



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

### Role – Vice Chair

#### Instructions

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

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.

## Vice Chair (11 applications)

### 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.

### 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.

## David Edwards

**Professor Emeritus, King's College London, ex-Evelina London**

Recently retired from neonatal practice at St Thomas's NICU, I am Professor Emeritus at King's College London, a Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences and NIHR Senior Investigator Emeritus. My research group contributed to the discovery of Hypothermic Neural Rescue Therapy for perinatal asphyxia, starting with laboratory experiments and moving through pilot studies to large randomised controlled trials, meta-analysis, and implementation research. We also used magnetic resonance brain imaging to define brain development, maldevelopment and injury. We defined prognostic MR appearances and multiple developmental abnormalities due to prematurity. Recently I led the Developing Human Connectome Project, a £12m open science project to map the growth of functional and structural brain connectivity.

I have chaired or served on panels for bodies such as the Wellcome Trust, Medical Research Council, National Institute of Health USA, INSERM, Health Research Authority, and the Academy of Medical Sciences. I served on the BAPM committee that developed guidelines for Hypothermic Neural Rescue Therapy following perinatal asphyxia. I was Associate Director of the NIHR Medicines for Children Research Network and was recently summoned to give evidence to a House of Lords Special Committee. I am applying to be vice-chair of this group as I think my experience will be of value. I am not applying to chair the group because I believe the chair should be an active clinician. I think I can offer support based on long experience of both scientific research into neonatal neurology and practical experience of caring for infants at risk of or suffering from brain injury.

## Michelle Fernandes

**Neonatal Medicine GRID (ST8) trainee & Clinical Lecturer, John Radcliffe Hospital**

I am a Neonatal Medicine GRID trainee (ST8), MRC Fellow and Clinical Lecturer at Oxford with specialist expertise in neonatal neurology, newborn brain science and neurodevelopmental follow-up. My experience spans all tertiary NICUs across the TV&W ODN, where I have advanced brain-orientated neonatal care through clinical practice, QI, education and research leading major local and regional updates in therapeutic hypothermia for HIE, neonatal seizures, severe IVH prevention, neurodevelopmental surveillance and developmental care pathways. I lead the F1000 Research Group at Oxford, studying brain health and development during the first 1,000 days. My research portfolio includes the BRAINENDEVR, INTERGROWTH-21st, INTERBIO-21st studies. Key outputs are 3 novel neurodevelopmental assessment toolkits used across 26 countries and novel fetal-neonatal neuroimaging and metabolomic brain-risk markers. My commitment to advancing equitable, evidence-based newborn brain care (NBC) in the UK and globally, includes contributions to BANNFU (as research co-lead), BAPM's IFCDC framework,

and the WHO's GSED initiative.

Working with Professor Austin and colleagues, I helped conceptualise the Newborn Brain Care (NBC) Group and contribute to its initial strategic direction. I have a strong track record of multidisciplinary, cross-national and multi-agency collaborations in NBC both clinically and in research. I bring extensive experience of coordinating/contributing to national and international NBC-focused working groups (including BANNFU (as co-lead for research), BAPM's IFCDC framework, the Oxford Maternal & Perinatal Health Institute (director of early brain science), the WHO (technical expert for early child development) and the Global Centres of Child Neurodevelopment (founding NED)). My academic work requires close collaboration with diverse professional teams spanning neonatology, neurology, psychology, AHPs, researchers, and policymakers across 26 countries. I have authored >80 peer-reviewed publications in NBC, delivered 27 keynote lectures, am a freelance writer for BBC Future, and been commended for my contributions by the MRC Impact Committee, the Neonatal Society & Neonatal Update.

