

BRITISH SOCIETY FOR RHEUMATOLOGY

STRATEGIC PLAN, FOR THE PERIOD 2004 TO 2009

'Aims of the Society':

1. To advance knowledge and practice in the field of rheumatology.
2. To improve awareness and understanding of arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions.
3. To work at a national and local level to promote high quality standards of care for people with arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions.
4. To lead the profession of rheumatology in the United Kingdom and ensure greater recognition for the society as the representative voice of the specialty.
5. To promote partnership between rheumatologists and patients, and work with other groups with an interest in rheumatology.
6. To promote the advantages of membership of the society and maintain the highest standards of professionalism in its internal governance and management.

'Objectives of the Society':

1. To advance knowledge and practice in the field of rheumatology.

- 1.1. To cultivate excellence in the management and treatment of arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions throughout the multidisciplinary team.
- 1.2. To build upon the society's reputation as the leading educator in the field rheumatology.
- 1.3. To further knowledge of arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions through facilitating and supporting research initiatives.
- 1.4. To provide opportunities for 'continuous professional development' for rheumatologists and the multidisciplinary team.

Plans and activities will be to:

- a) To deliver high quality scientific meetings, educational courses and professional development programmes, and promote them effectively.
- b) To produce a high quality journal to disseminate scientific and clinical research, and advance knowledge and practice at a national and international level.
- c) To influence the research agenda through close collaboration with the arc, MRC and other research councils at a national and international level.
- d) To effectively manage the BSR Biologics Register in order to provide useful epidemiological information, and establish the register's reputation as a leading international clinical study.
- e) To ensure appropriate standards are in place for the education, training and support of those entering the profession.
- f) To assist members in providing high quality local rheumatology services through peer review and other forms of peer support.
- g) To work with representatives from primary care to produce training standards and programmes for general practitioners.

2. To improve awareness and understanding of arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions.

- 2.1. To promote awareness and understanding of arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions amongst key policy influencers and decision-makers, people with arthritis and the general public.

- 2.2. To inform debate and ensure that policy makers and health service professionals understand the impact of the condition and the importance of improving standards of care.
- 2.3. To influence policymaking at a local and national level and lobby for appropriate provision of rheumatology services across the country.
- 2.4. To develop effective links with key parliamentarians and government agencies.

Plans and activities will be to:

- a) To establish an External Relations Committee with responsibility for steering this area of work.
- b) To network and establish effective methods of communication with key parliamentarians, government officials, NHS agencies and other bodies.
- c) To create strategic alliances with relevant groups, for the purpose of sharing information, and actively participate in joint initiatives, in order to raise the profile of arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions.
- d) To actively support the Bone and Joint Decade and develop international partnerships to further awareness and knowledge of arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions.
- e) To provide information to key target audiences through the BSR website, newsletter and other promotional tools.

3. To work at a national and local level to promote high quality standards of care for people with arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions.

- 3.1. To lobby for arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions to be given a higher priority in local and national health service planning.
- 3.2. To campaign for effective and appropriately resourced services for people with arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions.
- 3.3. To work with other organisations in the arthritis community to lobby for equitable access to services and treatment for all people with arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions, based on need.
- 3.4. To develop up to date standards, guidelines and audit tools for rheumatologists in liaison with the multidisciplinary team.
- 3.5. To facilitate and support exemplary working relationships across the multidisciplinary team, with other specialities, and with primary care, in order to share good practice and achieve continuity of care for people with arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions.

Plans and activities will be to:

- a) To monitor parliamentary and government activity and communicate pertinent information to relevant committees and to members for action.
- b) To build upon our reputation as an organisation that should be approached as part of all relevant consultations and appraisals and that delivers high quality responses.
- c) To work as an active member of ARMA, and in coalition with other groups, to lobby for a national strategy for arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions.
- d) To effectively promote the implementation of BSR standards, guidelines and audit tools for rheumatology at a national and local level.
- e) To regularly monitor service provision for people with arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions and support and facilitate local and national campaigns where issues arise.

