

Press Release

BAA Statement in Response to DHSC Paediatric Audiology Review Announcement:

The British Academy of Audiology welcomes Health Secretary Wes Streeting's announcement of a review into paediatric audiology services. While we acknowledge that significant work has been carried out to address concerns, we remain disappointed at the length of time it has taken to bring this level of scrutiny and coordination to the issue.

Much of the progress has relied on small groups of highly committed subject matter experts working tirelessly across several regions in addition to their full-time roles in paediatric audiology. In many cases, these efforts have been carried out under immense pressure, with stretched services doing their utmost to balance urgent caseloads, staffing challenges, and complex recall programmes—all while trying to ensure no child is left behind.

We are particularly concerned about inconsistencies in how support and improvement work is implemented across different areas. Mixed messaging across system leadership—from calls for mutual aid to restrictions on recruitment to intense scrutiny over diagnostic targets—creates confusion and hinders meaningful progress.

In some instances, there appears to be a tendency to focus on assigning blame rather than building long-term, sustainable solutions. This approach risks demoralising staff and missing the opportunity to embed real improvements.

Claire Benton, President of the British Academy of Audiology, said, “Our colleagues across audiology services are deeply affected by these issues, both professionally and personally. Many feel personally responsible for every child that has been missed across the country and are at a breaking point in trying to support their departments and other services. Audiologists, parents and the children affected need a clear, realistic, and well-supported roadmap to improvement — one that takes into account the complexity of the task, the sheer volume of data being analysed, and the need for national alignment across all levels of leadership.”

ENDS

Notes to editor:

- The British Academy of Audiology (BAA) is the largest association of professionals in hearing and balance in the UK. Our membership extends internationally and provides services in both the public and private sectors.
- The BAA aims to help its members to develop their professional skills, provide a benchmark for quality and professional standards and promote audiology as an autonomous profession.

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