



**BRITISH ACADEMY  
OF AUDIOLOGY**



**British Academy of Audiology (BAA)**

**Annual Report  
2018-2019**

# Annual Report April 2018 to March 2019

Welcome to the Annual Report for the British Academy of Audiology. We report on our activities for members each year at our Annual General Meeting in November, but this report covers work up until the end of March 2019. Your Board of Directors for 2018-19 were:



**Sue Falkingham**  
*President*



**Karen Shepherd**  
*Vice-President*



**Michelle Booth**  
*Immediate Past President*



**Barbara Gregg**  
*Treasurer*



**Claire Benton**  
*Conference*



**Lizanne Steenkamp**  
*Education, Accreditation  
& Registration incl. HTS.*



**Dr Tim Wilding**  
*Education, Accreditation  
& Registration incl. HTS.  
(Appointed 23 July 2018)*



**Samantha Lear**  
*Membership Secretary*



**Kathryn Lewis**  
*SQC incl. ASG*



**Heather Dowber**  
*Regional Groups*



**Michelle Foster**  
*Healthcare Science  
Board Lead*



**Charlotte Rogers**  
*Early Professionals*



**Susannah Giggins**  
*Publicity & Communications,  
IT & Website  
(Appointed 8 November 2018)*

We have once again tried to focus all our activities on four key areas of work as defined by our annual plan.

- **Supporting Audiologists as professionals**
- **Promoting excellence in clinical practice**
- **Delivering a sustainable organisation**
- **Being a strong voice for Audiology**



We will focus on each area of our annual plan individually here.

## 1) **Supporting Audiologists as professionals**

- **We continue to offer the largest UK Audiology conference**

The conference team is made up of two groups, the Scientific Programme Committee and the Conference Organising Committee, both led by Claire Benton, Board Director and overseen by Sue Falkingham, President. The Event's Team at Fitwise led by Sarah Black and Phyllis Tait are integral to the successful planning and delivery of the conference. The aim of all of the team is to deliver the largest, successful annual conference and exhibition to the satisfaction of both delegates and exhibitors.

The 2018 conference was held in Liverpool and we had 512 delegates, an increase on previous years. Last year we had a higher number of non-BAA member delegates (31%) and we introduced a preferential delegate fee for both BSA and BSHAA members.

Delegate feedback indicated over 80% found the content and structure of the conference excellent or good. As always, we had areas to improve on such as seating for delegates around lunch time and the transport to and from the gala dinner.

Conference 2018 again not only covered its costs, but made BAA a profit. This helps support free-to-access regional events throughout the year.

Looking to conference in 2019 and the future, we are aware the costs of putting on the conference, such as catering, travel and venue hire, are increasing whilst training budgets for UK Audiologists are more constrained. Therefore, we are always looking at making the conference more cost effective whilst not increasing delegate fees for members. For 2019, we are no longer having a formal sit-down gala dinner, instead opting for a more informal social event.

We are adding some new elements to conference in response to delegate feedback this year. There will be a fully staffed crèche available over the two days, which hopefully makes conference more accessible for some members. We are also adding Pods to the exhibition hall to provide opportunities for more interaction with the Board and its committees, and to give smaller exhibitors an opportunity to present.

The whole conference team have produced yet another conference to be proud of. We aim to keep the BAA conference current, cost effective and value for time and are willing to take all feedback from members to ensure we offer what you want.

- **Supporting students through free membership**

We have worked hard through our Board Director for Early Professionals, Charlotte Rogers, to engage not just students, but also people in the early years of their careers with BAA. We have redefined the membership category to simplify the offering and increase the free membership to include new courses, such as apprenticeships, and extend the free membership offering into the full first year of practice. We are working with a focus group of students to develop content that is relevant to them on our website.



- **Developing a coaching and mentoring scheme for Audiology**

BAA have spent a significant amount of time taking legal advice and ensuring that the mentoring scheme is fit for purpose and is now ready to launch. This seems to have taken a long time but will launch at Conference in 2019 and we will have a team ready to offer support to professionals at all levels in Audiology.

- **Promoting and supporting CPD**

Our Vice President, Karen Shepherd, has ensured that we are offering great support to our members in their efforts to maintain relevant, cost effective and reflective CPD activities. Within the members section of the website, there are examples, guidance, and ideas to help you maintain a great CPD record. As the new website launches, there will be an interactive downloadable record form to record your CPD. We will not store your records, but we will give you all the tools you need to keep a great CPD portfolio.

- **Improving the website for members**

This project has been much longer than we anticipated but vital to the continuing support we want to give to BAA members. We have used funds from our reserves to bring new features, a new feel and a more versatile website to members. The project has stalled a couple of times and has been brought back on track by the appointment of our Digital Communications Executive, Victoria Adshead. The post was implemented to ensure our communication with members, potential members and the general public improved and I hope members are seeing clear differences in the information we share.

