

BAA President Blog 22nd March 2021

In my last blog I referred to the possibility of going back to the discussions on a College of Audiology. I was asked to attend a meeting with BSA, BSHAA, AIHHP and, still at the table, NCHA, to see if BAA would be willing to re-join the negotiations. I attended the meeting and I want to give you an appraisal of what was discussed and potentially agreed as a next step if you are happy for BAA to continue.

It was clear that our pulling out of negotiations in November 2019 had been an issue for the other groups and some were clearly not happy with BAA.

I take a wider view that if things are to progress then we must find the right strategy and all individual views need to stay at the door. This is not about us as individuals, but for the greater progress of our profession and our members, and those are the views we should represent. In recent times we have shown that as a profession, from both public and private sector, the professional bodies can work well together and achieve positive outcomes (e.g., [the joint working during Covid-19 document](#)).

My concern was the same as Sue's when we removed ourselves from the talks ([BAA statement from 2019](#)). So, I want to set out what was discussed and where the process was left after we pulled away in November 2019. The last joint statement is included here: [Joint Statement 261119](#)

Forming a strategy group *that does not involve the individuals who have been in all the early talks*, should be a positive next step. This strategy group would be made up of cross sector representatives that we can put names forward for (see page 4 onwards in the joint statement). This strategy group would decide how a college should look, be formed and all the logistics that will go with it. They would be supported by project groups who will be selected by the strategy group and would work on the different areas needed to pull everything together. These would involve members with the skills to take it all forward. I am sure you could think of suitable people who can take a neutral, unbiased approach with the drive and enthusiasm to develop our profession who would be ideal for these working groups.

However, in the interim I suggested that this should be led by our learned body, the BSA, and that everything be co-ordinated by them, supported by the professional bodies until a strategy group is formed. Then we, as individuals, step back. This was agreed.

One of the people present at the meeting is drafting a term of reference for the strategy group and this will be then put out for comments and any amendments.

This does not mean everything is done and dusted.

I said I would bring back to you all what this looks like so far. I represent all members of BAA and what you want to do next is now up to you all. Questions that I have been asked include what happens to the professional bodies? Honestly, that has not been decided. However, we will still need the registration bodies as does all the other colleges.

For me, the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists is how Audiology perhaps could look – see the presentation that was given when we had our first joint session back in 2019 ([Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists](#)). That may give you an idea of what a college looks like and how it was

developed. We took all the previous comments in the early stages of putting forward the idea of forming a College of Audiology and the joint statement was set out to try and address any concerns by setting out a professional approach.

So, I ask of you all that you consider this very carefully and let me know how you wish BAA to proceed, by answering a couple of questions:

[Respond here to the 'Next step' survey.](#) This next step is just about forming a strategy group as mentioned earlier in my blog.

Stay safe and take care of yourselves. We are looking to add more items in our health and wellbeing section and if you have come across any useful tips and support please share with us and we can share with everyone.

Kath Lewis