

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH SCIENCE WRITERS

# Proposal: Board Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Investment

<b>Submitted by</b>	Board of Directors
<b>Status</b>	Board-Endorsed — For AGM Information
<b>Date</b>	March 2026
<b>Confidentiality</b>	AGM Communication

## Board Statement

The Board of Directors wishes to inform members that it has agreed in principle to introduce a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) allowance of £300 per year for all Board Members and Board Directors (14), subject to an annual aggregate cap of £4200. This document sets out the Board's intentions and the governance framework under which the policy will operate.

## 1. Introduction

The Board of Directors is informing members of its intention to introduce a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) investment for all Board Members and Board Directors. The investment will be delivered through a CPD allowance mechanism and is intended to support the professional development of board members in a manner that directly benefits their role and, in turn, the ABSW.

*This proposal does not constitute remuneration. No payments will be made directly to board members. All expenditure will relate solely to approved CPD activities and will be reimbursed or paid directly to providers following formal approval by two directors.*

## 2. Purpose

The CPD investment is designed to:

- Encourage greater diversity on the Board by making these roles more attractive to talented and skilled individuals who may not previously have considered joining, particularly freelancers and members from underrepresented demographics
- Support skills development relevant to board members' job roles and board responsibilities
- Strengthen governance, journalism, writing, and organisational leadership capacity
- Represent a strategic investment in the effectiveness and sustainability of the Board
- Facilitate greater representation of the ABSW at conferences and events, supported by this financial investment

## 3. Financial Context

The ABSW's financial position has been carefully considered in setting the parameters of this policy. The CPD investment is designed to be modest, clearly capped, and manageable within the organisation's annual budget.

## 4. Financial Parameters

<b>Eligibility (pilot phase)</b>	All Board Members and Board Directors (14 members)
<b>Per member allowance</b>	£300per year
<b>Annual cap</b>	£4500per year — this cap may not be exceeded under any circumstances
<b>Expected annual spend</b>	£4200per year (14 members × £300)
<b>Maximum pilot exposure</b>	£8400, over the two-year pilot period
<b>Funding source</b>	Drawn from the annual budget as approved by the Board

## 5. Governance and Safeguards

All CPD expenditure will be subject to the following controls:

- Prior 2 board member (director) approval for each proposed CPD activity
- Clear demonstration of direct relevance to the individual's job role or board duties
- No cash payments to individuals — all payments made directly to providers or as reimbursement against receipts
- Any conflicts of interest to be declared and recorded prior to approval
- All approvals and expenditures to be formally recorded in the spreadsheet of payments received by Board members that is presented to the AGM each year. There will be a new heading for these payments of CPD Payments
- Boarders must attend at least 2meetings during each 6-month period, after which they can claim the CPD allowance. They can also opt to not accept the allowance if, for example, their employer already provides CPD.

Operational details — including specific courses, institutions, and timing — will be managed through standard board governance processes and will not require AGM approval.

## 6. Member Transparency

In keeping with the Board's commitment to openness and accountability, members are being informed of this policy at the AGM prior to any expenditure being incurred. The Board considers this notification a matter of good governance rather than a requirement for member approval, as CPD investment falls within the Board's operational remit.

All CPD expenditure will be reported to the Honorary Auditors and presented at the AGM, in the same manner as all other expenditure relating to board members. The spreadsheet used to record payments to board members will include a dedicated section for CPD Investment, with individual expenditure recorded against each board member.

We consider courses such as the following as part of the possible options but not limited to:

- <https://tcij.org/scheduled-training/>
- <https://www.nuj.org.uk/learn/nuj-training.html>
- <https://www.nctj.com/professional-development/cpd-courses/>

## 7. Review, Sunset Clause and Metrics

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This policy will be reviewed after two years. At that point the Board will consider:

- Whether to continue the CPD allowance at the same rate of £300 per member
- Whether to adjust the annual cap in light of actual expenditure and the financial position of the ABSW
- Whether the overall policy remains fit for purpose

### Recruitment pipeline metrics

- % of new board applicants who cite CPD allowance as a factor in applying (via application/onboarding survey)
- % of new board members who are freelancers vs. employed, tracked before and after pilot launch
- Demographic breakdown of board composition at start vs. end of pilot (gender, ethnicity, disability status, in carer role, home in area of multiple deprivation, career stage)
- Number of applicants from underrepresented groups per recruitment round, compared to pre-pilot baseline

### CPD Uptake & Engagement

- % of board members who spend any of their allowance (uptake rate)
- Average % of allowance actually spent per member
- Range and types of CPD activities funded (courses, conferences, coaching, memberships, etc.)
- Number of CPD activities completed per member over the pilot period
- Self-reported relevance rating of CPD to board or professional role (post-activity survey, e.g. 1–5 scale)

### Skills Development

- Pre/post self-assessment scores across target skill areas: governance knowledge, journalism/writing, organisational leadership
- Number of members completing governance-specific training (e.g. charity law, financial oversight, editorial independence)
- Qualitative evidence of skills applied in board meetings (e.g. line manager or Chair observation notes)
- Any formal qualifications or certifications gained during the pilot

### Practical / Administrative

- Time taken to administer claims (to assess operational burden)
- % of spend that falls within agreed eligible categories
- Any issues or edge cases that required policy clarification (useful for iterating the scheme design)

The CPD investment and associated allowance will lapse automatically if not formally reapproved at the point of review. Members will be informed of the outcome of the review at the relevant AGM.

— End of Memo —