



bsg BRITISH SOCIETY OF
GASTROENTEROLOGY

BSG Strategy

2024 - 2026

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INTRODUCTION

by Prof Andy Veitch, President and
Prof Colin Rees, President-elect of the
British Society of Gastroenterology

The BSG has been at the forefront of gastroenterology and hepatology internationally for nearly 90 years. Through our members we continue to deliver practice changing guidelines, training, education and research in the UK and throughout the world, for the benefit of our patients. We collaborate effectively with many professional organisations at home and abroad. The members of our committees and sections have given their time to produce an outstanding breadth of work of the highest standard, supported by our excellent BSG staff.

Our membership is at its highest level ever, with increases in all categories. We aim to promote gastroenterology at the earliest stages of careers, and undergraduates are now enthusiastic contributors to the Society. We are a modern, diverse organisation encompassing a wide range of professionals who seek to deliver the very best in gastroenterology and hepatology care. We also provide support and mentorship to our members during these challenging times within the NHS. This strategy document highlights how we aim to build on superb ongoing work as we move our society forwards towards our 10th decade.



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BACKGROUND

The British Society of Gastroenterology (BSG) is a professional membership organisation that aims to enhance care in gastroenterology and hepatology in the UK and internationally.

Since the publication of the previous strategy, the NHS has faced a challenging time, including COVID-19 recovery, unprecedented waiting lists and strikes, leaving many members weary. The BSG must respond to these challenges and support members in every way possible.

This updated strategy shows how the BSG is supporting its current members and aiming to attract new members. This will be achieved by continuing the highly valued hard work of the BSG committees and sections and by starting new projects that are specifically aimed at helping members discover or rediscover the joy and excitement of the speciality.

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PROGRESS UPDATE

Current priorities for the BSG were agreed during the early COVID-19 recovery and a return to face-to-face gatherings after nearly two years of online-only meetings.

Much progress has been made in the last two years, including the work of the five higher committees: Research, Education, Training, Clinical Services and Standards, International as well as the section committees that provide a forum for sub-speciality membership engagement and special interest groups

The BSG carried out a comprehensive membership survey in 2022 to find out what members value and what direction the organisation should take going forward.

A new website was launched in early 2024 with the aim of improving the membership experience and operational effectiveness.

A mentoring programme has been established and embedded and by early 2024 there were 76 mentors and 86 mentee profiles on the mentoring platform. Early evaluation shows that users find the mentoring platform easy to navigate and that good connections were made between mentors and mentees.

One key priority in the previous strategy was for the BSG to make significant progress in the area of [equality, diversity and inclusion \(EDI\)](#). The first EDI strategy

launched at BSG LIVE June 2023. Progress against the 3-year activity plan is being monitored by the EDI Working Group who meet regularly and BSG is on target to meet year one objectives, including the establishment of robust and relevant data collection related to EDI, ensuring diverse representation at the annual meeting and encourage the adoption of EDI principles in research.

Another key priority for the BSG has been to support the ever-increasing urgency of reducing the significant impact that healthcare has on the environment and how it contributes to global warming. Endoscopy plays a significant role in the carbon footprint of healthcare and the BSG has a key role in supporting efforts to reduce carbon emissions in the speciality. BSG, Joint Accreditation Group (JAG) and Centre for Sustainable Health (CSH) published a joint consensus on practical measures for environmental sustainability in endoscopy in 2022. There have also been significant efforts in reducing the carbon footprint of BSG LIVE, for example by having two meat-free days of catering, recycling and upcycling event materials, and working with venues who are committed to continuously improving their infrastructure and sustainable waste disposal practices.



PRIORITIES

As well as building on the work described above, four key strategic priorities have been identified for the BSG to take forward in the next two years, which are outlined below.

SUPPORTING MEMBERS

A key role of the BSG is to support its members. The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) 2022 census showed, amongst doctors, gastroenterologists and hepatologists are some of the most burned-out clinicians. Work is pressurised and it has become more difficult to have time out for learning and development. This is also a major issue for nursing colleagues. The BSG membership survey also showed that excessive workload is considered the biggest challenge amongst members. There is now a greater need than ever for the BSG to provide a safe and supportive space for learning, development and to re-energise clinicians to find joy and fulfilment in their work.

Over the next two years, in addition to the fantastic ongoing work, the BSG will deliver the following priority actions to support members:

Launch **'Project 90'**, which aims to support members with the following exciting opportunities:

- **Medical and nursing fellowship programme**, where members can access funding for 'time out', for example visiting centres of excellence in the UK and internationally.
- Significantly strengthen the support provided by the BSG to **nursing colleagues**, including education programmes specifically designed by and for nurses and regional engagement and networking opportunities.
- **Launch a leadership development programme** for specialty trainees, consultants and senior nurses/AHPs to allow individuals to explore their personal and career development opportunities.
- Deliver a range of regional based educational meetings 'taking the BSG to our members'

The following existing membership support programmes will continue:

- **Supporting specialty trainees** by delivering the annual management and leadership course as well as an online education webinar. Early trainees also benefit from taster courses, hands on endoscopy training and bursaries to attend events and to support exam fees.
- A new membership category has been set up to encourage undergraduate **medical students** to join the BSG with the aim of nurturing and growing a new community of doctors considering the speciality as their future career choice. This will be promoted going forward.
- Other, existing initiatives will continue, including the successful **mentorship programme** and the work done by the BSG workforce lead to analyse and report on workforce numbers.



