



## Application statements for the Newborn Brain Care Group (BAPM special interest group) Committee 2026

### Role – Secretary

#### Instructions

BAPM has received the following application statements from members wishing to join the Committee in the role of SECRETARY.

Please read the statements and cast your vote using the online form by **11:59pm, 2nd August 2026**. All Newborn Brain Care Group members will be emailed a link to the form to vote. If you have not received this, please contact [bapm@rcpch.ac.uk](mailto:bapm@rcpch.ac.uk)

Votes will be counted by BAPM Office staff and will be treated with complete confidentiality.

## Secretary (12 applications)

### Andrada Bianu

**ST5 Paediatric Trainee, Queens Hospital, BHRUT**

Through my foundation and paediatric training I have developed clinical skills that help me offer patient-centered and family integrated care as well as safe practice using evidence based medicine. Working in both general paediatrics and community paediatrics in neurodevelopmental clinics I have strengthened my skills in outpatient settings and witness the outcomes of babies who were admitted to NICU from different perspectives. Having worked in both NICU and LNU as an SHO and then at Registrar Level, I have diagnosed and managed cases of HIE, congenital brain malformation, extreme premature infants and meningitis among others. But not only infants with a neurological abnormality need brain oriented care. Any baby admitted to NICU is at risk and would benefit from evidence based care to promote brain health. Brain oriented care is best provided through a multidisciplinary approach offered by clinicians, nursing team, AHPs and parents and education and training regarding the optimisation of newborn brain health for lifelong benefits sits at the cornerstone of better outcomes and safe practice.

I strongly believe that I would be a great addition to the committee team after having been a NeoTRIP's regional lead for the last 3 years. During this time, I have successfully coordinated 5 different projects developing my skills in collaborative work as well as enhanced my communication and time management skills.

Having coordinated Morbidity and Mortality meetings in a large tertiary Paediatric Hospital I have developed team working skills that involved multidisciplinary members. My work there involved organising and advertising monthly meetings, organising the schedules and coordinating the presentations of different subspecialties, taking minutes and creating and distributing the learning points from each meeting through posters. During the pandemic I created a new emergency SHO rota for 30 juniors spread across 9 subspecialties in a tertiary hospital making sure there was enough staffing for the clinical care to continue smoothly and safely. The feedback I have received was overwhelmingly positive.

### Ebony Blewer

**Neonatal Sister- Lead for Clinical Governance & Quality Improvement, Evelina London Children's Hospital**

In my current role, I am leading on the implementation of One Brain for Life, a unit-wide multidisciplinary initiative focused on improving neurodevelopmental outcomes. As part of this project, I established a developmental care champions group, delivering bite-sized educational sessions, advocating for funded FINE training opportunities and supporting the development of updated clinical guidelines. I am also leading the implementation of a local intraventricular haemorrhage (IVH) prevention care bundle. This work has included a comprehensive review of the literature and a local audit of care provided to infants born at less than 28 weeks' gestation during 2025. To support implementation, I organised a One Brain for Life study day for nursing staff with an interest in neonatal neurodevelopment and IVH prevention. I also worked collaboratively to successfully advocate for standardised 1:1 nursing care for all infants born at less than 28 weeks' gestation in line with the IVH prevention bundle. I am continuously striving to embed evidence-based, neuroprotective practices and promote a culture focused on optimising lifelong outcomes for neonatal patients.

I have substantial experience leading multidisciplinary quality improvement projects focused on improving neonatal outcomes. In my current role, I led the implementation of the SECURE project, which aimed to reduce unplanned extubations through thematic analysis of incidents and the introduction of a targeted care bundle. This resulted in a 40% reduction in event incidence and supported a significant cultural shift in the management of intubated infants across the unit. I also designed and conducted a national survey of UK tertiary NICUs to explore skin-to-skin care practices for extremely preterm infants (specifically <24 weeks' gestation) during the first days of life, particularly in relation to intraventricular haemorrhage prevention. The project aimed to address an important

gap in guidance and literature for this population, highlighting variation in practice across centres. Both projects have been presented nationally and internationally. My project management skills are supported by extensive practical experience and an advanced Master's qualification. I regularly and confidently chair meetings, produce minutes and communicate effectively. I have a strong understanding of the barriers and facilitators to change and use this knowledge to support successful project delivery. I am also a strong advocate for multidisciplinary engagement in change management to achieve sustainable improvement.

