



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) POLICY

1. Introduction

BAPEN recognises that all its members act in a voluntary capacity whilst participating in BAPEN activities. The vast majority of its members are subject to policies and procedures in contract with their own employer and as part of their professional registration and licence to practice. Regardless of employment status, members will enjoy the full support of BAPEN's policies and procedures whilst working with and contributing to the Association.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) are core components of membership and reflect the values of the Association. They should be seen as essential individual rights. In the context of BAPEN's work, the most important reason for promoting EDI is to help achieve better outcomes for patients. Hearing all voices within an organisation can bring more careful consideration, better decision-making and better risk management. When supported and valued, colleagues create a happier, more imaginative and more engaged collective. Within a voluntary association it is essential to create 'parity of esteem' and a feeling of joint ownership amongst members, regardless of their individual role.

Health inequalities are known to relate, inter alia, to ethnicity, disability and social and economic deprivation. A diverse membership, more representative of the general population, is potentially better able to identify changes to guidance on practice within nutritional care, likely to secure optimal outcomes for patient groups. All BAPEN members should be enabled to make their greatest contribution possible to its work.

2. Purpose of the Policy

This policy demonstrates how BAPEN will avoid discriminating against people, and how we will create a safe and inclusive atmosphere for our members and service users.

3. The Policy

3.1. Policy Statement

BAPEN membership carries a commitment to treating all people equally and with respect, regardless of any protected characteristic or circumstance. Every member should be made to feel welcome, valued and included at all Association meetings and events.

3.2. Delivery

To deliver this commitment, BAPEN will work to ensure the highest possible standards across the Association, but particularly with regard to the following:

a. Membership

BAPEN promotes multi-disciplinary working and can only be fully effective if it represents the full range of people involved in providing nutritional care. It is committed to:

- Increasing the size, range and diversity of membership
- Focusing recruitment on under-represented groups and specialisms
- Providing new members with induction material that enables them to participate fully
- Ensuring that both new and existing members are made aware of BAPEN's vision and values together with expectations of conduct.

b. Leadership

Leadership is encouraged from all areas of the Association. The current BAPEN structure requires leadership at Trustee Board, Executive Committee, Council, Core Groups, Special Interest Groups, Standing Committees and the Independent Advisory Group. All roles are voluntary and unremunerated. Many leadership roles and in particular those of the Executive Committee, are extremely demanding. It is recognised that the additional management burden is a barrier to access and discriminates against those with limited availability and control of their home and work time. BAPEN is committed to:

- Actively seeking potential leaders from across the membership
- Providing comprehensive information and guidance on: leadership roles, job descriptions, expectations of time demands and expertise, and levels of support available
- Organising informal leadership interest meetings
- Providing leadership mentoring via 1:1 coaching, job shadowing and observer status at meetings
- Providing support for those new to chairing meetings
- Routinely reviewing the number and type of key roles, identifying levels of management burden and providing support or changed structure where necessary
- Providing speakers, panels and session

c. Communication

BAPEN cannot regard itself as inclusive by membership profile alone. Members expect and require good quality information and education relevant to the Associations role, as well as opportunities for their differing opinions and ideas to be considered. BAPEN is committed to:

- Regularly surveying members on their perception of equality, diversity and inclusion in practice
- Providing up-to-date information on advances and best practice in nutritional care and welcoming feedback
- Regularly reviewing content on BAPEN's website and ensuring point-of-entry content reflects the diversity of membership and its commitment to EDI
- Ensuring that the website and BAPEN's social media presence promote:
 - ✓ Images that include a range of age, gender, disability, ethnicity and race
 - ✓ Language that avoids stereotypes and particularly gender bias
 - ✓ Case studies that reflect the general patient population
- Sharing communications with all BAPEN Core groups and encouraging those groups that as separate entities have their own constitution, to adopt or harmonise this EDI policy.

d. Access

Access to information and opportunities within the Association is covered elsewhere. Access to all meetings and events is a core member entitlement. However, the concept of 'meetings' is changing and whilst it is acknowledged that the particular nature of informal face to face communication can provide additional benefit, particularly at conference and other large gatherings, virtual meetings will increasingly be considered the norm. BAPEN is committed to:

- Ensuring members' access needs are fully understood for all physical meetings including conference when an access audit should be completed to ensure suitability. Where needed, working to ensure reasonable adjustments can be made to enable participation
- Ensuring physical access to all meeting venues, including wheelchair and non-ambulant access, the provision of hearing loops and PA systems for larger meetings with 50+ present, and support for finding adapted accommodation
- Supporting members in meeting their dietary, religious and medical requirements
- Ensuring a planned mix of virtual and face to face meetings appropriate to members' ability and ease of participation
- Where traditional physical meeting venues remain, providing opportunities for members to join via video or telephone link, thus equalising participation for members in more remote or time-restrictive locations.

e. **Data**

As a stand-alone voluntary membership organisation, BAPEN is committed to ensuring that it holds sufficient data to understand and support member's individual and collective needs. It also aims to establish a baseline measure of diversity within the organisation from which to monitor progress. BAPEN is committed to:

- Protecting all data with strict adherence to the Data Protection Act 2018 along with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) that sets out the key principles, rights and obligations for processing data
- Surveying the membership in order to better understand the distribution of protected characteristics
- Mapping the data above against that of both the general UK population and the UK wider medical world, with particular reference to gender and ethnicity
- Identifying priority areas for membership recruitment, based on the data
- Examining diversity data amongst trustees, committee and council members and taking positive action to diversify membership where appropriate
- Improving survey return rates by emphasising the primary purpose of improving patient outcomes and by sharing with members: survey feedback, analysis, conclusions and recommendations.
- Ensuring that a balance is struck between the need for more and better data and the survey burden to members and their potential disengagement with the process

f. **Dealing with Discrimination**

All members should be alert to discrimination. In some cases of discrimination, it may be appropriate to help the individual or group involved by providing training at the appropriate level – from awareness of unconscious bias at one level through to avoiding potentially unlawful situations at another.

Sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic or otherwise offensive or inflammatory remarks or behaviour are not acceptable and have no place within the Association.

If any member feels that they have suffered any form of discrimination by the Association or been harassed at an Association event, they should raise this directly with any member of the Executive Committee or in writing to the Secretary or President.

Any complaint will be investigated by the Executive Committee or a delegated officer of that committee, in line with BAPEN policies and accepted good practice, and an outcome agreed with the complainant. Should no agreement be reached or the complainant feels any actions fall short of the agreement, the Board of Trustees should be notified and they or a sub-group formed for the purpose, containing at least one 'external' trustee, will consider the complaint and following any further investigation, determine a final outcome in line with the constitution. Should the subject of the complaint be a member of the Trustee Board or Executive then the member should recuse themselves from that body until the complaint has been heard and the outcome determined.

Following any serious breach of conduct, either individually or corporately, the trustees should consider any implications or recommendations for change to this policy or to BAPEN corporate activity.

Date of Policy: March 2021

Date of Review: March 2025