Amongst doctors, gastroenterologists and hepatologists are some of the most burned-out clinicians



EDUCATING

Providing a broad range of high-quality education is one of the key benefits for members. A cornerstone of BSG Education is the annual BSG LIVE conference. A lot of work has been done in recent years, led by the Education Committee, to significantly increase the availability of flexible online learning resources on the BSG website. Plans are to continue the growth of online learning resources, including advanced training modules for sub-specialisation, alignment to endoscopy training academies and providing CPD accreditation for online content.

The International Committee is also very active in providing educational opportunities with experts from across the world to benefit national and international members. The BSG is looking at how we strengthen and expand new and existing international partnerships.

The BSG Sections and Committees will continue to provide educational opportunities for specific sub-specialty and special interest groups. This includes educational events that focus on non-clinical topics, such as wellbeing, leadership, career progression and equality and diversity.

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RAISING STANDARDS

The following key priorities will be taken forward to raise standards in Gastroenterology and Hepatology:

Guidelines and Guidance: The BSG has long been known to produce high quality guidelines and guidance documents. Guidelines are amongst the most valued membership benefits (membership survey 2022). A robust process has been used for many years to develop, agree and publish guidelines. Work will take place to make the process as efficient and effective as possible and remain fit for purpose in the context of other international guidelines in a digital age. This will be achieved through a joint effort of the Clinical Services and Standards Committee (CSSC) and the Section Committees.

Invited Service Reviews (ISRs): BSG will work with the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) to deliver invited service reviews and a number of Clinical Representatives have been appointed to deliver this service over the next few years.

Improvement projects: A number of committees are working on specific improvement opportunities, for example by publishing IBD Key Performance Indicators, publishing ERCP Service Standards, improving the management of GI bleeding and supporting teams in meeting upper GI endoscopy standards.

PROMOTING RESEARCH

Supporting high quality research is one of the founding priorities of the BSG. The Research Committee has focused in recent years on supporting members to participate in research, published research priorities (Pancreatitis 2022; IBS 2023) and supporting the successful delivery of research projects. The Research Committee is continuing its focus on developing the next generation of researchers and broadening access to research for nurses and allied health professionals and underrepresented groups. This will be achieved by offering training and networking opportunities, research grants and supporting researchers through our research scholars programme. There are also plans to develop research partnerships with industry and other funders.



The Research Committee is continuing its focus on developing the next generation of researchers



ENABLERS

A SEAMLESS MEMBERSHIP JOURNEY

In order to stay relevant to current and future members, the BSG has recognised that the membership journey would benefit from improvement. This will initially be achieved by maximising the capabilities of the new website that was launched in early 2024. The new website better harnesses information about and engages with members. This will allow more targeted and effective communication with members.

ADVOCACY

The BSG will strengthen its role in advocating for the profession and the membership. This will include ensuring that senior BSG executives are represented in key national groups, ensuring that the voice of gastroenterology and hepatology is strongly represented when key decisions are made.

One area of focus will be advocating for Gastroenterology and Hepatology Trainees to ensure that the UK continues to deliver the highest quality training.

The BSG will also continue to work in close collaboration with partner charities and alliances to amplify our voice on behalf of the speciality.

ORGANISATIONAL GOVERNANCE

As part of its commitment to good governance, The BSG will commission an independent review of oversight and assurance processes and structures. This will ensure that the society is able to meet its charitable objectives and strategic goals into the future. This review will report to the BSG board of directors.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Following the publication of the first EDI strategy and three-year activity plan in June 2023, the working group has successfully delivered on first year activity, including reporting on the EDI of BSG events, committees and membership and developing a robust events code of conduct and complaints policy, as well as a series of webinars on themes like 'Active Bystander Training' and 'Unconscious Bias'. Following publication of the RCS Report on Sexual Harassment in Surgery, the BSG also established a further group to respond to the report and implement an action plan. The group continues to refine reporting on the EDI of BSG membership and activities and using this insight to ensure BSG activities are representative and offer opportunities for all members. The next step will be to recruit a designated lead for EDI who will chair the working group and ensure that progress against the agreed strategy is made.

SUSTAINABILITY

This continues to be a key priority for the Society. The BSG is collaborating with the Centre for Sustainable Healthcare and the UK Health Alliance on Climate Change in advocating for improved sustainability in healthcare. The BSG will explore commissioning carbon-foot printing of The BSG as an organisation and developing a decarbonisation plan. Further work is taking place to reduce the carbon footprint of BSG LIVE, including partnering with a local 'green' charity in the host city and soliciting donations from delegates which the BSG would match and incentivising the use of low carbon travel by partnering with our host city and negotiating free travel passes on public transport. The BSG is also working to advise on how GI healthcare can be delivered more sustainably including working with industry.

