

# SIG Handbook

*IMPORTANT: Please note this is a work in progress and will be updated from time-to-time.*

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people specifically in helping me piece together this initial draft: Paula Devine, Hannah Marston, Andrew Newman, Tanya Phillips, Debora Price, Tushna Vandrevale. I would also like to thank everyone on the Executive Committee for their support and understanding during this process of providing structure to SIGs and their activities.

## ABBREVIATIONS

BSG	British Society of Gerontology
EC	Executive Committee
ECM	Executive Committee Meeting
NEC	National Executive Committee
SIG	Special Interest Group

## What is a SIG?

The overarching aims of BSG Special Interest Groups are to strengthen research, policy and practice impact in ageing-related work through knowledge exchange and public involvement.

With the generous support of our publication partner Cambridge University Press, the BSG supports a number of Special Interest Groups (SIGs). SIGs are designed to bring together BSG members who share a specific interest and to support activities to further knowledge in these areas. The SIGs also provide forums for BSG members to engage with a broader group of academics and other stakeholders in their particular field of interest.

Any member of the BSG is eligible to propose a SIG. Although the SIG must be initiated and chaired by a BSG member, SIG members are not required to be BSG members. The Society hopes that SIGs will play a crucial role in enhancing links between our members and other organisations – whether academic, policy or practice-based, and to wider stakeholders.

## What does the BSG expect from SIGs?

The Key Features of a BSG Special Interest Group are as follows:

1. SIGs must be chaired by a member of BSG and must have at least three BSG members at their foundation (including the Chair)
2. SIG participants do not need to be a member of BSG to join, although of course, we hope that in time all members of a SIG will become members of BSG
3. SIGs must submit at least one symposium to the BSG Annual Conference, and this must clearly be shown as the Symposium for that Special Interest Group
4. SIGs must have at least one meeting each year (whether physical or virtual); this can take place during the BSG Annual Conference
5. SIGs report to and are accountable to the BSG National Executive Committee (BSG NEC)
6. SIGs maintain their own dedicated web-page on the BSG Website outlining their work and forthcoming activities
7. SIGs are expected to contribute to the Society's blog *Ageing Issues* and are welcome to set up their own BSG-branded Twitter account.
8. An annual report should be submitted to the July ECM demonstrating how expectations have been met (from effect July 2020).
9. Viability of individual SIGs will be assessed every three years (from effect December 2021 for current SIGs or three years after the official start of new SIGs).

## Who is the BSG NEC SIG representative?

Dr Gary Christopher from UWE Bristol is the current BSG NEC SIG representative. He took on this role in July 2018. If you need to contact him, please email, [gary.christopher@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:gary.christopher@uwe.ac.uk).

## What is expected from the BSG NEC SIG representative?

It is the role of the BSG NEC SIG representative to:

- keep track of activity within individual SIGs;
- keep in regular contact with SIG leads;
- report to the EC on the activities of each SIG;
- ensure SIGs have visibility at national events.

## What SIGs exist and who is the lead?

EG	Educational Gerontology	Caroline Holland ( <a href="mailto:caroline.holland@open.ac.uk">caroline.holland@open.ac.uk</a> ) John Miles ( <a href="mailto:johnmiles68@yahoo.co.uk">johnmiles68@yahoo.co.uk</a> )
TA	Technology and Ageing	Katie Brittain ( <a href="mailto:katie.brittain@northumbria.ac.uk">katie.brittain@northumbria.ac.uk</a> )
TM	Transport and Mobility	Charles Musselwhite ( <a href="mailto:c.b.a.musselwhite@swansea.ac.uk">c.b.a.musselwhite@swansea.ac.uk</a> ) Ben Spencer ( <a href="mailto:bspencer@brookes.ac.uk">bspencer@brookes.ac.uk</a> )
WR	Work and Retirement	Martin Hyde ( <a href="mailto:martin.hyde@swansea.ac.uk">martin.hyde@swansea.ac.uk</a> )
CA	Creative Ageing	Emily Bradfield ( <a href="mailto:emily102@outlook.com">emily102@outlook.com</a> ) Robyn Dowlen ( <a href="mailto:robyn.dowlen@manchester.ac.uk">robyn.dowlen@manchester.ac.uk</a> )

Proposed new SIGs are:

EnG	Environmental Gerontology	Sheila Peace ( <a href="mailto:sheila.peace@open.ac.uk">sheila.peace@open.ac.uk</a> )
CHR	Care Homes Research	Laura Brown ( <a href="mailto:laura.brown@manchester.ac.uk">laura.brown@manchester.ac.uk</a> )

## What is expected from each SIG lead?

SIG leads should promote BSG membership through SIG activities. SIG leads are required to ensure that their SIG meets the annual expectations set out in the previous section. They are required to submit reports to the NEC SIG representative promptly to ensure inclusion in the quarterly and annual reports.

## Change of SIG leadership structure

It is the responsibility of the SIG lead to find a replacement should they desire to step down. For new SIGs, one of the requirements is to name individuals who directly support the lead. It would make sense for that person to immediately take over the running of the SIG either permanently or until a time that an alternative lead is secured. This structure is not in place for most of the existing SIGs, but is something current SIG leads should consider to ensure a smooth transition period. Running of a leaderless SIG does not by default go to the NEC SIG representative.

