

President's Blog 6th April 20

Thank you all for your dedication, commitment and hard work to navigate these challenging times with conflicting and often unclear directives. I add my applause to you all, as I know you are concerned to do the right thing by your patients and teams with what must seem like your hands tied behind your back.

Since the prioritisation document landed on the 20th March, we have seen a rapid and varied response to the call for “community audiology” to stop. The question as to whether this document also explicitly applied to acute settings was not clear but became a moot point as routine outpatients began to shut, and so the interpretation was audiology full stop. Most services have now physically closed to routine work but remain **open** to provide essential support such as a repair service – often by post or drop off and collection – and a variation of urgent services. BAA Board interpreted the prioritisation document and drew up a guidance document on what was a recommended way of working within these guidelines. This can be found on the Covid pages and will be reviewed as we understand more. The Government has reacted and enforced a way of living to help keep us all safe. This is an unprecedented time and we are all learning information thanks to our media platforms simultaneously, so please bear with us if you look to Board to give guidance as we need time to interpret too.

One area of focus this week has been on seeking further clarification surrounding the newborn hearing screening service and the diagnostic pathway. In the absence of central guidance, a valued group of members have drawn up guidance and BAA has facilitated interaction with NHS England and Public Health England to get this guidance to meet our member's needs whilst also satisfying the requirements of NHS E & PHE. Productive meetings have been held and we hope to have a guidance document to share very soon. We have also seen published this week the AEA and ENT UK guidance on procedures and care that can be delivered when PPE is used. Guidance documents can be found [here](#)

On Thursday 26th March BAA hosted an online Heads of Service meeting which, of course, had a very specific theme of how we are responding to the current coronavirus pandemic. We were joined by over 120 colleagues, many of whom shared their responses and ideas. A recording of this meeting is available [here](#).

Board are pulling together the themes which emerged and building up a resource section on the website for all Heads of Service to access. The themes split into the following areas: Cochlear Implants; Well-being and staying connected; essential service – batteries, repairs, earmoulds; NHS Paediatric screening and diagnostic; redeployment and transferable skills; remote programming; registration and education; CPD, study ideas and remote activity; Heads of Service Network; guidance documents.

It was agreed that we will run these sessions every other Thursday morning for those who want to connect, share experiences and seek the opinions and thoughts of others. Watch out for the invite.

Whether you are home working, home-schooling, part of the skeleton team holding the fort or redeployed, on behalf of BAA, we send you our best wishes to stay well & healthy, Stay physically distanced but not socially distanced, for those of you on Facebook – take a virtual walk with Sue round her village!

Stay safe