

## BRITISH SOCIETY OF CRIMINOLOGY REGIONAL GROUPS AND SPECIALIST NETWORKS

### How To guide for non-profit event and conference organisation

There are currently 10 regional groups (RGs) and seven specialist networks (SNs) hosted by the British Society of Criminology (BSC). The organisation of the groups vary – some have a chair and a secretary, others a wider executive body including a treasurer and publiciser. The SNs have steering groups. Each RG/SN has developed its own schedule of events – some have an evening event with speakers every four to six weeks; others have one larger day and one evening event a year. Whatever the arrangement, the events and meetings organised regionally and in connection with special interest groups are very important to the Society as both a resource and focal point for existing members and a way of reaching out to the wider public. The purpose of this document is to guide chairs and other officers of RGs and SNs in a way that gives that freedom in arranging events, while ensuring that Society members get the maximum benefit from their membership.

#### Is there a budget for each region/network to spend on events?

The BSC has an annual guideline budget for each of the regional groups and specialist networks of £1,000. The budget applies to each academic year from the beginning of September to the end of August. This money will normally only be paid out if the BSC office ([info@britsoccrim.org](mailto:info@britsoccrim.org)) is informed of the event at least 4 weeks before the event and only on receipt of proof of expenditure on events. The money will be paid out from the annual budget to which the date of the receipt relates.

The Society hopes that previous guidance about being economical will be borne in mind. Prior to this arrangement being introduced in September 2010, the BSC covered speakers' travel and accommodation costs along with dinner (at a rate of £22 a head) for the speaker and two others – normally the chair and secretary. The Society also encouraged event organisers to use reasonably-priced, mid-range hotels such as one of the larger chains (Premier Inn ([www.premierinn.com](http://www.premierinn.com)) or Travel Lodge ([www.travellodge.co.uk](http://www.travellodge.co.uk))) or a good local alternative.

Flights were also agreed if it was more cost- or time-effective for the guest to fly - obviating the need for an overnight stay for example. Organisers/speakers were asked to book tickets for trains as soon as possible as advance tickets can be much cheaper. The Society will only refund travel which is taken by **public transport (the cost of a standard class fare only)** except in circumstances where there is no other alternative and reasons must be provided.<sup>1</sup>

The Society also paid out small amounts for printing, room hire etc, if necessary.

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<sup>1</sup> Only in situations where it is not possible to use public transport will claims for mileage or taxi fares be paid. Use of taxis has to be explained – non-availability of public transport, injury, inability to use public transport, etc.. Mileage will be paid at a flat rate of 40p per mile.

The current budget arrangement allows organisers to be more flexible in spending their money – they could spend more on a speaker’s travel expenses if one of the local members was going to put him or her up for example. As a charity, the BSC would still encourage event organisers to obtain funding or support from other organisations if possible. In the past it has been common for the host institution to fund refreshments for example. Sometimes it is possible to obtain sponsorship from outside bodies, such as publishers, if local ties exist or the event co-incides with another event such as a book launch.

### **‘Badging’ BSC events**

BSC events should be obviously badged as funded by the BSC. This can be achieved by either having BSC leaflets, BSC display boards, feather boards or table runners on any reception desk or the BSC logo on any PowerPoints. Please contact the BSC office ([info@britsoccrim.org](mailto:info@britsoccrim.org)) if your group requires any of these items. It should also be made clear whether events are open to the public or closed.

### **How do I go about choosing a guest speaker/s?**

There are a number of considerations that could influence your choice of speaker. You may need to work from a shortlist in order to ensure availability if you are committed to fixed dates for your events. A first step might be to canvas members on who they might like to invite. You may like to pick a speaker to tie into the research interests of the particular institution or deliberately choose one who does not. Bear in mind the distance the speaker is likely to have to travel and potential speakers’ ability to attend during teaching terms. You might also want to consider whether your potential speaker has already appeared recently at nearby institutions. People who are known to one of the groups’ members might be easier to arrange and accommodate. It might be helpful for organisers to consider what the theme or rationale for the event or series of events is in order to focus in on particular speakers.

### **How do I/speakers claim back expenses from events?**

BSC members can download copies of the form to claim back expenses from the members-only section of the website. Members get given the current password when they join and then subsequently there are announcements in the E-bulletin.

Speakers may submit their expenses directly to the BSC, but please could chairs make sure, at the time of arranging their attendance, that speakers are aware of the limits of expenses claims as explained above. For example, the Society will only refund the cost of a standard class, not first class, fare. Moreover, speaker expenses need to be endorsed by the chair or treasurer of the group - either on the form or by email directly to the BSC office ([info@britosscrim.org](mailto:info@britosscrim.org)). Other expenses claims must come directly from chairs. Please remember it is BSC policy to normally only refund expenses where the BSC office ([info@britosscrim.org](mailto:info@britosscrim.org)) is informed of the event at least 4 weeks before the event and only where a receipt is enclosed.

### **How do I book accommodation for speakers?**

There are three options here. The speaker or you may prefer to book the accommodation and claim back expenses in line with the above. Alternatively speaker, your institution could arrange accommodation and invoice the BSC.

### **Does one have to get approval for an event from the BSC first?**

A recognized group does not have to gain approval to organise a non-charging event but we would ask groups to keep us informed. This is really important to us as the BSC office takes queries about what is going on regionally - it is faster, not to mention more professional, if we already know about what each region/network is doing. We can also advertise your events on the e-bulletin and website - again see below. Therefore, it is for this reason the BSC will normally only refund expenses where the BSC office is informed of the event at least 4 weeks before the event.

