The National Allergy Strategy Group (NASG)

Terms of Reference of the NASG

1. Aims of the NASG

Formed in 2001, the aim of the NASG is to improve the lives of all people with allergies in the UK and influence Government to improve allergy services across the National Health Service so that all allergy patients receive high quality care with equitable access, regardless of where they live in the UK. Over time, this remit has expanded and now relates to wider aspects impacting the quality of life of people with allergies and their families.

Specific objectives are:

- To develop a joined up National Allergy Strategy for the alliance, and other stakeholders, to implement
- To lobby for accountable and identifiable representation in relation to allergy services provided by the NHS across the whole of the UK.
- To improve the provision on specialist allergy care services within the NHS across the whole UK, reducing current geographical disparities, working with stakeholders in devolved nations where required.
- Increase the number of adult and paediatric consultants trained in allergy; which in turn requires an increase in the number of training posts in the adult (ACI) and paediatric allergy (national grid) training programmes.
- Increase education and awareness of allergy in primary care, for GPs and other healthcare professionals
- Ensure appropriate national and local commissioning of allergy services within the new Integrated Care Systems to ensure cost effective and efficient use of NHS resources whilst improving patient care.
- Work collaboratively with other stakeholders to engage positively with government agencies and influence policy across diverse areas such as food labelling, education and transport, ensuring that the needs of people will allergy are addressed
- To support our core members in actively promoting the agenda of people with allergies and advocate for them in all areas of society
- To advocate for increased funding, delivery and dissemination of scientific research into the causes, prevention of and treatment of allergic disease.

2. Membership

The National Allergy Strategy Group (NASG) is an alliance of the national professional medical society the BSACI (British Society for Allergy and Clinical Immunology), the UK-wide patient organisations Allergy UK (AUK) and Anaphylaxis UK (AU). This core group is

responsible for leading the operational activities of the NASG, which includes Secretariat support for the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Allergy. All core members have equal status as NASG partners.

Core members are responsible for the leadership as well as the day to day running of NASG. They are obliged to support the NASG by, between them, providing all required resource either by financial contribution or provision of benefit in kind. There is an expectation that all core members will contribute to the running of the NASG either by financial contribution (but not exclusively by) or by a benefit in kind but this may vary according to each organisation's own resources and by mutual agreement.

More specifically, NASG core members all undertake to actively contribute to the following activities:

- Coordination and implementation of all the NASG objectives.
- Working closely with the Chair providing full secretarial support and administration for the NASG, including drafting agendas, briefings for and minutes of meetings. (Full secretariat support provided by AUK as a Gift in Kind)
- Maintenance of the NASG website and other social media channels eg Twitter (support provided by Anaphylaxis UK as a gift in kind)
- Management of finances relating to the Member contributions to the NASG (support provided by BSACI as a gift in kind)
- Acting as the central document repository for NASG (provided by BSACI as a gift in kind).
- Acting as Secretariat to the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Allergy (Full secretariat support provided by AUK as a Gift in Kind)
- Representing the NASG at meetings with Government agencies, MPs and Peers relating to NASG activities.
- Coordinating any NASG-led wider stakeholder activities which support NASG objectives and activities.
- Make decisions based relating to NASG activities, ideally by consensus or where there is not consensus then by a majority vote
- Any other tasks as deemed appropriate by NASG core members.

Core members will work jointly to lead the development of a national allergy strategy, under the umbrella of the NASG and likewise, work towards its implementation. Core members will not develop their own National Allergy Strategy. Core members will agree exclusivity regarding the National Allergy Strategy development in as much as they will not be part of any other allergy-related collaborations that involve the development of an alternate National Allergy Strategy. If a core member choses to do so, they will inform other members and acknowledge that this may lead to exclusion from further involvement with the NASG National Allergy Strategy. For clarity, development of allergy strategies or plans for devolved nations would still be considered compatible with an overall National Allergy Strategy.

Core members are expected to lobby and campaign in their own right without permission of the other core members but do undertake to ensure that such activities are consistent with the agreed National Allergy Strategy. Any such activities undertaken by individual core

member organisations relating to issues not included in the National Allergy Strategy (even if related to the same objectives) will be independent from these terms of reference and requirements.

Core members will also ensure that other members are given notice of such activities to minimize the risk of apparent inconsistencies in each core members commitment to a national strategy.

Each core member should be represented at all NASG activities. Decisions will be made by consensus. Votes will only be required for appointment of new core or stakeholder members (for which a unanimous decision is required) or election of a new chair, in which case each core member will have one vote. The Chair will not hold a vote.

The NASG Chair is an elected role, with a three-year term of office. The Chair may be re-elected a maximum of twice. The Chair must be a representative of one of the core members, each of whom can chose how they wish to decide which individual may represent them for this role. At the end of the 3-year term, each organisation may put forward a representative and the core members will vote if more than one candidate is put forward.

The Patron of the NASG is Prof Sir Stephen Holgate and the President is Dr Pam Ewan. These roles will be reviewed every 3 years and changes made by core members as required. Neither Patron nor President has voting rights.

The alliance may consider other stakeholders to join the core members group in the future on a case by case basis (if all members were in agreement) if it was deemed beneficial in helping the NASG deliver its aims.

3. Additional Core Members

NASG is committed to inclusivity and any organization can apply to become a core member. All existing core members are required to agree for an application for core membership to be accepted.

