

Clinical Group Members:

* Dr Siobhan Brennan - Audiology Lecturer (University of Manchester) and Lead Clinical Scientist (Audiology) Sheffield Teaching Hospitals

* Ed Brown – Consultant Clinical Scientist, Head of Audiology, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust

* Prof. Chris Degg – Consultant Clinical Scientist, Head of Evoked Potentials and Newborn Hearing Screening, Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust

Donna Corrigan – Vice Chair of the British Society of Audiology

Sue Falkingham – Past President, British Academy of Audiology

Dr John Fitzgerald – Consultant Clinical Scientist, Head of Audiology, Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals

* Dr Michelle Foster – Head of Audiology, Leeds General Infirmary

Dr Derek Hoare – Chair of the British Society of Audiology

Sam Lear – Lead Clinical Scientist (Audiology), Sheffield Childrens Hospital

* Karen Shepherd – President of the British Academy of Audiology

* Jason Smalley – Specialist Audiologist, Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust

Karen Willis – Head of Paediatric Audiology, Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust

For Public Health England (PHE):

* Jane Hibbert – NHSP Programme Manager, PHE Screening

* Andrew Rostron – Antenatal and Newborn National Screening Programmes Lead, PHE Screening

Sally Wood – Clinical Advisor to NHSP

* Julie Tucker – Project Lead NHSP

(* indicates present on the call)

The group met today (3/4/2020):

- It was felt it would be worthwhile to show the wider community what was being discussed within these meetings, hence it was agreed a meeting summary will be produced for each meeting.
- The revised NHS England COVID-19 Prioritisation within Community Health Services document was discussed – clarity is needed from NHS England around this document and if it also applies to audiology departments within acute hospital trusts. It was agreed that the

PHE team would try to find out and would ask for a contact within NHS England for the BAA to contact directly regarding clarification going forward.

- The 'Newborn hearing screening programmes technical guidance and management of audiology referrals during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic' document is still awaiting final sign-off by NHS England. It is hoped that once approved, it will be easier for the national screening programme to revise and update, but until then no changes can be made to the current version.
- PHE raised a point of clarification about a query received by them regarding maintaining the diagnostic follow up testing in order to diagnose asymptomatic cCMV. This was discussed by the clinical group and PHE.

Decision: No change to the technical guidance at the current time. Clinical queries should continue to be submitted to PHE and/or BAA and will be discussed at future meetings.

- PHE national template letters for the babies who cannot be screened and those who are referred from the screen were circulated. The group considered the wording and content of these letters to be appropriate. It was agreed that the letters sent from the screening programme would be held within S4H, with the BAA hosting the audiology letter to parents as a proposed 'national template letter' for audiology services
- Screening sites had asked the PHE team that if there is an opportunity to perform the AOAE2 before the baby leaves hospital, even if it less than a 5-hour period, then could they do so? This may further reduce the number of AABRs that need performing. The group felt this was acceptable provided sites were aware of the risk of the baby going home before AOAE2 was completed.

Decision: Clarification of the guidance on this point (to be added into later version) – sites may use their own judgment on putting a time gap between AOAE1, AOAE2 and AABR if they wish, however must be aware that this runs the risk of the baby being discharged home before the screening pathway is complete.

- A site had asked about the screening of the unaffected ear in cases of unilateral microtia/atresia. The group discussed this and felt this may well be appropriate at the present time

Decision: Clarification of the guidance on this point (to be added into a later version) It is acceptable to screen the unaffected ear in unilateral microtia/atresia cases however these babies must still be referred for a diagnostic assessment at a later date

- Sites had asked about paediatric assistant audiologists / ATO's being redeployed as Newborn Hearing Screeners. It was agreed that this was appropriate and PHE will issue guidance on the training route so that this may be achieved.

Decision: Change to the guidance to allow assistant audiologists to screen following training pathway decided by PHE - Guidance, following update will read:

During these exceptional times, expanding the newborn hearing screening team capacity as necessary, should be considered whilst maintaining quality. A paediatric assistant/associate audiologists who does not hold a current professional health care registration, can train as a newborn hearing screener in the same way as a [new screener](#) is trained. They would still need to successfully complete an OSCE before being able to screen independently without local manager/experienced screener support. We are looking into how we can offer the new version of the OSCE in a virtual way to facilitate this. Currently, if they are still working as a newborn hearing screener after 6 months they would be required to register for the health screener diploma (HSD) although this timeframe may change during the Covid-19 situation.

There is additional information about training requirements for audiologists, with a current professional healthcare registration included in the technical guidance.

- The group briefly discussed what to do with the babies who had not been screened by the Newborn Hearing Screening Programme during these unprecedented times. It was felt it was too early to make a clinical decision on this group yet and that this would be discussed again with the input from the PHE team on the numbers of babies involved

Decision: No change to the guidance at the present time - review next meeting

Next meeting : 14/04/2020

Anyone with any queries regarding the Newborn Hearing Screen or who wish to feed into the discussions should contact either the PHE national screening programme on PHE.screeninghelpdesk@nhs.net or the British Academy of Audiology