## **2) Promoting excellence in clinical practice**

Influencing the development of NICE guidance is important and BAA have responded to a number of NICE documents this year. The most important of these in 2018-19 were:

- Hearing Loss in Adults: Assessment and Management
- The Quality Standard for Hearing Loss in Adults: Assessment and Management
- Cochlear Implants for Children and Adults with Severe to Profound Deafness

Once these documents are released, BAA will continue to support members by providing information and awareness of the documents, as well as training on the new guidance if required.

One of our most active teams, the Service Quality Committee (SQC), is heavily involved with providing comment on NICE guidance, but also in developing our own recommendations.

The Service Quality Committee is chaired by Hanna Jeffrey, and is made up of 14 members from across the UK representing the public, private and third sector, and 1 representative from the Audiology Supplies Group.

We have welcomed 4 members this year: Alan Bryant, Keri Barker, James Mander and Gordon Harrison. Membership changes when members come to the end of their term so please think about joining this very active group in the future - we still need representation from Scotland.

All the members of the SQC are very committed to improving quality across Audiology, and I have absolute respect and am amazed by their dedication, commitment and expertise that they bring. Every member makes a valuable contribution to ensure our membership has the tools and guidance to help with improving standards and quality in our services and Audiology as a whole.

### **Key areas:**

This year we have continued to work on a range of documentation and the following are now published:

- Vestibular Direct Referral
- MRI Referral Guidance

Thanks to the hard work of Adam Walker and Melanie Lough who have led on these.

Current projects include:

- **Funding Guidance for Adult Audiology**  
This originally started out looking at the definition of routine and non-routine, but has since developed into a guidance on funding implications for both. Hanna and Ann-Marie are leading on this.
- **Tinnitus Direct Referral Guidance**  
This is still in the early stages as a decision was taken to await the NICE guidance on tinnitus which is due in March 2020. Irhum Nabeela and I will be developing this.

If any members feel they need guidance documents that we have not currently looked at, please contact us via Fitwise.

Details of documents in the production process are available on the webpage.

The team will be presenting sessions at Conference on reasonable adjustments, and complex hearing aid patients. They have been putting together some examples from our members that may help us all. The team are also working on an animation for CI referrals with a team from Manchester University who develop animation videos for health.

We continue to have close links with the BSA's Professional Practice Committee and BSHAA's Professional Development Committee. Two of the members, Ann-Marie Dickinson and Alan Bryant, attend these meetings.

Ed Brown and Keri Barker represent members at UKAS where they have an input to IQIPS revised clinical standards which will be published soon.

The Audiology Supplies Group, now chaired by Greg Nassar, have had a busy year assessing devices to ensure they meet the specifications for the NHS Supply Chain hearing aid tender process and the new devices are now approved. There was a further assessment in September as the group can be asked to assess devices that may be suitable for the NHS Supply out of the tender process. More information on what the group do on behalf of Audiology can be found on the website.

Information on committee members and our ongoing activities can be found on the SQC webpage in the members area of the BAA website and we also publish articles about SQC work in the BAA Magazine. If you have any questions or suggestions for SQC then please contact us via [admin@baaudiology.org](mailto:admin@baaudiology.org).

## Advocating professional body membership and registration for all Audiologists



In January 2018, the BAA Education Accreditation and Registration (EAR) directors drafted a BAA response to the government regulation consultation and the government has responded in July 2019. The response did not address the issue of voluntary and statutory registers, as applicable to Audiology, but we continue to monitor the situation and liaise with all three regulators (HCPC, RCCP and AHCS) as needed.

This past year, the EAR Team has been working on creating a 'Standards of Proficiency' document for an Audiologist. The purpose of this document is to provide regulatory bodies with standards for safe and effective practice in the profession. They are the threshold standards to consider necessary to protect members of the public, and set out the threshold skills, knowledge and attributes of a professional.

The BAA Accreditation of Academic Education (AAE) Committee identified a gap in literature, as no standards of proficiency documents for an Audiologist exist in the United Kingdom. This became evident with the introduction of Foundation degrees in Hearing Aid Audiology/Diploma in Higher Education in Hearing Aid Audiology leading to eligibility to register as a Hearing Aid Dispenser, and BSc (Hons) in Audiology (top up) degree pathways.

Additional pieces of work in EAR include identifying the need to create a standard of proficiency for a hearing therapist to facilitate the registration of newly qualified hearing therapists, and a working group will be created in 2019.

Jointly working with ACS, AHCS, NSHCS, RCCP, HCPC and HEI colleagues to ensure highest standards of training and registration are met

BAA EAR Board directors continue to represent BAA at AHCS, NSHCS, ACS and RCCP, and have also been contacted about the PTP and STP reviews, as well as the level 7 apprenticeship steering group. BAA remains involved in the OSFA assessment process for the STP and support clinical scientist registration through links with ACS and AHCS.



### Developing guidelines for prescribing within a PGD

Jagjit Sethi (BAA Past President) continues to lead on this long-term project for BAA and presented this at the BAA Policy Updates meeting in 2018. The work is progressing as quickly as possible but as legislation change is required to implement this work, it is important to follow the defined procedures.