## **Paul Cawley**

**Consultant in Neonatology, Evelina Children's Hospital / St Thomas'**

Researcher at the Department of Early Life Imaging and Centre for the Developing Brain; focusing on early life origins of neurodevelopmental disorders, imaging associations of brain injury and translation of developing technologies to enhance diagnosis, prognosis and management of brain injury in the neonatal period.

Co-lead for the 'one brain for life' neuroprotection group at the Evelina neonatal Unit. Medical lead for Family Integrated Care, Evelina Neonatal Unit. Experienced in secretarial duties including arranging meetings, minutes, action logs and leadership of MDT. Author/Faculty: BAPM Framework: The Perinatal Optimisation Team  
Being able to job plan role within BAPM SIG would be transformative.

## **Manigandan Chandrasekaran**

**Consultant Neonatologist, Liverpool Women's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust**

As a consultant neonatologist and the neurology lead at Liverpool Women's Hospital, I champion comprehensive brain-oriented care for preterm and sick term infants in the NICU. My clinical practice is underpinned by a robust academic foundation, having completed my MD in neonatal neuroscience at University College London (UCL). This academic work is complemented by a strong portfolio of published research focused on newborn brain projects. I possess a practical understanding that safeguarding the developing brain through optimized neurocritical care is paramount to improving long-term neurodevelopmental outcomes for our most vulnerable babies in the NICU. Currently, I am leading newborn cooling education for the North West Neonatal Cooling Special Interest Group (SIG). This role enables me to translate complex neuroprotective strategies into high-quality, standardized bedside care regionally. My blend of frontline clinical leadership, targeted research, and educational outreach uniquely positions me to contribute meaningfully to the BAPM Newborn Brain Care Group.

As Lead for Network Cooling Education, I have successfully directed our regional educational strategy to enhance neuroprotective practices. Over the past three years, I have organized our annual network cooling study day, consistently attracting 60 to 80 multidisciplinary attendees and fostering vital collaborative learning between doctors and nurses. To ensure continuous and accessible professional development across the region, I also instituted a three-monthly cooling webinar series. My commitment to standardized excellence extends directly into clinical governance. I have been a key contributor to drafting and updating critical regional protocols, specifically our network cooling, neonatal seizure, and Post-Haemorrhagic Ventricular Dilatation (PHVD) guidelines. Furthermore, as an active team member within the BAPM BANFFU group, I have consistently participated in national discussions surrounding neurodevelopmental follow-up. Together, these educational, clinical, and collaborative endeavors demonstrate my dedication to elevating neonatal neuroscience and brain-oriented care standards across the UK.

## Hana Damra

### ST5 Paediatric Trainee, University Hospitals Leicester NHS Trust

In my role as a neonatal registrar, I have worked across different levels of neonatal units in the UK (NICU, LNU and SCU), gaining practical experience in delivering brain-orientated care. I also developed early experience in this area during my work in Jordan, where I was involved in starting therapeutic cooling and using aEEG monitoring. In daily practice, I focus on protecting the baby's brain by maintaining stable temperature, glucose and oxygen levels, and by reducing pain, stress and handling. I support developmental care by promoting a calm environment and involving parents as much as possible. I have experience recognising and managing conditions such as hypoxic-ischaemic encephalopathy and neonatal seizures, including involvement in cooling and neurological monitoring. I work closely with the multidisciplinary team and aim to follow BAPM guidance to improve long-term outcomes.

Although I have not formally worked within a dedicated brain care working group, I have contributed to several collaborative projects requiring strong communication and teamwork. In Jordan, I was part of a national discussion committee that developed paediatric seizure guidelines, working closely with multidisciplinary colleagues to review evidence and agree on best practice. I also served on the scientific committee for the first national breastfeeding conference in Jordan, where I helped design and organise educational workshops for both healthcare professionals and mothers. In addition, I have been involved in working with local neonatal teams to review and update neonatal guidelines, supporting best practice and consistency of care. These experiences have strengthened my ability to collaborate effectively, contribute to guideline development, and work within diverse professional teams.

