

BAA President Blog – 7th July 2025

Last week, the NHS 10-year plan was published, which will have an impact on everyone who works in or offers services to the NHS. Whilst only specifically mentioned once, it is clear that many of the themes within the report are likely to have an impact on Audiology. Moving care closer to the patient with an emphasis on community, multi-professional neighbourhood teams and Neighbourhood Health Centres on every high street, all seem to fit with the changing face of Audiology.

There is a focus on the workforce and establishing the education and training plan for all. This is an ongoing initiative within Audiology at the moment, as we are taking lessons from the Paediatric Hearing Services Improvement Programme to improve both the sustainability of our training routes and the quality of training in our specialisms. The suggestion that all dentists must complete a set minimum time within the NHS post-qualification is also being discussed for our audiology graduates.

There is also the theme of innovation, the use of AI and streamlining information sharing. We have a session this year at the conference about the use of AI – we need to think not just about how it is applied to our diagnostic testing, but to all the functions around delivering a service to improve efficiency.

Naturally, quality figures in the report as well, including finding ways to improve quality, reporting quality metrics, and rewarding delivery of a quality service. BAA have consistently been championing the widespread use of quality assurance throughout the profession. The capacity required for maintaining a quality management system within your service should always be factored into any capacity and demand models built. The expansion of our use of non-clinical quality managers to support teams are an essential factor in creating a high-quality service delivery that our patients should expect.

The delivery method for all the report's themes has not yet been articulated. In England, we are currently in a state of flux where NHSE is moving into the Department of Health and Social Care, and our Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) are having to reduce their workforce by 50%. Delivering change in such circumstances is incredibly challenging. With the aim that decisions around local health services will be devolved to the ICBs, this could lead to a more agile, location-specific health service, or may indeed run the risk of a postcode lottery for patients.

If you deliver NHS Audiology care, I suggest you read the plan. On Thursday, we are hosting the Heads of Service meeting in Birmingham, where we will hold a session on the future delivery of our services, which we hope will inform the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Deafness's work. So, keep a lookout for our summaries of these meetings in your Horizons emails.

As always, you can contact me or any of our board directors here: admin@baaudiology.org

Take care

Claire
BAA President

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