



ASO Networks Terms of Reference
Association for the Study of Obesity

ASO Networks

Founded in 1967, the ASO has become the UK's foremost charitable organisation dedicated to the understanding, prevention and treatment of obesity. In addition to the ASO national meetings, we aim to have ASO Network (formally known as regional groups) meetings across the UK in order to meet the ASO mission and objectives at a regional or national level. Additionally, establishing and maintaining Network meetings will offer additional communication channels between the ASO and its members and allow the ASO to be more responsive to its members' needs which is a strategic aim of the ASO.

The ASO has established Networks throughout the UK. Meetings are held periodically and are organised locally with some administrative and financial support from the ASO Office and the Trustee(s) with the role of ASO Networks Officer. Active Networks are detailed on the ASO website (www.aso.org.uk/aso-Networks). ASO Networks are created to help establish links between academics, practitioners and policymakers in a locality, to share good practice, research, policy updates and provide local Networking opportunities for the development of partnerships and collaborations where appropriate. The benefits of establishing an ASO Network include:

- Provision of names of ASO members in any areas where Network meetings are being held;
- Annual funding to assist in meeting costs;
- Free ASO membership for one Network lead;
- Promotion of meetings on ASO website, newsletter, e-mail alerts and twitter;;
- Provision of assistance/advice with meetings where requested e.g. advice about speakers, how to arrange free Specialist Certification in Obesity Professional Education (SCOPE) accreditation from the World Obesity Federation;
- Provision of ASO branding and templates for the organisation, promotion and running of meetings;
- Provision of local Networking opportunities and with other ASO Networks;
- Some administrative support from the ASO Office (e.g. setting up the Eventbrite registration, providing a sign-in sheet/register, providing updates on the number of registered delegates if requested, paying expenses);and Trustee(s) with the role of ASO Networks Officer (e.g. Reviewing programme/providing suggested speakers if requested, approving costs
- Complimentary attendance at the ASO national conference, the UK Congress on Obesity (UKCO), for one ASO Network representative, and the opportunity to be involved in the running of this national conference.

This document outlines the terms of reference for the ASO Network meetings and will be reviewed every 2 years, in collaboration with the ASO Network Leads:

1. Support available from the ASO for the Network meetings
2. Data protection
3. Registration fees for Network meetings
4. Adherence to the ASO sponsorship policy
5. Joint ASO Network meetings with other organisations
6. Minimum requirements for ASO Networks
7. ASO position statement on weight bias and stigma

1. Support available from the ASO for Network meetings

a. Financial Support

The ASO will provide financial support to cover reasonable costs associated with running Network meetings. The amount of financial support available for each meeting will be dependent on sponsorship arrangements and should be discussed with the ASO Network Officer before any financial commitments are made. Once agreed, monies can be redeemed by invoicing the ASO through the office, with the provision of evidence of payments made (e.g. an invoice, receipts). Meetings should be run on a cost neutral basis as a minimum. ASO will not pick up any losses and a budget sheet should be kept for each Network for auditing purposes. Any invoices to be paid should be highlighted to the ASO office as soon as possible (and within 3 months) to allow time for it to be paid in a timely fashion. Requests for additional funding to that agreed must be made to the ASO Networks Officer and the ASO Treasurer before any payments are processed. Examples of how the ASO funding has been used by ASO Networks include the provision of refreshments for delegates, travel costs for speakers, room hire fees, administrative support to organise the Network activity. ASO Networks are encouraged to utilise local expertise where possible and fees are not remunerated to speakers (except for economy travel). Invited speakers can book their own travel and claim expenses back directly from the ASO office using the [ASO expenses claim form](#). Reimbursements for speakers travel will be taken from the ASO Networks annual budget. Please note that all invited speakers should be made aware that the ASO only refunds economy travel, and that travel should be booked as early as possible to keep costs to a minimum (at least 30 days before the date of travel).

