proposing?

Our ambition is to create four new Boards that will operate at the highest strategic level to improve the Society's impact in areas of most importance to our members. The Strategy Boards would be responsible for setting the Society's vision for psychology in the relevant area of our work and defining a limited number of policy change objectives to achieve that goal. The Board of Trustees would delegate responsibility for developing a long-term strategy and interpreting the relevant goals of the Strategic Plan to these Boards.

The proposed new strategy boards are:

- Practice Board
- Research Board
- Education and Training Board
- Public Affairs Board

What are we seeking members' opinions on?

This consultation presents a purpose statement, remit and list of stakeholders for each Board. The list of stakeholders, which is not exhaustive, is useful to help conceptualise the different spheres of influence for each Board.

It then outlines membership of each Board and an overview of the Committees that would deliver the work of these Boards; Task and Finish Groups and expert advisory groups who would report to the Boards and operational Committees and provide psychological expertise to support the work of the BPS Departments.

Finally it makes preliminary proposals for how the change will happen.

Practice Board

Purpose

To promote excellence in psychological practice so that everyone can access high quality evidence-based psychological interventions to enhance their lives, organisations, communities and wider society.

Remit

1. To define and clearly articulate the Society's vision of the highest standards of best practice across the discipline in the delivery of psychology in applied settings.
2. To develop and oversee a proactive long-term strategy to deliver this vision, which would include horizon scanning to proactively identify gaps in practice knowledge and to develop the Society's response to emerging issues.
3. To commission Task and Finish Groups to gather the necessary expertise to develop high-quality evidence-based guidance for psychologists in response to gaps or emerging issues, and to consider proposals from member networks for such projects.
4. To make evidence-based recommendations to commissioners to promote excellence in psychological practice and service delivery and to identify the external stakeholders and policy makers/influencers who need to action them, taking a four-nation perspective.
5. To identify strategic partnerships relevant to further the Board's strategic policy change objectives and delegate the development and maintenance of those relationships to the relevant Director.
6. To act as a responsive source of expertise for the Policy Unit and the wider BPS in ad hoc matters relating to practice, for example media enquiries and consultations.
7. On the advice of the Policy Unit, to appoint Task and Finish groups to review all the Society's best practice guidance documents on a regular basis to ensure advice is up to date.

Stakeholders of the board include all those who are concerned with psychological practice, they will include the HCPC and those who employ psychologists, for example Statutory Bodies, NHS Arms-length bodies, Local Education Authorities. They would include those who develop best practice guidance, for example NICE. Partner organisations with similar aims would include NHS Providers, the Faculty of Public Health, and the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Membership

The Chair and members of the Practice Board will be appointed for their relevant experience and skills as psychological practitioners. We will be looking for board members with expertise across the discipline and an up-to-date knowledge of a broad range of practice issues, such as commissioning and service design.

Research Board

Purpose

To promote excellence in psychological research, pure and applied, so that everyone can access evidence-based psychology to enhance their lives, communities and wider society.

Remit

1. To outline and clearly articulate the Society's vision for the sustainable future of psychological research across the discipline that is responsive and relevant to public need and that encourages innovation and application.
2. To develop a proactive long-term strategy to achieve that vision in all four nations of the UK. The strategy will cover both advancing the knowledge base of the discipline and securing ongoing support for research.
3. To provide informed, impartial and balanced advice on research issues in response to internal and external enquiry and maintain best practice guidance on ethical issues in the conduct of psychological research.
4. To make recommendations regarding the sustainability of funding to support psychological research and identify the external stakeholders and policy makers/influencers with the power to action them.
5. To identify and stimulate innovative research by providing Society funding to support research projects through overseeing the Society's grants scheme.
6. To clearly articulate the strategic direction for the Society's policy around journals and to provide oversight of the editorial management of the Society's scientific journals, academic resources and services in line with this policy.
7. To have strategic oversight of the society's annual programme of scientific meetings and conferences, particularly with reference to promoting excellence in psychological research.
8. To act as a responsive source of expertise for the Policy Unit and the wider BPS in ad hoc matters relating to research, for example media enquiries and consultations.

