

Charter for BNA Special Interest Groups

Purpose

The overarching purpose of all Special Interest Groups (SIGs) is to help further [BNA's Charitable Objects](#), which can be summarised as being, *"To preserve and protect health and advance public education in neurosciences related to health and disease"*. ([Read in full below.](#))

The more specific purpose of SIGs is that they enable BNA members to benefit from being part of a larger community by connecting with members who have a shared topic of interest. This can be a scientific field of study (e.g. neurodegenerative diseases) or subject of shared interest/concern (e.g. REF; undergraduate teaching; European funding). **The topic must be clearly defined and relevant to the sector.**

SIGs exist to enable:

- Sharing of information, concerns and experience on defined topics (e.g. pain, electrophysiology, outreach, neuroethics)
- Identification of specific activity and/or extra information on that topic for the benefit of BNA members, to update and inform the wider BNA membership
- Advancing the SIG's area of interest itself, e.g. teaching, epilepsy or synaptic physiology, to the benefit of neuroscience as a whole
- Producing accessible and up to date information on the topic which is suitable for a wider audience (BNA Associate Membership) to increase public awareness and understanding of neuroscience research

It is imperative that any and all externally directed communications of SIGs must first gain approval of the BNA office e.g. Press releases, statements.

It is imperative that all discussions and actions of a Special Interest Group (SIG) comply with the BNA's policies (see www.bna.org.uk/about/policies/). SIG members may raise a concern to the BNA Council for guidance.

Structure

- SIGs are not open to Associate members at present. Wherever BNA member is mentioned in this document, it refers to all BNA members except Associate Members. If a SIG wishes to include Associate Members, e.g. to achieve Patient and Public Involvement, they must first propose to the BNA Council and gain approval to do so.
- The Chair of the SIG must be a BNA member who is keen to take an active lead in developing a successful and useful BNA SIG
- The SIG may wish to have a Co-Chair if appropriate, e.g. it is large or bridges across separate fields
- A SIG is open to any member BNA who is keen to actively participate in fulfilling the purposes above
- Anticipated size of a SIG is at least 12 BNA members.
- SIGs must have a geographical spread by the members coming from at least three BNA Local Groups or (for areas without a BNA Local Group) university/location.

Operation

- It is suggested that SIGs hold yearly meetings, but more if the SIG desires or the topic dictates additional meetings to be meaningful
- The BNA would encourage a SIG to hold its inaugural meeting in person, but subsequent meetings could be held via video-conference or teleconference e.g. via Skype or Polycom.
- SIGs are encouraged to use opportunities to convene before or after a BNA biennial meeting or another conference where SIG members are likely to be in attendance.
- SIGs must meet a current need for BNA members: they should not continue indefinitely without specific purpose or meaningful outcomes. To this end, a BNA SIG will be reviewed every three years.
- Continuation of a SIG is dependent on the group meeting its responsibilities (see overleaf) and submitting a review which meets the approval of the BNA Council every three years.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of a SIG chair to complete and submit the SIG application form to the BNA Council. This can be submitted following a preliminary meeting of the proposed SIG, but must have approval of Council before any further meetings / activities take place.

- To ensure transparency and due diligence, each SIG meeting must be minuted and minutes made available to the BNA Council and membership
- A SIG must produce a brief report for circulation to the wider membership at least yearly, more if appropriate e.g. a fast-moving area such as neuroscience post-Brexit (this can be one of the SIG's outcomes)
- A SIG must also produce brief summary of its area of interest for dissemination to Associate Members and the wider public, i.e. for public engagement purposes, at least annually.
- A SIG must maintain its webpage on the BNA website.

Outcomes of SIGs may include but are not limited to:

- Documents to share with other BNA members (which can simply be meeting minutes)
- Guidance, updates, or Standard Operating Practice (SOPs) for use by BNA members
- Position statements on behalf of the BNA membership
- Communication documents to outside organisations
- Communications for the wider public

BNA support:

- To help identify and set up groups
- Help arrange first meeting of a new SIG
- Meetings should ideally be hosted by a member institution, but the BNA can offer up to £500 to support the initial activities of the SIG. This can all go towards an initial meeting, or spread over a number of activities.
- The SIG can apply for further funding of up to £500 once every three years (i.e. in years 1, 4, 7, 10 ..) contingent on successful outcomes and review of the SIG's activities
- Individuals attending a SIG meeting must cover their own expenses (travel, accommodation and subsistence)
- Groups should be largely self-directed
- BNA can set up and host a webpage on the BNA website for SIG members' use
- BNA to support by way of communications and co-ordination of groups
- BNA to ensure minutes and outcomes of SIGs are disseminated to all members

Application Procedure

See separate application form.

Date for review: December 2017

The BNA's Charitable Objects

'To preserve and protect health and advance public education in neurosciences related to health and disease (in particular but not exclusively) by:'

- Promoting on a multidisciplinary basis the study of the development structure and function of the nervous system in health and disease.
- Promoting the dissemination of information to all those interested in the neurosciences and related disciplines by means of lectures, discussions, meetings and reports from time to time obtained from such researchers.
- Advising as far as possible on issues in neurosciences related to health and disease.
- Endeavouring to increase public awareness and understanding of neuroscience research in health and disease.
- Assisting in the training of neuroscientists and other professionals engaged in neuroscience teaching and research.
- Representing the interests of neuroscience researchers and promoting the case for the advancement of neuroscience research in the United Kingdom to government, to agencies providing research funding and to bodies engaged in science administration, regulation and standards.