

## BAA as a Strong Voice for Audiology across the UK

Board members met in December 2022 to review our strategy for the coming year and decide on our priorities.

We reviewed our core strategic goals, which are:

1. *Being a **strong voice for Audiology**: Providing the leadership to influence national direction and policy*
2. ***Promoting excellence** in clinical practice: Being the driving force for improving the quality of services*
3. ***Supporting Audiologists as professionals**: In training, education and CPD*
4. ***Delivering a sustainable organisation**: Maintaining and growing as a viable membership body*

Over the last few years, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic, we believe we have been successful in delivering on goals 2, 3 and 4. We have worked hard to support professionals, deliver CPD, both in person and virtually, and have extended our HTS scheme. Our website members area has many valuable resources, and we are always here to answer queries and support wherever possible. Our service quality committee continues to produce guidance for services, and the board has been involved in service review and advice about service improvement. We work tirelessly with many other bodies and stakeholders to support our profession.

However, we know that audiology faces serious issues right now, particularly for our NHS members, and you have told us that you want us to be a stronger voice for our profession.

So, we have gathered evidence together, including research, policy docs, feedback from members/membership engagement. We analysed the insights from the workshops we held in 2022 on workforce, leadership and quality & innovation, and worked to define what we actually want to see happen.

We now have a better idea of what we need to try and influence within all 4 nations. Among the most urgent are **workforce issues** in audiology and **service quality**. In England, we have met with some of those within NHSE who have the capacity to make changes - in the CSO's office and in the Transformation Directorate. We have made it clear that without a plan to support, train and grow the audiology workforce, services will not only struggle to meet targets, but also to deliver on the transformations that NHSE is planning. We are also concerned about the variable quality of services and the barriers that prevent services from improving and engaging with assurance, such as IQIPs.

In Scotland, several board members are providing input into the National Audiology Review, and are involved in groups looking at quality assurance, education and training, and leadership and the structure of Scottish services. As you may have seen, in January, we will run several workshops to further discuss the themes raised in our recent survey of audiologists in Scotland. We will analyse the findings and report them objectively to the review and ultimately to the Scottish government. We will continue to support audiologists in Scotland after the review and will be vigilant about what happens in response to the review's recommendations.

We are keen to engage with audiologists in Northern Ireland this year, and to find out what issues they face. BAA is working on establishing links with DHSSPSNI – Strategic Planning and Performance Group - to directly influence workforce planning in NI. And of course, we will be attending Audiology Cymru in March to catch up with Welsh colleagues.

In all home nations, we will try to influence those who can make change as much as possible, within our limitations as a voluntary professional body, outside those systems. So please continue to keep us informed and engage with us, so that we can best support you.

Take care

*Samantha Lear*

President