## List of SIG members

The privacy policy for the Society is available at the following address:

<https://www.britishgerontology.org/privacy-policy>

It states:

*“From time to time, you will be asked to submit personal information about yourself (such as name, email/postal addresses etc) in order for BSG to provide you with the membership and other services that we offer. Whenever you provide such information, we are legally obliged to use your information in line with all laws concerning the protection of personal information, including the Data Protection Act 1998 and GDPR 2018. We will only use your information for the purposes for which you have given it. We will hold your personal*

*information on our systems for as long as you use the service you have requested. We will remove your personal information within 2 months from those purposes being met.”*

The NEC SIG representative should have a list of all SIG members. This can then be used as a line of communication for BSG activities, but it would not be acceptable to use these contact details to encourage them to join the Society. For more information about Data Protection, please contact **Paula Devine**.

## SIG renewal

There are clear expectations that need to be met by each SIG. Not only do SIG leads submit a quarterly report to the BSG NEC SIG representative, from now onwards, SIG leads will be asked to submit an annual report that demonstrates how they have met these expectations. The first of which will be presented at the July 2020 ECM. Every three years, SIGs will be assessed in terms of their viability. This will be three years following their acceptance as a SIG or December 2021 for all current SIGs. This will provide adequate time for new SIGs to embed themselves in the Society's structure and for existing ones to demonstrate their activity levels. It might be the case that, after three years, interest in a particular clustering of expertise wanes, and so a new SIG or revised SIG will be the best option. If someone leaves a SIG, their details need to be removed from the list of members immediately.

## Creating a new SIG

A form has been created (see Appendix 1) to ensure proposed new SIGs are cohesive and self-sustaining. It has been suggested there should be a cap on the number of SIGs such that ten would allow sufficient breadth of coverage of research interests.

## Reports to the BSG

Quarterly reports to the EC should include the following items.

1. List of recent activities
2. Intentions for the coming months
3. Plans for the upcoming annual conference
4. Budget spent
5. Future budget spending/budget requests
6. Any requests?

## Funds

Each SIG is allocated £500 per annum. This amount includes sponsorship by *Ageing & Society*. Invoices should be made out to the British Society of Gerontology. The invoice should adhere to the guidelines around what is considered an appropriate activity for a SIG. The invoice itself should clearly indicate precisely what it is for. It also needs to include the bank details for the payment – sort code and account number – and the total amount to be paid. Two signatures need to be obtained. The NEC SIG representation will send the invoice then either the **BSG Secretary** or the **BSG Treasurer**.

The NEC SIG representative can approve up to and including spends of £500 per financial year. In some cases, funds can be carried over into the subsequent financial year. There needs to be a clear audit trail.

## Ageing & Society sponsorship

It is important that the close links between *Ageing & Society* and BSG are fully endorsed. They are always keen to provide promotional material/branded items for SIG-related events. Indeed, events can be co-badged to acknowledge the role of *Ageing & Society*. Key points of contact here are the **BSG Secretary** and the **Publications and Archiving lead**.

## Contributions to Who's Who

BSG members are encouraged to contribute to the Society's Who's Who feature. This consists of a short biography of 135 characters and a photograph. SIG leads should encourage their members to engage with this scheme.

## Webpages

There should be consistency across all SIG sites. Any updates should be sent to the NEC SIG representative for vetting to ensure consistency before being sent to the **BSG Secretary** on [info@britishgerontology.org](mailto:info@britishgerontology.org).

## Communication

### Twitter

The agreed format for Twitter handles for SIGs is BSGxxxSIG (e.g., BSGcreativeSIG). Each SIG who has their own Twitter handle needs to provide a plan to engage with and monitor the account.

Tweets are scheduled throughout the year using Hootsuite. This works out at between one and three Tweets each month. This ensures a steady stream of social media traffic and a strong presence. This activity is overseen by **Hannah Marston**.

### Blogs

### Email

There has been a call for a generic email address for SIG leads.

## SIG meetings

To facilitate virtual meetings, the Society subscribes to GoToMeeting. If external-facing events, BSG promotional material should be incorporated, such as a BSG banner.

## Annual conference

### Symposiums

It is the responsibility of the NEC SIG representative to liaise with the Conference Manager to ensure SIG symposiums are provided with adequate visibility to BSG members and non-members. There should also be formal slots where each SIG can meet before the opening ceremony.

### Visibility

It is important to be in close communication with the Conference Manager to ensure SIGs are visible to those attending the conference.

## Appendix 1: Application form for new SIGs

# Application Form: Special Interest Group

Name of proposed SIG

Full name of the proposer/chair (BSG member only)

Full name of the person who will support the chair

Proposed members and their ascribed roles/responsibilities

Describe the focus of the proposed SIG [up to 200 words]

How will this SIG strengthen research, policy, and practice of the BSG? [up to 300 words]

Plan of action for the first 12 months [up to 250 words]

Plan or concept for the first SIG symposium [up to 200 words]

**Please note it is a requirement that all SIGs organise a symposium at each annual conference.**

Plan for meetings [up to 150 words]

Plan to develop the proposed SIG over the coming 12 months [up to 500 words]

Proposed Twitter handle (optional)

**You do not need to propose a Twitter handle. Instead, you can opt to use hashtags in any BSG Tweets using the main BSG Twitter handle, @britgerontology. If you do wish to propose a Twitter handle, you should indicate how you plan to engage with Twitter and monitor activity. The proposed handle will need BSG in the name (e.g., @BSGnewSIG).**

Please provide details of any existing social media links

**For example, Research Gate, LinkedIn, Twitter, University staff profile pages**

## Contact detail

If you would like more information about the application process, please email Dr Gary Christopher ([gary.christopher@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:gary.christopher@uwe.ac.uk)).