The Association for Informatics Professionals in Health and Social Care

Member group: Constitution

Version 6.0
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INTRODUCTION
This document describes the rules and processes by which the Association for Informatics Professionals in Health and Social Care (BCS ASSIST) operates. It sits alongside the governance arrangements for all member groups of the BCS and describes what members may expect from BCS ASSIST which is managed through a committee called National Council.

A BCS member group enables members to get together with others to share and advance their common interests. In the case of BCS ASSIST this interest is in Health and social care informatics and the use of Information Technology in health and social care. Member groups are integral to the BCS and are bound by the Institute’s Royal Charter and rules.

Member Groups are managed by a committee elected by the members of the group at an Annual General Meeting. The committee has the power to set up sub committees. BCS expect each member group to have a name, aims and objectives, be able to form a committee, provide budget projections and gain approval from the Membership Board. BCS ASSIST gained such approval through its full integration in 2009/10 with BCS. BCS ASSIST may not change its name without approval from BCS.

NAME
The name of the BCS Member group shall be "The Association for Informatics Professionals in Health and Social Care" and will be known as "BCS ASSIST".

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
The purpose of the member group is to advance health informatics as a profession by providing a national organisation for staff involved in and for informatics in health and social care organisations.

The aims of BCS ASSIST are to:
• Provide a network to exchange information and good practices, and to address informatics issues.
• Promote discussion on issues associated with the implementation of national informatics strategies.
• Provide a forum for activities and events at a national and branch level.
• Influence national and local informatics policy.
• Encourage professionalism and raise standards through supporting staff development and educational programmes.

In furtherance of its aims, BCS ASSIST will set a business plan and provide budget projections to BCS each year. The plan for the year ending August 2012 has objectives of:

• Maintaining membership numbers
• Supporting branches
• Influencing national policy
• Developing professionalism
• Raising the profile of the profession
• Developing partnerships

MEMBERSHIP
The Members of BCS ASSIST are recognised as those members of the Association of Informatics in Health and Social Care, now a member group of BCS and administered by BCS central membership teams.

The mechanisms for joining BCS ASSIST are set out on the web site [http://www.bcs.org/category/7900](http://www.bcs.org/category/7900)

Attendance at events is not limited to members of BCS ASSIST unless there is a stated restriction on attendance, but a fee may be charged to non-members equivalent to BCS ASSIST membership fee.

Where a meeting fee is charged (to members and/or non-members), it should be clear what this fee includes and how the funds will advance the aims of BCS ASSIST. This particularly applies to conferences, but also to meetings, workshops and other types of events.

STRUCTURE
The structure for BCS ASSIST is to operate through branches across the United Kingdom. Branches will be focussed either geographically, determined by subject matter or established to meet a particular objective and will be determined and reviewed periodically by the National Council.

BCS ASSIST National Council will support each Branch to have a management Committee of whom one delegated representative sits on the National Council.
**NATIONAL COUNCIL**

Member Groups are managed by a committee elected by the members of the group at an Annual General Meeting. The committee has the power to set up sub committees.

The management committee for BCS ASSIST is called BCS ASSIST National Council and shall be responsible for the overall business and affairs of the member group. This will include representation at BCS Health Executive and Health Member Group Committee level through the nominated Chair. The National Council shall consist of the following:

- Chair,
- Vice-Chairs with particular responsibility for various aspects of BCS ASSIST operations (i.e. events, communications, developing professionals, partnerships and professional development), including chairing any sub-committees of Council
- Treasurer,
- Secretary
- The immediate past Chair of the Council.

- A representative of each Branch (preferably the Branch Chair)
- Minimum of two ordinary members, elected at the Annual General Meeting.

Every (National) Council member shall be a member of BCS ASSIST. The Council must have at least three professional BCS members, with two of them filling the roles of Chair and Treasurer. The Treasurer and the Chair will jointly approve expenditure over £1,000.

The Council can co-opt members in year as long as the majority of the Council (including co-opted members) are members of BCS and the number of co-opted members does not exceed elected members.

The term of office is determined for each post by the Council, subject to a maximum of three years before re-election. One year is normal with all members standing down and a re-election taking place at each Annual General Meeting.

Council members can be removed by a majority vote of the Council. There is a right of appeal to the BCS Membership Board Policy Committee. A Council member may resign at any time by giving notice in writing to the Council Secretary. A Council member shall forfeit their membership of Council on ceasing to be a member of BCS ASSIST. The Council may temporarily fill vacancies for Council members until the next Annual General Meeting.

The Council will meet regularly (either physically or electronically via teleconference or web conference). Notice of these meetings must be...
given to all members of the Council by the Secretary. The chair is expected to approve the minutes and an electronic copy of the minutes must be made available to members of the Council and Branches and the Member Groups Team (groups@hq.bcs.org.uk) within 20 days of the meeting.

The Chair or one of the Vice-Chairs shall preside at Council meetings. If neither is available, the Council shall elect a chair by simple majority of those members present. 4 members or 50% of the elected members of the Council constitute a quorum. If there are fewer members present (in person, by phone or electronically) the meeting cannot make binding decisions.

**MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (OFFICERS)**
The Officers shall act in accordance with the direction of the Council but shall also have regard to the wishes of the members they represent.

The Officers will be appointed at the Annual General Meeting. Nominations will be sought from the members by the Secretary, at least two months prior to the Annual General Meeting.

The Chair shall:
- Lead Council meetings and General Meetings
- Act as focal point and spokesperson for the Association publicity and lead contact with other associations and organisations as well as internally within BCS
- Be a member of the BCS Health Executive and Members Group Committee and shall represent the interests of BCS ASSIST in these forums.

The Vice Chairs shall:
- Lead Council meetings and General Meetings and attend the BCS Health Members Group Committee meetings when the Chair is unable to do so
- Support the Chair in the role as focal point for BCS ASSIST publicity and contact with other associations and organisations.
- Lead on particular aspects of BCS ASSIST operations as outlined below:
  - Events (through the events organising sub-committee). Remit would include any national activity including conferences, roadshows and webinar
  - Communications (through the communications sub-committee). Remit would include e-newsletter, website, social media, promotion material and so on
  - Developing Professionals (through the Developing Professionals Group and on-going support for the NHS Informatics Graduate Training Scheme
Partnerships – maintain and develop partnerships with third party organisations and focus on generating sponsorship income

Professional Development – develop the Mentoring scheme, on-going links with UKCHIP and overall development of professionalism agenda.

- Any other duties as required by the Chair.

The Secretary shall:

- Send in due time notices of all General Meetings to Members
- Provide the secretariat for all Council meetings and General Meetings
- Take minutes of all meetings and circulate them to Council members and Branches
- Lead on constitutional affairs.

The Treasurer shall:

- Lead the development of the annual BCS ASSIST Business Plan and budget submission to BCS
- Receive and verify records of all financial activities of BCS ASSIST from BCS
- Be responsible for implementing BCS ASSIST financial duties as required by BCS
- Receive a year end budgetary outturn in lieu of an Annual Statement of Accounts of the Association.

The financial year shall be from 1st September to 31st August.

Member Group funds are held centrally in BCS administered bank accounts. UK based Groups may not operate their own Bank account.

**BRANCHES**

The purpose of the Branches is to support members. Branches shall be bound by the rules of the BCS through the National Council. Each Branch may select a Management Committee from amongst its members which shall consist of at least a Chair and a secretary. Each Branch shall hold a Branch General Meeting at least once in every financial year in order to appoint a representative to the National Council.

**GENERAL MEETINGS OF BCS ASSIST**

**Annual General Meetings**

BCS Member groups must organise a General Meeting once a year, where a report to the membership on the previous year’s activities is presented and Council members are elected. The annual general meeting should be called as soon as practicable after the close of the Institute's financial year (31st August).
The Annual General Meeting may take place with a set of draft accounts and will be followed up with publication of the approved accounts when these are available.

At least fourteen days written notice (it may be via email) of the date, time and place of the annual general meeting shall be given to BCS ASSIST members and to the Member Groups Team (groups@hq.bcs.org.uk). The calling notice should include an agenda, a call for nominations to committee and say where the minutes to be discussed can be found. This will normally be on the web pages www.bcs.org/assist.

The agenda will include:

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the previous general meeting
4. A report from the Chair on the years activities
5. A financial statement from the Treasurer inclusive of a review of income and expenditure against the budget agreed with BCS HQ for the past year and an indication of the following year's budget requirement
6. Election of Chair, Treasurer and Council members
7. Any other business

Notification of items wishing to be raised at the annual general meeting under "Any other business" should be sent to the Secretary not less than three days in advance. Admission of items not so notified at the annual general meeting will be at the discretion of the Chair.

Following the annual general meeting an electronic copy of the Chair’s and the Treasurer’s report will be sent to the Member Groups Team (groups@hq.bcs.org.uk) within one month after the annual general meeting.

Extraordinary General Meetings (EGM)
An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) shall be convened if requested by fifty or more members of BCS ASSIST or by resolution of the Council. The notice calling the meeting shall state the purpose of the meeting, which shall be convened on a date within five weeks of receipt of the request or the Council resolution.

Ballot
A ballot undertaken by the Council of all members may be undertaken on any subject. The result shall be recorded as if the decision had been taken at a General Meeting. A notice of the decision shall be
posted onto the BCS ASSIST website within 20 days of the closing date of the ballot. The returning officer for all ballots will be the Secretary.

**CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION**
This Constitution will be reviewed annually by the Council. Proposed changes will be drafted for review by Council, prior to review and comment by the BCS and final approval at an annual general meeting. Version 1.0 was presented to the 2007 AGM, and subsequent versions will be numbered sequentially at each review.

**DISSOLUTION AND REVERSION**
A proposal to dissolve BCS ASSIST shall only be considered at a General Meeting. Any assets of BCS ASSIST shall be disposed of in accordance with the terms of any resolution approved at a general meeting.

Where the group is not operating, has come to the end of its planned life or is in conflict with the Institutes aims and objectives it may be suspended or closed down by decision of the BCS Membership Board. Any action will be preceded by consultation with members of the group.