## 3) Deliver a sustainable organisation

During 2018, BAA Board made the decision to remove the post of Consultant CEO in the organisation. The work done by the post holder in their time with BAA made the organisation more accountable with better internal governance documentation. It was clear that with this work completed, the post was no longer required to meet the aims of the organisation. Board chose to utilise the additional funds this released to improve our communication not only for the membership, but also for the wider profile of the organisation. The appointment of the Digital Communications Executive is supporting all areas of BAA work with a unified approach across the organisation.

Our full financial records are available as a separate document, but below you will find our key financial information.

With significant investment in our new website, we have used money from our reserves, but we continue to provide a financially viable organisation that is accountable to our membership.

### Treasurers Report

#### INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019

	2019 £	2018 £
<b>Income</b>	578,814	540,915
Administrative expenses	(578,538)	(561,498)
<b>Operating surplus/(deficit)</b>	276	(20,583)
Interest receivable and similar income	5,998	4,129
Fair value gains and losses on investments	3,391	3,948
<b>Surplus/(deficit) before taxation</b>	9,665	(12,506)
Tax on surplus/(deficit)	—	—
<b>Surplus/(deficit) for the financial year</b>	9,665	(12,506)

## 4) Being a strong voice for Audiology

We proactively support the One Voice agenda as Healthcare Scientists.

Although the President has been attending meetings to support this agenda, it has become increasingly difficult to maintain the required level of detail with just one representative. Using a new Board Director role of Healthcare Science Lead, we have been able to increase our engagement with this agenda.

Michelle Foster has provided excellent engagement with the HCS agenda in England. Across our home countries, we continue to try engage and encourage interaction with the Healthcare Science agenda where possible.

This last year has been a great year for Healthcare Science (HCS). HCS has raised its profile and is becoming a more unified professional identity representing 52 disciplines. Lead Healthcare Scientists are being appointed by more and more trusts, giving us greater visibility and a clearer, more professional voice. Some trusts have appointed Audiologists to this role which is brilliant. I would encourage you to get to know your lead healthcare scientist so that we can raise our profile on a local, regional and national level. This year has also seen the launch of healthcare science networks across specific regions in the country, with each healthcare science network having a locally defined purpose. Some of these networks are part of the local integrated healthcare system and are helping and supporting the NHS Long Term Plan.

In March, we saw the first HCS Education Summit hosted by Health Education England. Professor Dame Sue Hill was the keynote speaker and addressed the opportunities for the healthcare science workforce today and in the future. We heard other inspirational speakers, who lead innovation within their areas of service delivery and research, and they facilitated discussions around developing education strategies to deliver the NHS Long Term Plan and other key policy areas. Audiology has always been at the forefront of innovation and is an early adopter. We have led the way in for the physiological sciences with IQIPs accreditation and we should be no different when it comes to transforming healthcare. We have already seen benefits from the award winning Practical Skills in Education, Training and Leadership Programme (PSEL). This course is a leadership course specifically for HCS. This course will give you a unique insight into yourself, challenge you as a leader, as well as equipping you for higher level leadership. It is a great opportunity to network with other HCS, to share insights and explore ways we can support one another and learn from each others disciplines.

The NHS constitution states: “It is there to improve our health and wellbeing, supporting us to keep mentally and physically well, to get better when we are ill and, when we cannot fully recover, to stay as well as we can to the end of our lives. It works at the limits of science – bringing the highest levels of human knowledge and skill to save lives and improve health. It touches our lives at times of basic human need, when care and compassion are what matter most.” There is a call for us as HCS to help support the wider agenda and transform our area of HCS as well as support others with the launch of the NHS Long Term Plan. There is a clear challenge within this to help transform our healthcare model to empower patients with long term conditions to increase their level of self-care.

Although Audiology isn't mentioned specifically, we know that our services will be needed to support a patient pathway. We know that people are living longer and with recent evidence of hearing loss being linked with dementia, we have a significant role to play in transforming both dementia, healthcare and the frail elderly plan. The Topel Review title is 'Preparing the healthcare workforce to deliver the digital future'. HCS's reputation for innovation and for working at the forefront of science makes them central to this agenda, while Audiologists themselves are natural forerunners, being both digitally savvy and spanning a number of patient pathways.

BAA President, Sue Falkingham, has continued to be a member of the Hearing Loss and Deafness Alliance, attending meetings with Sue Hill, the CSO for England, and a number of members of the Alliance over the last year.



## College of Audiology

During the last year, BAA have been an active part of discussions on the formation of a potential College of Audiology. The progress of these discussions is deliberately slow to allow time for consultation and consideration. The initial discussions between the leaders of the Audiology professional bodies, learned society and a trade body representing high street suppliers, resulted in a number of statements and discussions as well as question and answer panels. As this report is up to April 2019 and written in September 2019, no decisions on the future of this work stream are in place.

A consultation meeting with a wider group is now scheduled for October 2019, but the approach BAA leadership is taking to this work is slow and steady. Any change to our representation in the wider world should be well thought out and have the support of our membership.