### **How do I obtain an up-to-date list of regional members?**

Contact Membership Secretary Steven Rawlings on either e-mail [info@britsoccrim.org](mailto:info@britsoccrim.org) or phone 078963 47183. Helen maintains the Membership database. Please be aware that Steven only works part-time and you might need to leave a message and wait for a reply.

### **How to I get my events included in the BSC website and/or E-bulletin?**

Again contact Membership Secretary Steven Rawlings on either e-mail [info@britsoccrim.org](mailto:info@britsoccrim.org) or phone 078963 47183. Steven is in charge of distributing the e-bulletin and updating the BSC website. Again, please be aware that Steven only works part-time and you might need to leave a message and wait for a reply. Please use the website and e-bulletin - advertising your event could attract a wider audience than might otherwise be the case, including members from other regions and also keeps the BSC website up-to-date and interesting. The e-bulletin is published up to twice a month depending on demand. Please remember it is BSC policy to normally only refund expenses where the BSC office ([info@britsoccrim.org](mailto:info@britsoccrim.org)) is informed of the event at least 4 weeks before the event

### **How can I encourage attendance at events?**

The following ideas may or may not be appropriate depending on the group/event:

- Asking members to suggest speakers who they want to hear speak. Members who suggest a speaker feel responsible to help encourage attendance.
- Canvassing members for the best months, days and times to hold events
- Giving as much notice as possible of speakers, dates and times, ie a list of events at the beginning of the academic year.
- Sending out multiple e-mail reminders with RVSPs
- Creating a website to advertise events
- Producing posters to advertise events
- Inviting PhD students and MSc classes

- Asking individuals whether or not they were coming in person or over the phone
- Asking individuals who have stopped attending why this is the case

### **What information is needed about each regional group/specialist network on the website?**

It would be very useful if each chair could provide, if they haven't already:

- A short section on the group/network - its history, structure, members/audiences, main activities and any particularly interesting past or forthcoming events/speakers.
- Link to regional group/specialist network website (if applicable)
- Details of any forthcoming events
- A photo of themselves (any standard format) and summary of research interests

### **How do I get information included in the newsletter?**

The newsletter is normally published twice a year, in June and December. Articles about news and activities should be sent to the BSC Publications Committee Chair, or the BSC office ideally in May and November.

### **Can I get help from or learn from the experiences of organisers in other regions/networks?**

Positive and negative experiences of organising events can be shared through the Regional Group and Specialist Networks Committee chair or at the meeting of regional group/network organisers which will normally take place at the BSC annual conference.

### **How do I go about setting up a new group?**

The BSC is keen to encourage new interest groups to form. In the first instance you should contact the chair of the Regional Groups and Specialist Network Committee, Professor Andrew Millie ([Milliea@edgehill.ac.uk](mailto:Milliea@edgehill.ac.uk)) who will give advice on forming an organising group and preparing the proposal and present the matter to the Executive Committee (EC). There is no set format for the proposal, but it would be helpful if the proposed organisation/steering group, aims and any ideas for events could be included. One cannot be the chair of a SN (an EC member) unless one has been a BSC member for 12 months though one can still form part of a steering group led by a current BSC member. One of the existing EC members must also serve on a SN steering group.

### **What are the arrangements for electing new chairs/other officials?**

The tenure for a chairship is normally three years. Existing regional and specialist groups should ensure they have a recognized system in place for re-electing officials. Usually this involves asking members for expressions of interest/nominations with an election if there is more than one candidate. Each member of the Society who lives or works in a designated Region is eligible to stand for election and to vote. The

results of the elections will be reported to the Regional and Specialist Networks Chair. **What are the responsibilities of RG/SN chairs and participation in RG/SN conference panels?**

RG chairs have the function of organising local events. They do this under the delegated authority of the Executive Committee. They must conform to the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the British Society of Criminology. Both RG and SN chairs become members of the RGSN committee and SN chairs are invited to become members of the EC. Each SN is and RG is encouraged to submit a panel to the Society's annual conference (panel members are required to fund their attendance). **How do I go about arranging a regional/specialist network conference?**

Separate guidance for groups planning a more ambitious event is being prepared by the Conference Committee. If you are planning an event for which an entry fee is charged, you must tell the Society as this could have financial implications for us – in the event, for example, that you make a loss. If the event is to be marketed as BSC there must also be a cost differential between members and non-members. In the first instance, contact Conference Committee chair. A detailed proposal will subsequently be required that will be discussed by the Conference Committee and the EC so please allow time for this to happen. There is also a checklist of possible expenditure heads (aimed primarily at the annual conference organisers) which you might find useful in planning. In the past such one-day events have been used by the Society as an additional income stream. Any profits can subsequently be ring fenced for the organising body.

In addition, BSC Innovation Fund Grants of up to £1,000 are available for members to organise one-day conferences, colloquiums or symposiums in the field of criminology and criminal justice. Further details are available under the Members' Area on the BSC website.

**Charlotte Harris, Executive Director, BSC**

**Andrew Millie, Chair Regional Groups and Specialist Network Committee**

**31/01/22**

Any queries to Andrew [Milliea@edgehill.ac.uk](mailto:Milliea@edgehill.ac.uk) or Charlotte [charlotte.harris@britsoccrim.org](mailto:charlotte.harris@britsoccrim.org).