



Dr Trevor Smith
BAPEN President

An Update from BAPEN

I would like to start by congratulating and thanking everyone reading this who has been working in health and social care over this incredibly difficult winter period. I am hopeful that things will continue to improve, as they are at the time of writing, and we can look forward to a somewhat more pleasant summer.

Despite the pressures we all faced, the work of BAPEN kept going throughout the winter period, and I am pleased to be able to bring you up to date.

Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGP) Alliance

I have previously highlighted the work of the AGP Alliance, of which BAPEN is a member, and which is chaired by Dr Barry Jones of our Independent Advisory Committee. The Alliance of professional organisations and trade unions has continued in its efforts to campaign for enhanced FFP3 PPE (personal protective equipment) for all frontline workers. In March, we were pleased to see the publication of a Royal College of Nursing (RCN) independent review. This review closely examined the various guidelines for the prevention and control of COVID-19 in healthcare settings in the UK. It found that evidence relating to airborne transmission, the ventilation of healthcare premises, and the implications for the use of face protection needs to be reconsidered. The independent review argued that the Rapid Review and UK guidelines should be regarded as emergency level documents, which are no longer suitable at this later stage in the pandemic. The RCN identified the issues surrounding PPE as a 'major source of anxiety' – certainly an anxiety that BAPEN shares.

I would remind you that you can still write to your MP about this issue, and guidance on how to do so is available on the Royal College of Speech & Language Therapists website (www.rcslt.org). Our hope is that a groundswell of opinion reflected in a number of personal letters will demonstrate the strength of feeling on this issue amongst healthcare professionals. Something really must be done. We do of course keep you posted on any further developments on our social media channels, so please check back to stay up to date.

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Malnutrition

In March, I was invited to present on behalf of BAPEN at an All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Malnutrition. Alongside our Trustee, and Chair of the Malnutrition Task Force, Dianne Jeffrey, I talked about the need for better understanding of malnutrition, and awareness of the impact of COVID-19. This was my second parliamentary engagement in six months, following our highly successful virtual drop-in session that we conducted for parliamentarians during UK Malnutrition Awareness Week last year. Like that session, this one was well attended. APPGs serve as an important forum to raise awareness of issues, and it was great to have conversations around malnutrition with a variety of stakeholders and interested parties. We will continue our efforts through this year's UKMAW event to reach

out to parliamentarians and help paint a clearer picture of malnutrition risk and the changes that are required to protect the population as we emerge from COVID.

New guidance from the Royal College of Physicians (RCP)

The RCP has recently published updated guidance on how to support people who have eating and drinking difficulties. Several BAPEN Council members made significant contributions to the content of the report, and BAPEN has endorsed this guidance. I am confident that it will enhance clinical knowledge and practice amongst all those who are responsible for delivering care to patients. Its particular attention is on the complexities that can arise towards the end of life. It is crucial for all health and social care professionals to understand the many issues that can arise around eating and drinking, as well as how to navigate them. As the guidance notes, the ability to eat and drink hinges on a complex and coordinated system, resulting in significant potential for things to go wrong. I hope this guidance will be useful, and I urge you to read it and share with colleagues. The guidance can be found on the Royal College of Physicians' website: (www.rcplondon.ac.uk/projects/outputs/supporting-people-who-have-eating-and-drinking-difficulties).

BAPEN's Board of Trustees

As some of you may be aware, BAPEN welcomed three new trustees into our ranks at our AGM towards the end of last year. The past few months of working with them has been fantastic and it has been great to get to know Dianne, Roger and Phil, albeit virtually. We have worked hard to identify areas of strategy to develop and improve delivery of so that the charity can continue to grow and progress. Our three new trustees bring with them a wealth of experience and knowledge in the charity sector and strategic partnerships. Having these fresh perspectives brought into our Board of Trustees has been invaluable and I am confident it will lead to a more professional and cohesive organisation. Do keep an eye out on our website for a new blog post on getting to know the new trustees and their motivations for joining BAPEN.

I would like to reiterate my gratitude for all your hard work over what has now been over a year of the pandemic crisis. Keep well.

For our COVID-19 resources visit:

www.bapen.org.uk/resources-and-education/education-and-guidance/covid-19

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