

BSG Strategy 2020

'Raising the Profile of Ageing Research in a Changing World'

Introduction

The BSG's Strategic Plan serves as our road map and guides us in establishing the actions that we need to pursue in order to achieve our aims and objectives. A period of reflection on the past 5 year strategy (2009-2014) has shown just how hard the BSG Officers and Executive members have worked to achieve both fundamental and innovative goals on a totally voluntary basis, supported by an excellent part-time manager. This will be our continuing position as we set new goals to maintain and develop our strengths.

The Changing Context

Since the last 5 year strategy was formulated, the context within which the BSG operates has changed considerably. The implications of an ageing population are much higher on the cultural, policy and practice agendas' in terms of issues that include: what gives later life meaning, intergenerational relations, dignity in care, the affordability of pensions, the funding of health and social care, the impact of dementia, age-inclusive environments and globalisation.

This has created some real opportunities for the BSG and its members in terms of research funding and research translation that foregrounds the evidence base contributing to debates at all levels. However, it has also brought challenges that include the need to confront negative messages often related to concerns about demographic change.

These debates will continue and there is a need for the BSG to prioritise the areas in which it has the chance to have a significant impact and to do this in a way which raises the profile of both the Society and social gerontology. The new five year strategy is designed to achieve this.

Aims and objectives of the BSG Strategy 2020

The BSG aims to promote the understanding of human ageing and later life, bringing to research, theoretical development, pedagogy, policy and practice an innovative multi-disciplinarity from the social sciences and other varied disciplines together with expertise from the care professions. It is a unique learned society that aims, through research and communication, to disseminate knowledge to improve quality of life in later life.

Our overall aim is:

to position the BSG as a leader in enabling and supporting ageing research, theory, pedagogy, policy and practice

Our objectives are:

1. To promote new gerontological knowledge on human ageing and later life;
2. To raise the national and international profile of the BSG and its members;
3. To build capacity in research on human ageing and social gerontology;
4. To strengthen the impact of research on human ageing and social gerontology through the support of knowledge exchange activities and public engagement;
5. To shape and respond to public and policy issues and debates on ageing;
6. To ensure that the BSG contributes to strengthening the social sciences

Going Forward: The 2015-20 Strategy

With our aims and objectives clearly identified the new BSG strategy not only builds on successes and maintains our everyday business but also identifies new directions.

In the next five years we will:

- i) Target mentoring and one day events as key directives aimed at members;
- ii) Identify an annual theme underpinned by associated publicity and influence. Solidify BSG Social Media outputs – GR, Twitter, Ageing Bites, Ageing Blogs, Membership Bulletin;
- iii) Request sub-groups prioritise activities in relation to aims and objectives more explicitly than in the past;
- iv) Promote ageing studies and social gerontology, nationally and internationally;
- v) Further develop our key partnerships with organisations such as Age UK and the International Longevity Centre-UK
- vi) Build a strong financial base to support our activities and the achievement of our objectives.

Putting the new Strategy into Operation

During the past 5 year period (2009-2014) the BSG has conducted its activities via a series of task/working groups under the leadership of members of the Executive. These are:

- Conference Liaison and Events
- Publications
- International Relations
- Emerging Researchers in Ageing
- Social Media and Communications

Membership of these groups is, of necessity, dynamic and overlapping as people join and leave the Executive and as BSG members volunteer and/or get co-opted to assist with particular groups. Their progress has been detailed through reports presented to each AGM held at the Annual Conferences.

The Executive Officers would like to see the working groups: Conference Liaison and Small Events, Publications, International Relations and Social Media and Communications maintained. They also, propose a 'Building Capacity' group encompassing both ERA and Senior Members

to develop both areas and associated links between them. This group will advise the Executive on membership issues.

The Executive Officers will oversee leadership development and specific initiatives such as membership (led by the Honorary Secretary), financing the strategy (led by the Honorary Treasurer), development of the annual theme, liaison and lobbying with external partners/ associations/academies (Presidential leadership). In 2015 our first annual theme will be 'Learning from REF 2015'. This will involve us leading a dialogue about lessons and issues for social gerontology from the REF and we will link this to a new edition of our Impact brochure.

This will lead the following working groups to drive the implementation of the strategy:

- Conference Liaison & Events
- Publications
- International Relations
- Building Capacity (including Emerging Researchers on Ageing – ERA; Senior Members)
- Social Media and Communications
- Executive functions

While a case was made for a new group relating to Devolution, the Executive feel that this discussion needs to take place within each working group. It should become a standing item on the Agenda for each group discussion with cross-referral between groups e.g. Conference Liaison and Events could support the funding of events in each nation; Social Media could request a regions or nations Ageing Blog or GR theme. Members from nations and regions should feel able to contact working group leads.

Procedures

There is a need for each working group to agree their leadership and set a schedule for meetings or conversations between or associated with

Executive Committee meetings. They should consider what they wish to achieve over the next 5 years; priorities and time schedules; group membership, turnover and need for renewal. This should be done by each group considering their position in relation to the aims and objectives of the BSG and their current work. The BSG membership will be notified regarding group leadership.

Ideally, each group should have at least 4 members and this can include co-opted members. Current Executive Officers should not be expected to lead a group although they can be expected to work with a maximum of two groups. A realistic schedule should then be outlined using the Template provided in **Appendix 1**.

The Template is offered so that each group can be aware of what they, and other groups, are working towards at any one time and, overall, how we are addressing our aims and objectives.

Sheila Peace (President Elect), Robin Means (President), Mim Bernard (Past President)
May 2014

As always, we welcome comments from our members in shaping the way forward for the BSG. Please contact Rachel Hazelwood with any comments

Appendix 1: Template for Strategic Initiatives by Task/Working Groups

Task/Working Group Title:	Members (list) Involvement/Co-option			
	Initiatives/ Activities	Priority (1high -5 Low)	Time schedule (year (s))	Outcome/s
<p>Objective 1:</p> <p>Promote new gerontological knowledge on human ageing and later life</p>				
<p>Objective 2:</p> <p>Raise the national and international profile of society and its members</p>				
<p>Objective 3:</p> <p>Build capacity in research on human ageing and social gerontology</p>				
<p>Objective 4:</p>				

<p>Strengthen research impact through knowledge exchange and public engagement</p>				
<p>Objective 5:</p> <p>Shape and respond to public and policy issues and debates on ageing.</p>				
<p>Objective 6:</p> <p>Ensure that the society contributes to strengthening the social sciences.</p>				