## Emma Frudd

### Advanced Neonatal Nurse Practitioner, Leeds Children's Hospital

I work on a level three NNU caring for a variety of patients of different gestations and conditions. I am also an active member of the unit developmental care team. These babies are a challenging group as when they are with us on the neonatal unit parents often want answers as to any damage that may have been sustained and often we are unable to tell them whilst they are on the unit with us. Our role is to explain as best we can what has happened and what we can do to support them and what the outlook may be and being honest and open.

I am a member of our units developmental care team which is an MDT comprised of nursing staff, physios, OT, SLT and play therapists, we are in the process of running monthly ward rounds, due to a change in staff. We are trying to update our documentation and the how we undertake the ward round to have more input from parents and include them in any decision making. I am also a member of a QI group looking at the IVH care bundle and how we can improve its use on the unit following an audit of the data.

## Anthony Hart

### Consultant Paediatric Neurologist, King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

I am a paediatric neurologist who has worked with neonatologists at Sheffield and King's College Hospital, London. My PhD was in preterm MRI and developmental outcome. My current research interests include outcomes of fetal and neonatal brain problems, improving communication of prognosis to parents, detection of seizures including preterm infants, and better neurological assessment / examination. I routinely review newborn babies with neurological issues on NICU. I have written reviews and guidelines on perinatal stroke, aetiologies of newborn encephalopathy, and neonatal seizures.

I created and chaired for 7 years the British Paediatric Neurology Association (BPNA) Special Interest Group in Perinatal Neurology. As chair, we collaborated with BAPM on guidelines for babies dropped on the ward and neonatal neuroimaging. I set up in 2014 the BPNA Neonatal Neurology Course (NeoNATE). All these show a high

level of ability to work with professionals from different specialities and allied health care professionals. I sit on the RCPCH ethics and law advisory committee. My research has included qualitative studies about communication and how to improve this. I have produced recommendations, published in *Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology*, on how to communicate with parents after diagnoses of fetal brain abnormalities, and remain active in this research field. The only roles available to apply for are chair, vice chair or secretary etc. I am happy to be an ordinary member or liaison role with BPNA, if preferred.

## Megha Jagga

### Neonatal Grid Trainee, Singleton Hospital

I have developed a strong interest in brain-orientated neonatal care through clinical practice, neurodevelopmental follow-up, quality improvement and education. I am a Neonatal GRID trainee with over 36 months FTE experience in tertiary neonatal units, including medical, surgical and cardiac centres. My interests span all four pillars of newborn brain care: neurological assessment (HNNE, Prechtl's GMA and Bayley III/IV), monitoring and imaging (advanced cranial ultrasound training and regular attendance at Dr Mary Rutherford's neuroradiology meetings), neuroprotection (PERIPrem Cymru principles, HIE care, extreme prematurity and proposed neuroprotection bundles), and developmental care. I actively participate in neurodevelopmental clinics, am contributing to the All-Wales Enhanced Neurodevelopmental Follow-up Framework, and am supporting development of a business case for enhanced neurodevelopmental services within a tertiary unit. My next post is an Out of Programme Training (OOPT) post as a Senior Clinical Fellow in Neonatal Neurodevelopment, reflecting my commitment to developing expertise in this field. As trainee Risk Management Lead and Wales-wide SWOSH project lead, I have experience in governance, guideline development, education and service improvement. I am also a member of the Newborn Brain Society and BANNFU, with a particular interest in improving long-term neurodevelopmental outcomes for high-risk infants.