Research Board stakeholders will include all those whose business is funding, supporting and furthering psychological research and those involved in setting research policy. This includes the Research Councils, Academic Institutions, Research Institutions, the Association of Heads of Psychology Departments, the Experimental Psychology Society, the Academy of Social Science and other learned societies.

Membership

The Research Board will bring together psychologists working in both pure and applied research settings to ensure that practice is evidence based and that future psychological research endeavours are innovative, collaborative and relevant. Networks will be invited to appoint Research Leads with a high level of expertise and experience in the field to represent them on the Board. The Board may also invite representation from key stakeholders.

Public Affairs Board

Purpose

To maximise the impact of psychology on public policy so that policy makers and the public know the value of evidence-based psychology and the role of psychologists.

Remit

1. To set ambitious long-term objectives for how evidence-based psychology can be routinely incorporated into the process of public policy-making to make a positive influence.
2. Each year, to select a limited number of policy change objectives in relevant areas of current public significance across the four nations of the UK and incorporate them into the longer-term strategy.
3. To oversee a rolling programme of policy development work that brings together the necessary expertise and knowledge from within the society.
4. In response to priority issues, to commission Task and Finish Groups to gather the necessary expertise to develop high-quality evidence-based policy products to inform and persuade key policy targets, and to consider proposals from member networks for such projects.
5. To clearly define key objectives for the Society's Public Engagement and Strategic Communications work so that the general public is motivated to find out how psychology can help them. To oversee the production of an operational plan to achieve these objectives and delegate its delivery to the Policy and Communications Director.
6. To oversee the expert advisory group responsible for the Society's Psychologist magazine and public-facing communications channels, including the Research Digest and the website.
7. To identify strategic partnerships relevant to furthering the board's strategic goals and delegate the development and maintenance of those relationships as appropriate.
8. To act as a responsive source of expertise for the Policy and Communications team and the wider BPS in ad hoc matters relating to public policy and public engagement, for example media enquiries and consultations.

Public Affairs stakeholders will predominantly be key policy makers in Government departments and parliamentarians, such as MPs. It will manage relationships with partner organisations who share our policy goals, e.g. Mental Health Foundation. Strategic communication with the general public will also be a key objective of this Board.

Membership

Members of the Public Affairs Board will be appointed for their relevant experience and skills. We will be looking for Board members with experience of working directly with policy makers and who understood the dynamics of the political process and those who had experience of delivering successfully communications strategies.

Education and Training Board

Purpose

To promote excellence in psychology education and training so that students and academics continue to access high-quality education and training now and in the future.

Remit

1. To outline the society's vision for the future provision of high quality psychology education from providing relevant psychological skills in early years settings, through to pre-tertiary, degree level, professional training, registration and beyond.
2. To develop and oversee a long-term strategy to achieve the Society's goals in relation to psychology education and training. The strategy will cover psychology teaching, teachers and students at all levels, including but not limited to pre-tertiary, undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes.
3. To develop and oversee a long-term strategy to deliver this vision in all four nations of the UK that would include horizon scanning to identify gaps in the workforce and proactive strategies to respond to them
4. To identify and implement strategies to ensure that students, teachers and members of the public are attracted to a career in psychology.
5. To make recommendations regarding the sustainability of funding in psychology education and training.
6. To identify external stakeholders and policy makers/influencers who have the power to action the board's recommendations.
7. To identify strategic partnerships relevant to furthering the board's strategic goals and delegate the development and maintenance of those relationships to the relevant BPS Director as appropriate.
8. To commission Task and Finish Groups to determine the standards required for the Society's registers and awards and those of external bodies.
9. To maintain an awareness of and active involvement with the qualifications and standards operating in other countries, especially in the devolved nations (e.g. Scottish Highers) and across Europe.
10. To act as a responsive source of expertise for the Qualifications and Standards Department and the wider BPS in ad hoc matters relating to training and education, for example media enquiries and consultations

Stakeholders will include all those involved in the commissioning and delivery of Psychological Education and Training and ensuring standards. This will include bodies like Health Education England, HCPC, the Department for Education and Higher Education Institutions, exam boards, service providers and large employers of psychologists.

