**British Society for Heart Failure (BSH)**

**Inclusion, Equality and Respect Charter**

**Background:**

Respect in the way we include and treat people, the commitment we make for patients and society as a whole and our ethics, are key considerations for the British Society for Heart Failure (BSH).

Respect, accompanied by consideration, brings inclusion and helps to neutralise inequality. Respect benefits both giver and receiver. It informs our modes of management and operation.

Through an awareness of intersectionality, we can better acknowledge and ground the differences among us. The resulting identity and belonging is important to each and every member of the BSH. It is equally important to each and every one of our patients.

As part of a wider programme of active engagement and interest in inclusion and diversity undertaken by the BSH in 2020, it was recommended that the Society composed a thoughtful agreement – a charter. This charter should be a ‘living/ evolving’ set of considerations which position BSH as a leader, confer benefit in terms of confidence to members and in time, shape heart failure care and medicine.

Creating a charter is a way of making the values of inclusion, equality and respect meaningful to members and serves to unite the Society. It encourages ownership, learning and development. Once developed the charter should become a point of reference for the Society. And once signed by members and external stakeholders, it becomes a pact which signifies a shared belief that the Society’s activities should be inclusive, accessible, encourage equality and foster respect. It should act as the ‘moral glue’ which binds everyone together.

As a Society, we seek to make an impact on heart failure care through innovative research and education. Respect for diversity of thought, belief and background and open mindedness to equal opportunity, are crucial to achieving the desired impact. It is only as an inclusive Society that we can face the challenges of the future, build sustainability and truly represent the patients we serve.

Passively embracing diversity, inclusion, equality and respect is not enough. On the way to true inclusion, we must not be afraid of challenging discriminating patterns of thought and behaviour and emanate respect and equality.​

We therefore invite you to commit to the tenets of our Charter and sign up to our pact.

**The Charter:**

The British Society for Heart Failure wants to spearhead the move towards respectful, inclusive, equal medical societies by creating an inclusive environment at the BSH where all of our members are encouraged to reach their full potential and individual differences are valued and respected.

* The British Society for Heart Failure commits to standing firm for our membership in matters of inclusion, equality and respect
	+ We assert the right of our members to be treated with dignity and respect no matter their gender, age, seniority, creed or ethnicity
	+ As a Society, we will promote the immense benefits of inclusivity, not merely representation, but culturally sensitive behaviours and psychological support
* We commit to building a culture of respect and collaboration across medical practice, research and education to consolidate the leadership role of our members in heart failure care
* The BSH will be working with others, including statutory bodies and relevant organisations to build and foster relationships of trust, confidence and cooperation through education, professionalism and leadership
* Our senior leaders commit to ‘leading from the front’ and to displaying model behaviours
* Our members must work to create environments that foster respect and good behaviour; calling out and challenging those who fall short
* Bolstering resilience through appropriate codes of conduct, policies and procedures to address unacceptable behaviours as provided by the UK’s healthcare professional bodies and regulators.
* Provide learning for all members to sensitise and to develop more actively inclusive behaviours
	+ Put in place actions to raise awareness about conscious and unconscious bias which adversely affects “inclusion” at every phase of work life, in every work environment and at every hierarchical level - inclusion must become a personal priority
* Make our work and initiatives accessible to all through careful assessment for interpretation including:
	+ Appropriate use of language and, as necessary, use of other language for those for whom English is not a first language
	+ Use of digital assets to accommodate neurodiversity and those with visual and acoustic impairment
	+ Appropriate adjustments to our physical spaces such as lighting, greater accessibility and space etc., including for our events
* Measures of Progress:
	+ An initial survey to document self-reported ethnicity/ diversity/ disability amongst members
	+ Monitor balance of speakers and subjects at all BSH events
	+ Expectation that members read and understand the principles when becoming/renewing membership

Signed:

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| **Name**  | **On behalf of** | **Signature** |
| Lynn MacKay-Thomas | British Society Heart Failure |  |