4. To lead the profession of rheumatology in the United Kingdom, and ensure greater recognition for the society as the representative voice of speciality.

- 4.1. To raise the profile of the society, and promote its role in improving the care of people with arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions.

- 4.2. To further the reputation of the speciality as the leading non-surgical speciality within the National Health Service.
- 4.3. To promote the expertise and work of society's members in their roles in practice, research and education.
- 4.4. To attract high calibre individuals into the field of rheumatology.
- 4.5. To provide a forum for members to discuss key issues affecting the speciality and the profession, and promote participation in the society's work.

Plans and activities will be to:

- a) To develop and implement an external relations strategy which creates a positive and effective identity and external profile for the society.
- b) To further the reputation of the speciality within the medical community and promote its work to key external organisations and target audiences.
- c) To highlight the achievements of rheumatologists and promote their involvement in professional management, governance and important medical arenas.
- d) To establish strategies to promote recruitment to the specialty, and promote initiatives to attract medical students and junior doctors into the profession.
- e) To maintain a dialogue about issues of concern to rheumatologists and other members of the multidisciplinary team.

5. To promote partnership between rheumatologists and patients, and work with other groups with an interest in rheumatology.

- 5.1. To evaluate and develop useful relationships with patient groups and exploit opportunities for joint working on areas of common interest.
- 5.2. To establish links with other professional medical societies with the purpose of sharing ideas and best practice.
- 5.3. To promote opportunities for effective representation of the multidisciplinary team on the society's committees and working groups.
- 5.4. To promote partnership and co-operation in all aspects of the society's work and exploit unity of purpose.

Plans and activities will be to:

- a) To develop and implement an external relations strategy which creates a positive and effective identity and external profile for the society.
- b) To further the society's reputation as a key member of the Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Alliance, and continue to be actively involved in appropriate joint working initiatives.
- c) To establish, maintain and expand partnerships with relevant groups.
- d) To promote and facilitate good communication between members of the arthritis community.
- e) To develop and implement a user strategy, which leads to the useful involvement of appropriate lay representation of the society.
- f) To extend representation of the multidisciplinary team on the society's standing committees, and establish closer co-operation with the BHPR.

6. To promote the advantages of membership of the society, and maintain the highest standards of professionalism in its internal governance and management.

- 6.1. To recognise and respond to the needs of members and ensure that they are effectively represented across the society's committees.
- 6.2. To improve and develop communication with members of the society.
- 6.3. To ensure that the society has transparent and effective procedures for the recruitment, support and development of trustees and committee members.
- 6.4. To achieve excellence in all aspects of the society's activities, services and administration, and maintain good practice in management and staff relations.

Plans and activities will be to:

- a) To draw up and implement a strategy to encourage effective two-way communication between the society and its membership.
- b) To review the society's membership categories promote membership to under-represented groups, and develop representation across the society's committees that is reflective of the make up and interests of the membership.
- c) To thoroughly review the society's governing structure including the role, remit and work of all committees, develop the interface between the society's committees and identify servicing requirements.
- d) To develop effective and sustainable regional representation, advance the role of regional groups, and explore the use of representatives to advise on issues at a local level.
- e) To develop and promote the communication between the society trustees, committee members and staff.
- f) To give trustees and committee members the necessary support and training to fulfil their duties confidently.
- g) To develop policies and system to ensure that the society does not allow its good reputation, independence or charitable status to be compromised, and maintain a record of potential 'conflicts of interest'.
- h) To ensure that the society's relationships with the pharmaceutical industry are clear and transparent.
- i) To put in place transparent and effective personnel systems and procedures to ensure good quality services and the recruitment, support and development of a skilled staff team.
- j) To secure the resources needed to achieve the aims and objectives in this strategic plan.

Dated: October 2003