One ASO Network lead for each group is entitled to free ASO membership. Free membership is only permitted for ASO Network leads who are not current ASO trustees. In circumstances where there is only one active ASO Network lead and they are also a current ASO trustee, the free membership can be allocated to an assistant ASO Network lead (e.g. research assistant or PhD student who assists with the organisation and facilitation of meetings). One ASO Network representative will also be entitled to attend UKCO and contribute to the running of the meeting (e.g. chair sessions, help out with registrations etc). This includes free UKCO registration, economy travel and one night's accommodation. Travel to attend UKCO and accommodation should be confirmed with the ASO Office prior to booking.

b. Trustee Support for ASO Networks

ASO trustees are elected by the ASO membership and serve a three year term and each trustee has a role. The role of the ASO Networks Officer is to support the ASO Network leads. The responsibilities of this role are to encourage ASO Network leads to run regular meetings; encourage members to lead an ASO Network where they don't exist; provide a point of contact for Network leads; and ensure Network leads are promoting the ASO at meetings and have resources to encourage new members. Additionally, there are trustees who are locally involved in the organisation and running of ASO Network meetings. The current trustees with an ASO Network role are detailed on the ASO website <http://www.aso.org.uk/about/trustees/>.

c. ASO Website

The ASO website has designated pages for ASO Networks which includes an interactive map to identify contacts and advertise events for each Network. The area also includes a repository of meeting presentations and other documentation associated with Network meetings (www.aso.org.uk/aso-Networks).

d. Advertising and Archiving

The ASO website will be used to advertise the Network meetings, as well as being an archive for meeting information for ASO members to access. In order to facilitate this, ASO Network leads should:

- Plan the meetings in advance (having the academic or calendar year planned in advance is best practice) and send any associated documentation to the ASO office to be uploaded to the website (e.g. advertisements, speaker biographies, agenda etc). It can take up to a month for an email to be sent to the membership to advertise the event, depending on the ASO comms schedule, so information should be sent as early as possible. Information provided must include:
 - Date, time and venue
 - Programme/speakers
 - Title of event
 - Registration fees and any particular registration instructions/ticket types
 - Registration link if not being created by ASO
 - Whether catering will be provided (and whether dietary requirements are needed)
 - Maximum number of attendees
- Request that all speakers provide slides that they are willing to have in the public domain (e.g. taking into account removing unpublished data, confidential or sensitive information etc) and send to the ASO office in PDF format to be uploaded to the ASO website;
- Send any meeting notes, summaries, reports or other outputs of the meetings to the ASO office to be uploaded to the ASO website.

e. Organisation, Promotion, and Professional Branding

The ASO has resources available via the website to facilitate the organisation, promotion, and professional branding of the ASO Network meetings in addition to local activities of Network leads and group members. These include:

- Organisation of meetings:
 - Registration and payment system via Eventbrite (see section 2 relating to registration and fees);
 - Database of ASO Network meeting attendees who register for meetings and agree to being contacted about future events for promotion of future meetings;
 - Speaker pack to be shared with invited speakers for ASO Network meetings, including information on claiming travel expenses;
- Promotion of meetings:
 - The ASO Office can promote meetings by email to ASO members and non-members who have agreed to receive correspondence from ASO (e.g. previous Network meeting attendees);
 - The ASO website should be used to advertise the Network meeting;

- The ASO Comms Officer can promote events using social media (e.g. Twitter and LinkedIn). If meetings are SCOPE accredited, then they will also be promoted on the World Obesity Forum website.
- Professional branding of meetings:
 - The ASO logo is available to the ASO Network leads via the ASO office and is to be used on all ASO associated documentation (including Network meetings);
 - Each Network will have an ASO pop up banner and leaflets about ASO membership, conferences and other ASO-related meetings and activities to distribute to delegates of the Network meetings. The Network Lead should inform the ASO Office with at least 1 months' notice if they require replenishment of flyers.
 - The ASO will provide slides for Network leads to use to promote the ASO and its activities to the delegates of the Network meetings;
 - There are ASO templates which Network leads can use and adapt for their local needs (e.g. joint meetings). The available templates are for posters, meeting agendas, presentations, meeting summaries, evaluation/feedback forms, signs to direct delegates to meeting rooms, information for speakers (e.g. travel reimbursement procedures, links to position statement on weight bias and stigma).

