



Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

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Drafted by: Outreach Coordinator
Responsible Person(s): Committee & Group members
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PURPOSE:

The British Society of Veterinary Pathology (BSVP) is committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion among our members, and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

This policy is fully supported by the Committee.

POLICY STATEMENTS:

The BSVP endorses diversity, equality, fairness, and respect, and does not advocate, support, or practice discrimination or harassment based on protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and caring responsibilities, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

SCOPE:

The policy applies to all elected positions, contractors, members, speakers, industry representatives and delegates.

The policy applies to all BSVP functions, including Committee meetings, workshops, conferences, meetings, social events, virtual events, online social media interactions and any other event held as a BSVP function.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Committee commits to:

- Encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion in the organisation.
- Creating an environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all members are recognised and valued. This commitment includes ensuring that:



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- The Society's practices and processes incorporate precautions against discrimination and harassment in such areas as elections, nominations, hiring, membership, professional development, and service delivery.
- Reasonable accommodations are made to allow diverse groups to access benefits and services provided by the Society
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- Taking seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination. Complaints are treated confidentially, with immediate and appropriate corrective action taken if such acts are recognised.
- Reviewing, as appropriate, the effectiveness of the management systems established to remove discrimination and harassment, and ensure fairness, and considering and acting to address any issues.
- Promoting a culture of effective policy compliance across the Society.

PROCEDURES

Complaint Process

This policy does not supersede the relevant policies of a complainant's employer, institution, or other agency. A complainant who believes they are the subject of discrimination, bullying, harassment (sexual or otherwise), or a witness who has observed any of the above to have taken place, should consider if they are covered by any of their own relevant workplace policies in the first instance. Non-members shall not be permitted to initiate a complaints procedure unless the policy breach occurs during a BSVP function or event.

If appropriate, the complainant should make the alleged harasser(s) aware their behaviour is offensive, unwelcome, and unacceptable, and that it needs to stop immediately. If the complainant feels unable to speak to the person(s) directly, or the behaviour continues, they should contact the BSVP President (or appropriate nominated member of the Committee), who will provide support, and ascertain the nature of the complaint and the wishes of the complainant. The BSVP provides support in a structured process to reach a resolution of disputes between members, but it does not have a policing or judicial role. All complaints are dealt with in a prompt and impartial manner.

Informal Intervention



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Informal intervention may be undertaken through a process of mediation. The alleged harasser will be made aware of the allegations being made against them and given the right to respond.

This procedure will be complete when the complainant and alleged harasser come to an agreement on the procedure to be followed. Notes of the meeting will be made available to both parties. If an agreement does not occur, a formal complaints procedure may be followed.

Formal Complaints Procedure

Proceeding with a formal complaint requires the consent of the complainant. All complaints must be made in writing and include the following details: name of the complainant, nature of the complaint, issues requiring resolution, date of the complaint and signature of the complainant.

The formal procedure is organised by the BSVP President (or appropriate nominated member of the Committee). This person organises an investigation which in most cases may involve, but is not limited to:

- A private interview to clarify the complaint and ascertain what the complainant's anticipated outcome is.
- An interview with the alleged harasser(s) to ascertain their defence.
- Interviews with other individuals who may be able to assist in clarifying the matter.
- Examination of any relevant documents or evidence; and
- Determination of any previous behaviours or issues.

Interviews are documented to avoid irrelevant information. Relevant information includes parties involved, timing, location, and nature of the complaint. These records are kept and filed in a confidential and secure location.

Additional evidence may include:

- Supporting evidence provided by a medical practitioner, counsellor, family member, friend, or co-worker.
- Complaints or information provided by other members or volunteers about the behaviour of the alleged harasser; and
- Records kept by the person claiming to have been harassed.

Outcomes will depend upon factors such as:

- The severity and frequency of the harassment.



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- The weight of the evidence.
- The wishes of the complainant
- The level of contrition accepted by the complainant.
- Whether there have been any prior incidents or warnings.

On completion of the investigation, the complainant and BSVP President (or appropriate nominated member of the Committee) determine a course of action to be taken, unless the matter is deemed to be dealt with under the procedure for dealing with criminal conduct. Actions may include, but are not limited to, any combination of the following:

- Request that the harasser undertakes counselling at their expense.
- Disciplinary action against the harasser e.g., suspension, cancellation, or expulsion of membership.
- Disciplinary action against the complainant if there is strong evidence the complaint was vexatious or malicious.
- Formal apologies and agreement that the behaviour is to cease; and
- Mediation conducted by an impartial third party (agreed by all parties).

The BSVP President (or appropriate nominated member of the Committee) will advise all relevant parties of the outcome. Outcomes are deemed final and accepted in good faith.

If there is insufficient proof to decide whether harassment occurred, the BSVP President (or appropriate nominated member of the Committee) will remind those involved of expected standards of conduct and monitor the situation carefully. The BSVP President (or appropriate nominated member of the Committee) monitors the outcome to ensure that the offensive behaviour has ceased and that neither party has been victimised. This may involve follow-up interviews.

If there has been any substantiated victimisation following procedures, disciplinary action will be taken.

Procedures for Dealing with Criminal Conduct

Sexual harassment, or circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic, may amount to criminal conduct. This type of conduct is not suited to internal resolution and such complaints must be treated by the criminal justice system. It is not the obligation or duty of the BSVP to report such matters to the police on behalf of the complainant, except where required by law.