

SoR Political Fund



Why does the Society need a Political Fund - and what will it do for me?

What is a 'Political Fund'?

Changes to legislation means that trades unions will no longer be able to campaign and speak out about issues which are important to its members during general and other election campaigns UNLESS they have a specific 'pot of money' which is separate from the organisation's general funds. Legislation describes this as being a 'Political Fund' but a more accurate description is Campaign Fund.

But the Society isn't a politically active organisation?

The Society has never been affiliated to or seen to actively support any political party - and that won't change. However, UK Council believe that the organisation must have the option to campaign on issues that are in the interests of members and patients.

Such as?

Rightly or wrongly, the National Health Service and the care which it provides to patients, is politically controlled by the government of the day. The future of healthcare and the NHS inevitably is a key issue in the lead-up to an election.

Any other examples?

The Society doesn't just campaign to protect the interests of members, but also patients. An issue that is of concern to radiographers, often is detrimental to good patient care. Without a Political Fund, the Society would be unable to campaign on behalf of patients.

Why should the Society speak out and be involved in debates?

We live in a democracy and a society that has long treasured the principle of 'freedom of speech'. The Society is not a political organisation but it has never been afraid or held back from speaking out on behalf of members and patients. If we do not have a Political Fund, members will lose the right for their voice to be heard.

Why does the Society have to ask members to set-up a Political Fund?

Legislation requires it. We can only set-up a Political Fund if members are balloted.

Do all members have a vote?

All current members of the SCoR, with the exception of overseas members and a few smaller categories, will receive a ballot paper and be able to vote. If you have any questions about your membership and eligibility, please contact Sean Henderson-Kelly, membership and PR manager: seanhk@sor.org

What happens if the majority of members vote 'Yes'?

The Society will have the authority to establish a Political Fund and to continue to campaign for the issues that the Annual Delegates Conference and UK Council decide are important to protect the interests of members of the Society and the patients that we serve.

Does there have to be a minimum number of votes?

The ballot requires a simple majority of those who vote. The Society wants every eligible member to vote to ensure that the ballot is representative of the view of the majority of members.

What if the majority of members vote 'No'?

Then the Society will be unable to campaign and publicly state its views about the values that are important to its members and will be unable to defend the rights of patients.

If members vote 'Yes' to establish a Political Fund, is it permanent?

The law says that organisations have to refer back to members every 10 years to ensure that they continue to support a Political Fund.

Are you sure this isn't a 'back door' way of allowing the Society to affiliate to a particular political party?

The Annual Delegates Conference in 2014 was asked to consider affiliation to the Labour Party. It resoundingly rejected the proposal. At an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Society in 2015, members voted for a set of rule changes that actually strengthened the organisation's political independence. Plus, the money in the Political Fund cannot be used for affiliation to a political party.

If SoR members voted to set-up a Political Fund, where would the money come from?

Members would be invited to contribute to the Fund.

Would members have to make contributions?

No. Contributions would be entirely voluntary. There would be no requirement for members to donate money to the Fund and they would not be under any pressure to do so.

But if I voted 'Yes' in the ballot, wouldn't I then have to donate to the Fund?

Members can vote 'Yes' to establish a Political Fund but they do not have to contribute to it. Also, the ballot about whether the Society should have a Fund is a secret vote. No one will know who voted for or against establishing a Fund. Whether you donate money to the Fund is completely up to you.

If I did decide to contribute, how would it work?

The Society suggests that members who do want to contribute to the Fund pay 60p a quarter - £2.40 a year. This money would be used for campaigning activities only. This amount would be in addition to your subscription to be a member of the SoR.

Does this affect the tax relief that I get on my annual membership subscription?

No. Because a member's contribution to the Fund is a separate levy, it has no affect on the claiming of tax relief on the cost of the annual subscription.

Can I claim tax relief on my contribution to the Fund?

No, that amount is not tax-deductible.