f. Networking Support

- The ASO website will have links to lead contacts for all Networks;
- The ASO will provide Networking opportunities at the national UKCO conference for Network leads/representatives;
- New ASO Network leads can be allocated a more experienced buddy for support (e.g. with the practicalities of organising and running the meetings);
- We encourage Network leads to communicate with one another via group emails when appropriate, for example if you have a query relevant to all Networks or you would like advice about a topic relating to the Network meetings that other Network leads would be able to support you with;
- PhD students and early career researchers should be encouraged to support the ASO Network leads in the organisation and running of meetings to gain experience, Networking opportunities, and to enhance their CV (e.g. for future fellowship applications).

2. Data protection

Delegate data is managed by the ASO office via Eventbrite. If delegate details are required by the Network Leads for the organisation/administration of the immediate event, they must be transferred and stored in a secure way and disposed of securely following the event. Network Leads must NOT use that data to communicate with delegates for any purpose other than the administration of the event in question. The ASO Office will retain a list of any delegates who opt in to further communication from ASO and will manage those future communications.

3. Registration Fees for Network Meetings

All Network meetings should be free for ASO members. If meetings are sponsored (via ASO centrally or locally arranged sponsorship) and the sponsorship covers all meeting costs then ASO Network meetings can be free for all delegates to encourage participation. If there are no sponsorship arrangements in place then non-members will have to pay a registration fee to contribute to the costs of running the meetings. The suggested registration fees if required are:

- ASO full or student individual members: free;
- Non-members: £20 for a full day meeting, £10 for a short meeting (i.e. any amount of time up to half day);
- Student non-members: £10 for a full day meeting, £5 for a short meeting;
- An optional fee to cover additional costs may be included if the ASO Network leads feel this is required (e.g. to cover excess meeting costs).

Managing the Registration and Fee Process

The registration for ASO Network meetings and associated fees are managed by Eventbrite (www.eventbrite.co.uk). A template for each Network can be set up with support from the ASO Network Officer, the ASO Office, or ASO Trustees based locally to the Network groups. Once a template has been developed for an ASO Network, the details can be added for each meeting.

4. Adherence to the ASO Sponsorship Policy:

The ASO will actively seek sponsorship to support the sustained provision of funding for ASO Network meetings and activities. It is acceptable for ASO Networks to have external sponsorship in addition to that organised by the ASO centrally. However, any sponsorship associated with the ASO Network meetings must be discussed with the ASO Treasurer and Trustee(s) with the role of ASO Networks Officer in order to avoid jeopardising existing sponsorship arrangements for national meetings, and to ensure that sponsorship complies with the ASO sponsorship policy (available from <http://www.aso.org.uk/about/mission/>). It should be particularly noted that, following strategic review, the ASO no longer accepts sponsorship from food and drink companies. The ASO will promote the ASO Networks as appropriate when routinely approaching sponsors. If ASO Network meetings are sponsored then the sponsors should be acknowledged as appropriate at the meetings and as agreed in the memorandum of understanding for the event (e.g. advertising materials, agendas etc).

5. Joint ASO Network Meetings with Other Organisations

As ASO represents a diverse range of disciplines and professions, joint meetings with other appropriate organisations is encouraged, especially where these meetings have the potential to attract a multidisciplinary audience. These may require some degree of flexibility relating to the terms of reference set out in this document (e.g. relating to registration fees).

