

BAA President Blog – 10th June 2024

In my NHS role, I've volunteered recently to do a few of the regional review visits of paediatric services as a subject matter expert. During these visits, I've met some really inspiring, dedicated staff doing their best in difficult circumstances.

There are some services that are understaffed, and these often rely heavily on a few dedicated staff going above and beyond to support patients and keep the service going. These services may not always have the correct governance in place that they should have, but often this has gone unnoticed by their trusts over the years. We know that in some NHS Trusts and Health Boards, trust management have been hardly aware of the existence of audiology apart from a keen interest in the initial diagnostic wait. These departments have never been asked whether they have clear pathways, guidance, audits, risk registers, etc. let alone supported to put these in place.

We know that for many audiologists and services, it has clearly been overwhelming to cope with the demand to evidence the quality of their service and start putting all the governance in place that they didn't have. The scrutiny on audiology has been uncomfortable for us all, and downright terrifying and stressful for many. Please do reach out to discuss this where you need to.

What I really hope is that the current spotlight and pressure will lead to Audiology being recognised as an essential diagnostic service within Trusts and Health boards and this bringing audiologists the support they need and acknowledgement of all the hard work it requires to provide a service.

Trusts and Health Boards do have departments whose job it is to support clinicians with governance and quality improvement. And it is only by acknowledging that this has been neglected and that support is needed for audiology services that we will access this support.

It's important to remember that these regional service reviews haven't happened because there is a desire to cause trouble for audiologists or to close services. But it's becoming increasingly clear that some services do need support to improve to the safety and quality of care for their patients and to provide a safe, sustainable, working environment for staff. So please understand that although it's a painful process, everything that's happening on a UK level should ultimately result in better services for service users and audiologists themselves. As ever, you can contact me or any of our board directors here: admin@baaudiology.org

Take care

Sam
BAA President