



**The British
Psychological Society**
Promoting excellence in psychology

British Psychological Society responses to external consultations

- Society responses to external consultations fall under the auspices of the Policy Team, which is part of the Policy and Communications Department.
- They are coordinated by the Policy Advice Administrator (Consultations), Joe Liardet (Joe.Liardet@bps.org.uk)

What makes a good consultation response?

- **All claims MUST be evidence based.** The Society responds to consultations in order to provide a Psychological Evidence-Base to the consulting body. Full References MUST be included. Comments based on anecdotal evidence or professional opinion should be kept to a minimum however, relevant examples from clinical experience (such as examples of established good practice) may be included.
- **The argument must be presented clearly within the response.** If you don't agree with what is being proposed, suggest an alternative. Simply suggesting things that something should be changed without an explanation presented is not likely to have an impact.
- **Avoid criticising the language / grammar.** As psychologists, we are looking to present a Psychological Evidence-Base to the consulting body's consultation process. Language amendments are not necessary and can come across as pedantic to the consulting body. During the process, we are usually asked to comment on a draft document so it is not uncommon for spelling / grammar mistakes to occur which will be corrected before the final draft is published.
- **Be assertive in tone but not overly critical or "ranty".** This can undermine our response in the eyes of the consulting body and lessen our impact. Have conviction in your claims, i.e. "The Society welcomes this initiative but has the following concerns over the proposal."
- **The response should be written on behalf of the Society as a whole.** When you are responding to a consultation, you are representing the BPS as a whole and not your individual Member Network. Using a consultation as an opportunity to promote one area of psychology above another is not acceptable. It is important that a response should aim to reflect the consensus of opinion within the Society and not favour one particular area of Psychology.
- **Showing fairness and respect.** A response should be a fair evaluation of evidence and should be respectful of valid differences of opinion within the psychology community or between psychology and other disciplines. The contribution of other professions should not be unfairly criticised.
- **Please put acronyms in full.** The first time any acronym is used it should be written in brackets after the full term it represents, e.g. Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT).

Important

The Society will only produce **ONE** response to any consultation.

Responses on behalf of particular Divisions / Faculties /Member Networks are **NOT** permitted under any circumstances.

Any response that goes under the Society logo **MUST** be signed off by the relevant Board Chair and Branch Chair in the case of Devolved Nations.

Board Chairs may also decide to that the response is not appropriate and therefore not submit it if it does not meet the required Quality Standard.

If you have any queries in relation to any matters involving consultations please contact Joe Liardet by email, Joe.Liardet@bps.org.uk or phone, 0116 252 9936.

The Consultation Processes

- When a Consultation, inquiry or Call for Evidence is announced, it is assessed for relevance in line with Society's Strategic Priorities and Policy Workstream. If not relevant – consultation not pursued further.
- A Consultation is logged and deadlines are set. Relevant documents are downloaded and circulated. There is a comment deadline, office deadline and final submission deadline.
- The Consultation is circulated to relevant Member Network Chairs and Policy / Communication Leads. Chairs and Leads circulate this throughout their respective Member Network and anyone with interest / expertise in the particular subject area.
- If a wide array of interest is shown, reasonable deadlines (depending on submission time) are set for Contributors in terms of their feedback / comments, liaising with the Lead Author. If little or no interest is registered, a Society response is not pursued further.
- Lead authors work on the response including comments that they have received from contributors, liaising with them, where necessary and doing their best to highlight the key areas.
- The response must be sent back to the Policy Advice Administrator (Consultations) by the **Office Deadline**. The response will be sub-edited and formatted into the Society's house style.
- The response is then sent to the Chair of the relevant board to be signed-off / approved, as well as the relevant Nation Branch Chair, where necessary.
- Deadlines are set for the Chair to return the response to address any issues, liaising with Lead Author as to any changes / additions required.
- The **Approved response** is then sent to consulting organisation.
- All consultations, both archive and submitted responses are published on our website and can be found at: <https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/listing/policies-and-impact>

The Lead Author role

- The Lead Author role is key to the quality of responses.
- A Lead Author will be selected from those who have registered an interest based on their relevance and expertise. The decision on who to ask to act as lead author rests with the Policy Team.
- Lead Authors are required to collate all member responses and ensure that responses abide by all the steps mentioned on the previous page.
- Lead authors will attempt to resolve differing viewpoints and produce an agreed response to any particular issue. If the Lead Author and contributors are unable to agree on the content of a response in time for the consultation close date to be met, the differing viewpoints will be referred to the relevant Board Chair. The Chair will decide whether or not it is possible to resolve the outstanding issues. In the former case, they will edit the response as they feel is appropriate; in the latter, they will rule that no response can be submitted. The Chair's decisions are final.

Lead Authors will be supported as much as possible from within the office. If you have any queries or need any help at all, please contact Joe.Liardet@bps.org.uk.