Core membership may be achieved by an application process that will require completion of a standard proforma application approved by core members. Applications will be considered against a set of pre-agreed criteria and approved only if all core members agree. The decision to accept new core members will be entirely and exclusively at the discretion of the current core members and requires a unanimous decision.

Criteria for core membership will include:

- Demonstrable commitment to, and consistency with, the organizational aims of the NASG
- Ability to bring new resources, skills or perspective to the NASG
- Willingness to commit to the NASG Terms of Reference
- Full agreement from the organisation's governing body

- A scope of work which covers a range of allergy issues rather than being a single issue campaigning group
- Appropriate infrastructure to be able to meaningfully contribute to NASG activities

Core membership is not open to commercial organisations or individuals. New core members will have all the same responsibilities as existing ones as outlined in section 2 and will have voting rights. Applicants who do not meet the full criteria for core membership may be offered stakeholder membership.

If a core member has concerns that another core member is not adhering to the requirements laid out in these Terms of Reference, then these should be raised with the Chair. The Chair will in turn arrange for a group discussion of all core members and if there are irreconcilable differences, this may result in a core member being asked to leave the group by a unanimous vote of the other core members.

4. Wider Stakeholder Engagement

The NASG recognises the benefit of collaboration, with aims to engage with wider stakeholders to support development of the National Allergy Strategy, and where appropriate, join NASG meetings, which will include:

- Representative organisation of interested clinicians including doctors, nurses and allied healthcare professionals in the field of allergy and immunology across primary, secondary, and tertiary care.
- Interested patient organisations and charities in the field of allergy including single issue campaign groups.
- Interested industry stakeholders in the field of allergy.
- Representatives from stakeholders in the devolved nations eg Children & Young People's Allergy Network in Scotland (CYANS)
- Representatives of Governmental organisations e.g.FSA, MHRA, National Allergy Champion/National Clinical Lead in Allergy for NHSE and DHSC)
- Representatives of Governmental organisations in the devolved administrations

Stakeholder members support and inform the NASG by contributing to strategy development and, where appropriate, public awareness activities. They may do this by supplying delegated members to strategy development meetings and playing an active part in the development and implementation processes. They may also be invited to endorse the national strategy and act as advisors through the process of its development and implementation.

Stakeholder members do not have any voting rights nor any rights of veto on any decisions made.

Stakeholder membership may be achieved by an application process that will require completion of a standard proforma application approved by core members. Applications will be considered against a set of pre-agreed criteria and approved only if all core members agree. Ideally, stakeholder members should support the aims of the NASG. Initial

stakeholder membership will be for a 2-year period subject to review, with further decisions regarding a majority from pre-existing core members. Criteria for core membership will include consistency of organizational aims with those of NASG, full agreement from organisation's governing body (where applicable), scope of work which covers allergy issues. Stakeholder membership is open to commercial organisations but not to individuals, except by invitation.

If all core members agree, a stakeholder member may be excluded from NASG membership.

5. Meetings

- Meetings of the core NASG group are held a minimum of 3 times each year, preferably in-person, with the aim of holding at least one meeting of the wider stakeholder group each year.
- An open meeting will be held at the BSACI Annual Conference.
- Decisions are made by consensus in meetings; and, as necessary, by discussion between meetings. Where required, if consensus cannot be reached, voting will be required as outlined above.

6. Roles of the core group members

Each of the core group will provide in-kind support to enable the delivery of the NASG responsibilities. All documentation will be held in a central location by BSACI. These roles are subject to review every 3 years, with any decision to change based on a majority vote.

BSACI: BSACI will provide in-kind support for the financial administration of the funds for the NASG and provide an update on finances at each meeting. recording income and expenses to be audited through the BSACI with an annual audit circulated to NASG members annually. BSACI will also maintain an online repository of all NASG documentation.

Allergy UK: Allergy UK will provide in-kind secretariat support for the NASG, organising meeting dates, working closely with the Chair to draft agendas, briefing documents and minutes. Allergy UK will provide the NASG in-kind support for the APPG for Allergy, providing the secretariat and other support for the APPG through a Policy Officer.

Anaphylaxis UK: Anaphylaxis UK will provide in-kind support for the maintenance of the NASG website, liaising with other core NASG members to agree content and updates to be added to the website. The website will continue to be held at www.nasguk.org and will be reviewed regularly to ensure it is current. They will also manage other Social Media channels eg Twitter.

Wider stakeholders: NASG core group will discuss and agree any roles and activities which may engage wider stakeholders.

7. Publicity

- Publicity for NASG will mainly be via the website, media contacts and patient groups.
- Each NASG core member may also undertake their own activities and public affairs aligning with the core objectives of the NASG.

8. Intellectual Property and Confidentiality

- All core members will ensure any information relating to NASG business or affairs is kept confidential where agreed this is required, and not divulged without prior agreement.
- No core member will cause or permit anything which may damage or endanger any intellectual property of the NASG or use the NASG title to it or assist or allow others to do so.

9. Declarations of Interest

All core members will declare any declaration of interest that may arise which could be seen as a conflict of interest to specific NASG activities. Declarations of interest of NASG will be declared on the NASG website, co-ordinated by Anaphylaxis UK as part of their work supporting the website.

10. Changes to the Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed every three years and amended as required with agreement of all core members.

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