I have extensive experience working collaboratively within multidisciplinary and regional working groups. As trainee lead for the Wales-wide SWOSH (Switching to Oral Antibiotics and Sending Home) project, I coordinated data collection across seven neonatal units, organised stakeholder meetings, contributed to guideline development and now support regional implementation through education and engagement of clinicians across Wales. This project required effective communication, organisation and consensus-building between neonatal consultants, nurses, pharmacists and managers. I am currently contributing to the All-Wales Enhanced Neurodevelopmental Follow-up Framework through the regional Task & Finish Group, working with neonatologists, therapists, outreach teams and other stakeholders to standardise neurodevelopmental care across Wales. I am also supporting development of a business case for enhanced neurodevelopmental services within a tertiary unit. Nationally, as a member of the Soft-Landing Steering Group, I organise webinars and educational events for international medical graduates, collaborating with diverse faculty members and stakeholders to deliver high-quality educational programmes

## Nazakat Merchant

### Consultant Neonatologist, Watford General Hospital

I am a Consultant Neonatologist with 12 years of consultant experience and a longstanding clinical, academic and leadership interest in newborn brain care. My work spans all aspects of brain-orientated care, including neurological assessment, neuromonitoring (aEEG), neuroimaging, therapeutic hypothermia, neuroprotection, developmental care and neurodevelopmental follow-up. I have delivered regional education programmes in neonatal neurology, neuroimaging and neuroprotection, and have led quality improvement initiatives to enhance developmental care and neurodevelopmental outcomes. I have previously been an NIHR academic clinic lecturer at King's College London. My research has focused on neonatal neuroprotection and neuroimaging. I completed my MD (Res) degree and did the first clinical trial on Melatonin for Neuroprotection in preterm infants. I led and initiated active cooling in my hospital and have recently presented a QI on therapeutic hypothermia at the recent JENS conference. I have been a Bayleys 4 assessor and currently the PI for WHEAT and NEOGASTRIC studies.

I have contributed to national and regional multidisciplinary teams focused on brain health, neurodevelopment and service improvement. I have been involved in BAPM framework groups, including Neonatal Neuroimaging, Safe and Effective Repatriation and Optimal Medical Workforce. These roles have enabled me to work collaboratively with multidisciplinary teams, building consensus and delivering practical guidance to improve neonatal care.

I co-chaired the East of England Baby Brain Protection Group and currently chair the Neurodevelopmental Follow-up Workstream. Until recently, I was the Research Workstream Lead for British Association for Neonatal Neurodevelopmental Follow up (BANNFU) and have been involved with BANNFU since its inception, giving me valuable experience in establishing and developing a successful national Special Interest Group. In addition, I have secured funding for developmental care initiatives, including cerebral function monitoring, kangaroo care chairs and gel pillows, demonstrating my ability to translate ideas into sustainable improvements for babies and families.

## **Nipa Mitra**

### **Consultant Neonatologist, East and North Hertfordshire Trust**

As a consultant neonatologist with training and experience in neonatal intensive care in the UK and internationally (India and France), I have extensive experience caring for critically ill newborn infants with a wide range of neurological conditions. My academic interests include neonatal neurology and neuromonitoring. I contributed to the set-up of a clinical trial in neonatal seizures and completed a Master's dissertation entitled "Towards a More Stratified Approach to the Diagnosis and Management of Neonatal Seizures". This strengthened my understanding of evidence-based approaches to neonatal brain monitoring, diagnosis and management. In addition, through over 12 months' experience with a regional neonatal transport service, I have stabilised and transferred infants requiring specialist neurocritical and neurosurgical care. This has provided valuable insight into the importance of timely, coordinated brain-orientated care and its impact on both short- and long-term neurodevelopmental outcomes.

I currently co-chair a regional Baby Brain Care focus group within an Operational Delivery Network alongside the Lead Neuroprotection Nurse, working collaboratively with multidisciplinary stakeholders to improve neonatal neuroprotective care. I have contributed to several national working groups and committees, including serving as a case reviewer for the NCEPOD Emergency Procedures in Children review (2025), local unit representative on the BAPM Working Group for the Management of Neonatal Pain and Agitation (2025), and a member of the BAPM Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group developing publication standards (2023). As Chief Resident and participant in the Judge Business School Leadership Development Programme, I developed project management, organisational and stakeholder-engagement skills. I also led and supported quality improvement projects that resulted in presentations at national and international meetings, including BAPM and EAPS, demonstrating strong organisational, communication and collaborative working skills across multidisciplinary teams.