However, organisers of any joint events should ensure that the collaborating organisation does not breach the ASO sponsorship policy, and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) should be agreed and signed before the joint meetings are established (including being signed by the ASO Chair, Deputy Chair or a Trustee with specific responsibility for Network coordination). There is a MoU template available from the Trustee acting as the ASO Network Officer. This template can be used by ASO Networks for joint meetings, and adapted to suit the local needs. The MoU should include the following sections as appropriate:

- Description of collaborating organisations
- Objectives and scope
- The nature of the collaboration
- Definitions and interpretations
- The terms of the agreement
- Organisation and management of the agreement
- Resources and facilities
- Financial arrangements
- Sponsorship (see section 3 relating to sponsorship)
- Communication and exchange of information
- Intellectual property
- Marketing and publicity
- Settlement of disputes
- Review and evaluation
- Effective dates and signatures
- Amendments to the MoU
- Details for the management of registration

6. Minimum Expectations for ASO Network Meetings:

The following activities are the expected requirements for ASO Network meetings to be eligible for the financial support, free membership for one Network lead, attendance at UKCO and for the meeting to be branded as an ASO Network meeting. Please contact the ASO Network Officer if you would like to discuss any of these requirements.

- Use of the ASO logo on all documentation associated with the meeting;
- Adhere to the ASO sponsorship policy;
- Promote ASO membership, conferences and other activities at Network meetings;
- Implement the registration fees if required;
- Use the Eventbrite system to process registrations and fees;
- Run a minimum of one full day or two shorter meetings per year;
- Create a small working group locally to help spread the workload of arranging meetings and to encourage geographical spread (and encourage PhD students and early career researchers to get involved);
- Request speakers to provide a version of their presentation that they are happy to add to the ASO website;

- Agree on a Memorandum of Understanding for any joint meetings, to be signed by the ASO Chair, Deputy Chair or a Trustee with specific responsibility for Network coordination;
- Provide a short summary of meetings held for the ASO newsletter and website (this can be prepared by the ASO Network lead(s), member(s) of the working group, or meeting delegate(s)).

7. ASO position paper: position statement on weight stigma and discrimination

The Association for the Study of Obesity (ASO) does not believe there is a place for weight bias and is committed to reducing negative attitudes towards people with overweight or obesity in all settings. The ASO published a position paper in 2015 which was updated in 2018, and expects all members and meetings associated with ASO to adhere to these principles. A full copy of the position paper can be found on the ASO website (<https://www.aso.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/ASO-weight-stigma-and-discrimination-position-statement.pdf>). It is expected that all ASO members uphold the values of the society, and thus, abide by the statement within their work. Of particular relevance to the ASO Networks, the position paper recommends that when discussing, or portraying overweight or obesity at ASO meetings or events, members should:

- **Use person-first language:** avoid using terms such as 'obesity' or 'overweight' as adjectives. Use phrasing such as 'adults with overweight and obesity' or 'adults with obesity' rather than 'overweight adults'. People first language is the accepted way to address people with physical or mental disabilities or chronic illnesses.
- **Use non-stigmatising images:** avoid using stigmatising or derogatory images of individuals who are overweight or with obesity. Please see the section 'further information and resources' in the position statement for a range of links to image banks that ASO endorses the use of when using obesity-related imagery.
- **Provide accurate information:** avoid using weight-based stereotypes through inappropriate language or imagery; fat jokes/humour; or suggestions that a person's body weight implies negative assumptions about their character, intelligence, abilities, etc.
- **Recognise the complexity of obesity:** the UK Government's Foresight Report (2007) informs that there are over 100 factors that cause obesity, many of which are outside of a person's control. It is imperative that members recognise the array of causes and thus, avoid implicitly or explicitly blaming individuals, families and groups, or implying that a particular population group does not wish to manage their weight
- **Recognise that people have different views and opinions:** avoid implying that all people with overweight and obesity have a desire to lose weight. Recognise that there is an array of weight loss methods that people *might* choose, and where weight loss is desired, that no one form of treatment is appropriate for all.
- **Avoid combative language** when referring to efforts to reduce the prevalence of overweight and obesity. For instance, 'the war on obesity' and 'fight against obesity'.
- **Where appropriate, take the opportunity to condemn weight stigma attitudes and discriminatory behaviour:** weight stigma and discrimination is widespread and in many

areas of society is perceived to be acceptable. Members are encouraged to speak out against weight stigma attitudes and discriminatory behaviours or practices.