

BAA President Blog – 1st December 2023

Collaboration and Influencing

A month has already passed since the BAA conference, and what a conference it was! Besides the array of brilliant keynote speakers, thought-provoking presentations and posters, and the impressive exhibition, it was a chance for many of us to talk to others in the field outside our immediate circle. One of the things that makes conference special for me is that tangible buzz that you can feel when we have the opportunity to come together and learn from each other.

After a tricky year for many in our profession, it was uplifting to be reminded of the enthusiasm and dedication within our profession. I closed the conference by asking that we all continue with this spirit of continuous learning, collaboration, and mutual support.

As a professional body for audiologists in all fields in the UK, fostering collaboration is key to BAA. Driving advancements, promoting best practice, and advocating for positive change is essential to influence the future of the profession.

Clinically, audiologists are used to a multidisciplinary approach, with professionals from various fields working together to provide comprehensive care. Collaboration between audiologists, ENT, speech and language therapists, teachers of the deaf, and other healthcare professionals is crucial in addressing the complex needs of patients.

But collaboration is also essential for **research and innovation** in audiology. Collaborative research between clinical audiologists and academics and other services enables the pool of data and resources, expertise and capacity for research, which sometimes is lacking in clinical practice.

Sharing Best Practice is something that BAA has long been encouraging: Collaborating with fellow audiologists allows the exchange of best practices, innovative techniques, and evidence-based research. This sharing of knowledge fosters continuous improvement and ensures that audiology professionals stay up-to-date with the latest advancements in the field. BAA's Quality Improvement Tool continues with many colleagues sharing their own experiences in quality improvement.

Collaboration in audiology extends beyond the NHS clinical community. It also involves **engaging with other professional bodies, industry partners, and third sector** advocacy organisations. Over the last year, we were committed to this. We have met with BSA to ensure we have a collaborative approach to issues arising, such as national Audiology reviews. BAA as the professional body for all audiologists, and BSA as the academic body for the profession, have a symbiotic relationship, and it is essential we work together.

We have met with BSA, BSHAA, and AIHHP as professional bodies for audiologists across sectors, and begun to discuss the possible formation of a *College of Audiology* again. In theory, this would mean one body representing all audiology professionals in all aspects, from setting standards for the profession, CPD, setting the direction of the profession, and becoming one united voice for the profession. Discussions are at an early stage, but all parties are keen to examine our shared values and vision of a College.

We have reignited the national group looking at *wax removal*, which is now aiming to define what safe wax removal looks like and define training and competency requirements for whoever is performing this vital service.

BAA are an active member of the *Hearing Loss and Deafness Alliance* - an alliance of twenty-seven organisations spanning voluntary and independent sectors and professionals working in the NHS. It aims to represent the needs of children, young people and adults with hearing loss, deafness, and tinnitus across the UK on issues related to audiology, hearing services and public health. This is another opportunity for us as a professional body to advocate for policies that benefit our service users.

And of course, BAA has had plenty of opportunity to advocate for the profession and influence this last year. By actively engaging with senior decision makers in the NHS in Scotland and England, and providing evidence-based recommendations, we hope to shape legislation, funding, and service provision to ensure better access to high-quality hearing healthcare for all.

Collaboration and influence are at the heart of BAA's plans for the next year, and collaboration is essential to enable audiologists to deliver safe care, drive improvement, and address the challenges faced by audiology services currently. So, let us continue to foster collaboration, embracing the opportunities it gives us. We will also continue to advocate for audiologists and shape the policy and future of audiology.

Remember, as audiologists, we can effect positive change and improve the lives of countless individuals. Through collaboration and influence, the audiology community can continue to make strides in achieving better audiological care for all in the UK.

Please share your thoughts at admin@baaudiology.org

Take care

Sam Lear