

A Christmas message to BSPGHAN members from the President

I wanted to wish all our members Seasons Greetings and wish you well for the coming New Year. I hope that you all have a restful break with family and friends.

BSPGHAN takes time at the end of each year to reflect on the achievements and challenges of the previous year and set out the work plan for the coming year. Please look out for the Annual newsletter which will be available early in the New Year. In my new role as President, I was keen that the Society inform the membership of our vision of where the society should be. I hope that you managed to see our strategy set out on as “A welcome to BSPGHAN from the President” on the home page at <https://bspghan.org.uk>.

I have spent some time speaking to members. A number of themes have arisen this year. Firstly, workforce, pressures have been marked in some centres, compounded by increasing demand for children’s healthcare, greater expectations of the quality of healthcare, and growing financial pressures on the background of recruitment and retention issues. We didn’t predict the loss of a significant percentage of our colleagues to overseas centres. If units with workforce gaps pose a significant risk to service or children, then BSPGHAN can advise and encourage dialogue between Trusts with local and regional commissioners and providers, NHS England and we have a voice at the College via the RCPCH Speciality Board.

Training Reviews have shown a lack of flexibility and slow response of profession to change across the board, not specifically in PGHAN. BSPGHAN now has closer links than ever with CSAC so that we can encourage recruitment and support training, of both SPIN and grid trainees. BSPGHAN is keen to support Nursing, AHP and other staff shortages as best we can. We can encourage sharing of job plans and innovative ways of working with new team roles with colleagues.

These workforce pressures particularly highlight the need to push ahead with the BSPGHAN/RCPCH quality standards review in 2020. By describing the current state of clinical networks, in terms of what patients may expect to receive, how services are provided, and identifying how well we are performing against current standards, we can support our services. By benchmarking services, and sharing good practice, we will help units to work with local commissioners and providers to push up standards where needed, and reduce variation and inequality. We expect to circulate a questionnaire to all centres soon and will launch the work at the Annual meeting in January.

It was timely to spend some time-sharing experiences of innovative ways of working at the recent SSPGHAN meeting. Expanding roles of advanced nurse practitioners, and pharmacy practitioners, and Physicians Associates etc have proven to be great assets to teams, more than just a workforce gap solving role. New roles are now paramount in contributing to and enhancing team working some centres, essential in health care transformation. Council has shared experiences on how to attract training fellows from overseas, who we welcome to enrich our teams and potentially settle the UK as valued members of our teams.

We had recent pressures this year on our HPN services and thanks go to the NIFWG chair, who provided paediatric representation for the society in negotiations with NHS England.

Secondly, we have listened to your request to improve our website. This is almost ready to launch and in time, we would appreciate any feedback at webmaster@bspghan.org.uk.

Thirdly, we understand that the pressing need for psychological support to be embedded in our teams, and we will welcome a new BSPGHAN drive to facilitate team development.

Fourthly, this year, BSPGHAN has been tasked by RCPCH to lead on new Snomed codes. This is an enormous amount of work, for which I am extremely grateful to colleagues who have taken on shared responsibility. Our members are best placed to achieve these aims to code every step of a patient pathway to eventually inform tariffs and explore speciality specific trends.

We look forward to welcoming you to our AGM on Thursday 30th January 2020 in Brighton. Please can I ask you to send any burning questions in advance to Convenor@bspghan.org.uk so that we can do our best to respond and offer adequate time to pay due attention to your queries or concerns. I would like to encourage feedback from members to ensure the AGM (and the Society) may aim to fulfil everyone's needs.

All these initiatives, as well as the important role that BSPGHAN has in promoting research, come at a cost to the Society and we need to carefully consider the way that we are funded and the many challenging issues that come with the industry support we have relied on for many years. We look forward to an open debate about this and please see our discussion on this in our forthcoming newsletter.

Wishing you all a healthy and happy season and warm wishes to you all for the New Year.

Sue Protheroe, President
December 2019