This board would manage relationships with UK and International partners such as EuroPsy, the Psychological Society of Ireland, the American Psychological Association and Association of Heads of Psychology Departments.

Membership

Members of the Education and Training Board will be appointed for their relevant experience and knowledge of the Psychology Education system. We will be looking for Board members with experience across the spectrum of education and training, this will include pre-tertiary education, undergraduate and postgraduate education and training.

This experience will include design and delivery at programme level and also those who have had experience in influencing educational decision making at an institutional, regional and national level.

Board members should have a keen interest in the continual development of education and training.

Working groups

Each Board will appoint subgroups as appropriate to support aspects of its work. These groups will support the delivery of the boards' strategic objectives. These groups will fall into one of three types

- Task and Finish Groups
- Expert Advisory Groups
- Operational Committees

Task and Finish Groups

Task and Finish Groups may be established by any Board for the specific purpose of conducting an in-depth piece of work on any area of policy, practice or operations that falls under the remit of the board. The Task and Finish Group will gather evidence and make recommendations.

The Board setting up the group will decide on the number and required skillset of members and seek volunteers from within the board's membership and elsewhere to join the group. The Board may also decide to co-opt other members on to the group from outside Society membership. The Board will agree concrete objectives for the Task and Finish Group, establish clear and measurable terms of reference, set deadlines for the delivery of outputs and seek advice from the SMT regarding budget and resources. The Task and Finish Groups will report regularly to the Board and the Chair of the group will be responsible for delivering the piece of work on time and on budget. New pieces of work will require a new proposal to the relevant Board for approval and allocation of additional resources.

Examples of these groups might be a policy development group formed to deliver a policy product and influencing strategy on Obesity, which would be linked to a Society priority identified through the agreed processes.

Expert Advisory Groups

Expert Advisory Groups will be formed of members with expertise relating to specific areas where the society is likely to need on-going technical advice and strategic direction. The Expert Advisory Groups will serve as consultative panels to the Boards, acting as a source of expertise and advice and providing evidenced and strategic direction to inform policy decisions. They will report regularly to the responsible Board on their activity.

Each group will have agreed Terms of Reference that will set out the criteria for membership of the group, ways of working and the relationship to the Board. The membership will be constituted by members who were considered to be national or international experts in their area. The Expert Advisory Groups are expected to be long-term groups. There will be an annual review of these groups for the board to approve their remit and decide whether they continue, close or combine. The Board will approve budgets for the following year in consultation with the BPS Senior Management Team.

For example an expert advisory group on Safeguarding may be formed to report to the Practice Board. The Psychologist and Digest Editorial Committee is an on-going Expert Advisory Group that would report to the Public Affairs Board.

Operational Committees

These committees will be concerned with providing detailed member input into ongoing operational activity and will report to the relevant BPS Director who is responsible for delivery. Membership will be by application. Unlike Expert Advisory Groups that are focused on strategy, these groups will exist to deliver society functions requiring the use psychological expertise. For example a Qualifications Committee, which reports to the Director of Qualifications and Standards.

How will the change happen?

We propose that all four of the current Boards and all of the working groups and committees beneath them, which currently number around 30 (excluding sub-committees), would be disbanded.

We would immediately create four new Boards with new remits and membership and, at the same time, we would review the strategic objectives and terms of references of each working group.

Working groups that are effectively delivering the Society's strategic aims would be re-formed or amalgamated and re-allocated to the appropriate new Board. This would create a new energy for the Boards and provide a new sense of purpose around delivering an impactful strategy.

Each Board will develop strategic objectives around desired changes in policy and practice and the Society's Directors and their teams will operationalise and deliver those objectives. The Boards are not expected to carry out any operational activities, as this responsibility rests with the relevant Directors.

This will enable members and staff to play to their strengths – members contributing their psychological evidence, expertise and experience and staff being responsible for planning, implementation, project management and relationship management.

Recruitment of members of the new Boards will begin prior to disbanding the current Boards. Role descriptions and person specifications for the chairs and members of each Board will be developed by the Society's Directors and will be approved by the Board of Trustees.

The available roles will be advertised through the Society's regular communication channels, starting with the Chairs first, followed by other Board members.

Current Board members will be eligible to apply for positions on the new Boards.