

BAA President Blog – 12th Oct 2026

As I sit down to write what is now my second-to-last President's blog, I'm struck by just how quickly the last two years have passed. It's been a privilege to serve as your President, and while there is still plenty to do before I hand over the proverbial 'chain of office', this feels like an appropriate moment to reflect on some important changes taking place within the Academy.

Firstly, thank you to everyone who took part in our recent Board elections. We were delighted to see such strong engagement from members, with 20 candidates standing for six available positions. The quality of the candidates demonstrates the passion that exists across our profession and the willingness of members to step forward and help shape the future of BAA.

Congratulations to our six newly elected Board Directors. Among those elected are two existing Directors who have been returned for a second term, providing continuity and experience alongside four new colleagues who will bring fresh perspectives and ideas to the Board. You can read more about the election results in our recent news item: <https://baaudiology.org/six-directors-elected-to-the-baa-board/>.

Of course, new appointments also mean saying goodbye and thank you to some longstanding colleagues. This month marks the end of Board service for **Saira Hussain**, **Lauren Willis** and **Jason Smalley**, all of whom have completed the maximum two terms as Directors.

The two-term limit exists for a reason. While experience is invaluable, it's equally important that we continue to welcome new voices, new ideas and fresh perspectives into the Boardroom. Saira, Lauren and Jason have each made significant contributions during their time on the Board, helping to shape and strengthen the Academy through periods of growth, challenge and change. We are incredibly grateful for the commitment, expertise and countless volunteer hours they have given to BAA.

A particularly special thank you must also go to **Sam Lear**, who steps down from the role of Immediate Past President after many years of service on the Board. Sam has held a number of leadership roles within BAA and her dedication to the Academy has been appreciated.

With new Directors joining the Board, it also means we'll be undertaking a small portfolio reshuffle. Sometimes that simply means responsibilities moving between Directors; sometimes it creates opportunities for entirely new portfolios; and occasionally existing areas of work are brought together to better reflect our priorities. Details of the refreshed Board portfolio structure will be shared at the AGM and then explored further through Horizons and future blogs.

The final decisions on those portfolios will sit with our incoming President, **Saima Rajasingam**, who will soon be taking the reins. I know she will bring energy, insight and ambition to the role, and I look forward to supporting her during the transition.

Before all that happens, however, we have one of the highlights of the BAA calendar ahead of us. Conference is almost here, and I genuinely hope to see many of you there. The programme is packed with an outstanding line-up of speakers and sessions, and the organising team has worked incredibly hard to deliver an event that offers learning, inspiration and plenty of opportunities to connect with colleagues from across the profession.

As for me, my role within BAA is far from over. Following the conference, I'll move into the position of Immediate Past President. That means a significant portion of my attention will now turn towards a project that many of you have already heard me mention once or twice... and if not, here comes another reminder!

The **World Congress of Audiology 2028** is coming to **Edinburgh** in April 2028. Hosting a global congress is an incredible opportunity to showcase UK audiology on the world stage, and preparations are already well underway. It's a huge undertaking, but an exciting one, and I look forward to sharing more updates as the event begins to take shape over the coming months.

For now, though, my focus remains firmly on enjoying my final few weeks as President, celebrating our new Directors, thanking those who are leaving the Board and, hopefully, seeing many of you at conference.

It's been an unforgettable experience!

Claire Benton

BAA President

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

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