## **Akshay Phakey Kumar**

### **ST8 Senior Subspecialty Registrar (Grid Neonatal Medicine), Evelina Children's Hospital / St Thomas' Hospital**

I am an ST8 GRID neonatal registrar at Evelina/St Thomas', working mainly as senior co-ordinator in a busy L3 3 NICU caring for babies affected by extreme prematurity or needing cardiac critical care and complex surgery, and for whom we have implemented a comprehensive neuroprotection bundle. My clinical interests include neuroprotection, neurodevelopmental and family-integrated care - I've trained in ND follow-up including standardised scoring (Hammersmith, Bailey-IV and PrechtI) as well as in seizure management (BPNA membership, NET, NeoNATE). I've gained experience across several L3 neonatal services, including Evelina, Homerton, RLH, UCLH, across NICU, high-risk deliveries, and neonatal follow-up. Relevant clinical experience includes contribution to neuroradiology MDT, cranial ultrasound incl Doppler interpretation & PHVD quantisation, targeted bedside echocardiography for haemodynamics & cerebral perfusion optimisation, ventricular/reservoir taps, and community neurodevelopment/neurodisability training. I am particularly interested in making brain-orientated care practical, equitable, and embedded across all neonatal unit

Having contributed to several multidisciplinary projects requiring organisation, communication, and delivery, I feel well placed to strengthen the Brain Care SIG Committee. At Homerton, I co-led a major revision of perinatal palliative pathways with a diverse MDT including nursing, midwifery, therapies, hospice, specialties & pharmacy and drafted the updated local guideline for HIE including a neuroprotective care bundle. At RLH, I was trainee lead for weekly perinatal morbidity meetings, allocating cases, quality-assuring presentations, and giving feedback. Earlier projects include developing a WHO-inspired safety checklist for newborn stabilisation at high-risk deliveries, a neonatal central-line safety bundle, a prolonged jaundice pathway, and a practical network-wide investigation algorithm for children with neurodisability. I have also had extensive experience in cross-agency advocacy and leadership as trainee rep within the wider Deanery, Trust LNC representative, and as a BMA divisional rep, diplomatically and democratically collaborating with peers on safety & training. My communication skills and responsiveness are evidenced by my contributions to my teams and also through co-authorship of MDT guidelines and family-facing materials. In my spare time I enjoy community work including as a Neighbourhood Watch leader and as a reviewer of PILs for Cochrane & C&CUK. I enjoy teaching, journal clubs, critical appraisal, and developing practical digital tools, and host multiple open-access resources on my personal Github page; I can envision being a strong custodian for use of tech and productive teamwork going forward.

## **Katarina Stefkova**

### **Neonatology Subspecialty Trainee, Royal Jubilee Maternity Hospital, Belfast**

I am an ST7 neonatal subspecialty trainee working in a tertiary unit with experience in brain orientated care, including managing infants with HIE requiring cooling and caring for extremely preterm infants from 22 weeks. I have led regional neuroprotection work, chairing the MDT developing the new <30 week neuroprotection guideline and writing most of its content. I was a trainee lead for implementing the neuroprotection bundle in our unit. My commitment to newborn brain care includes completing the FINE neurodevelopmental skills course, the NeoNATE course, and a neurocritical care observership in Vienna. I completed an MSc in Neonatology with the University of Southampton and have been a member of the Newborn Brain Society since 2023. I designed education materials, including regional teaching on HIE, a YouTube CFM resource, and a parent leaflet on intraventricular haemorrhage. I have research experience as associate PI for the DOLFIN study and an online publication about neuroprotection.

I have a strong track record of contributing to collaborative, multi-professional projects. I led the MDT developing the regional <30-week neuroprotection guideline, coordinating consultants, nurses, and AHPs, and helping drive the project from concept to near-final approval. As trainee lead for implementing the local neuroprotection bundle, I organised teaching programmes, designed an MDT simulation, and compiled and circulated a six-monthly neuroprotection newsletter to maintain engagement across teams. Alongside this, I spent three years as a student representative on the Southampton MSc Neonatology committee, helping establish the role and presenting student feedback at joint meetings with senior faculty and ESPR colleagues. This strengthened my communication skills and ability to work with diverse international stakeholders. I also initiated my unit's involvement in the HIE Collaborative study by liaising with the Chief investigator; the IRAS outcome is awaited. I enjoy bringing people together to improve the care we provide to our most vulnerable infants.

**END OF STATEMENTS**