

These guidelines have been produced for committee members to ensure their professional activities on behalf of the Association do not contravene the Association's stance of political and religious neutrality, and to also help us all identify any potential conflicts with this policy in their activities outside of the BAPD.

The BAPD has a stance that is free from and form of party political allegiance, and develops its policies in the best interests of patients it cares for, and the profession it represents. Committee members and representatives are expected to implement those policies to the best of their ability, and it is a sign of our professionalism that no political or religious bias or indication of private conviction is evident in the manner in which staff discharge their duties. Staff should also avoid any overt manifestations of political allegiance when representing the BAPD, such as political emblems or clothing.

Elected members should contribute to debate on policy issues in the best interests of the profession and their patients. Elected members should not exhibit any party political bias in the democratic and policy making processes of the Association, and should accept they have a joint responsibility for the policies of the BAPD in all public forums.

Elected committee members and representatives can however join, and actively support, a political party in a private capacity.

This means colleagues should therefore be mindful of joining any public platform or engaging in any public debate that may associate their freely expressed private opinions, both religious and political, with those of the BAPD. If any elected member anticipates individual exposure to the media or in a public forum that may bring them into conflict with BAPD policy, then s/he should alert the Executive Committee who will endeavour to advise and support the colleague concerned in the most appropriate way. Advice and support will take into account the extent to which a conflict arises, the likely reaction or level of media interest, and the sensitivity or seniority of the position held by the committee member involved.

So long as the Executive Committee are advised of any potential conflict, the aim will be to manage the situation as effectively as possible. It is likely that in the majority of cases, with any difficulties can be either resolved or minimised. It is however possible that where strong private convictions are expressed in public and conflict with core policies of the BAPD, then continued democratic involvement with the BAPD may be mutually incompatible. This is likely to depend on the specific conflict and its sensitivity, the likely media reaction, and the position held by the committee member.

Any action against an elected official will be given careful consideration by the Executive Committee, observing both the demands of natural justice and the fact that any decision taken by the Exec Committee in this regard will set a precedent for the future.