## **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

## **Amanda Lawes**

**Neonatal OT/ODN Lead OT for Thames Valley and Wessex Neonatal Network, Singleton Hospital / Thames Valley and Wessex ODN**

My knowledge of this area began in 2007 -attending a NIDCAP study day, learning about synaptogenesis and how the brain is experience dependent, particularly in the neonatal setting where the cerebral cortex is highly vulnerable to stress and disruption. I have undertaken extensive training in neuroprotective care, and I have an in-depth understanding of preventing injury, protecting normal maturation and providing a neuroprotective environment. I have taught neuroprotective care including cue-based care, pain assessment and management, optimised sensory environments, positioning, Fi Care, neuroprotective medical strategies for over 10 years. I am trained in General Movements Assessment, understand neuroplasticity and how early intervention helps reorganise the motor cortex following injury. I visited Sweden to observe world class neuroprotective care and I use the Neonatal Neuro-protective Best Practice Guidelines in my daily practice. I have an up-to date knowledge of the evidence base e.g. the effect of neuroprotective care is lost by age 3 years and regular 'boosts' of this care is needed to optimise long term outcomes.

As someone who has led on Family Integrated practice in the UK over the past 10 years, I have recently been invited to join the newly-formed UK Fi Care Committee, to explore framework development. I work closely with Bliss and have led national teaching/webinars/study days. I was one of the clinical experts to develop the HEE e-learning package for OT's wishing to develop skills in neonatal care. I am one of the authors of the RCOT Career Development Framework for neonatal OT's. In addition to my clinical role, I have a Lead ODN role and collaborate with the other national ODN leads to implement recommendations of the NCCR, delivering workstreams that include workforce development, supporting clinical practice, education and governance. I have developed neonatal guidelines in England and Wales and more recently I participated in the Stakeholder group of the All Wales Maternity and Neonatal Assurance Assessment. My strengths are my communication skills and ability to influence others, even at a Government level.

## **Fadi Maghrabia**

**Consultant Neonatologist, Leeds Teaching Hospitals**

Subspecialty & Tertiary Expertise: I developed advanced expertise in neonatal neurology through extensive clinical experience in tertiary neonatal units during training, supplemented by a dedicated pediatric neurology rotation during neonatal GRID training. I'm also a member of the BPNA (British Paediatric Neurology Association) and NBS (Newborn Brain Society). National Leadership: I co-chair the BPNA Fetal and Neonatal Neurology Special Interest Group, successfully uniting neonatologists, neurologists, and fetal medicine specialists on a national scale. Educational Impact: I'm a faculty member on the BPNA NeoNATE Neonatal Neurology Programme, and I led the

comprehensive content update for the BPNA Neonatal Neurology Distance Learning Course. Clinical Governance & Research: Updated neonatal seizure guidelines at both departmental and network levels, and presented national data on cranial ultrasound practice in preterm newborns.

I co-chair the BPNA Fetal and Neonatal Neurology Special Interest Group, a voluntary multidisciplinary national group. In this role, I set structured agendas, maintain action logs, ensure accountability across workstreams, and co-lead the organisation of national educational days. I created the NeoMedAI neonatal educational podcast, demonstrating my ability to communicate complex clinical content accessibly to a wide professional audience, which directly maps to the communications officer role. I also have experience in developing and distributing professional newsletters during my role as the regional representative for International Medical Graduates. For the family engagement lead role, I currently lead the neonatal EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) workgroup at my unit, collaborating closely with families and advocacy groups to mitigate health inequalities and deliver structured, inclusive, family-centred engagement.

## **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 Prechtl) 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.

## **Charlotte Xanthidis**

**Lead Neonatal Network Physiotherapist, West Midlands Perinatal Network**

I have worked as a physiotherapist in neonatal care for the last 16 years and the prime focus of my clinical work has always been neuroprotection and neurodevelopment, across both inpatient (level 3) and follow up settings. As well

as patient facing clinical work, I have worked alongside the research team at the Centre for the Developing Brain on a research project looking at neurodevelopmental outcomes for children with WMPL found on routine research MRI scans. Within my lead network role, I have recently rolled out our network-wide Brain Protection Bundle across the West Midlands Perinatal Network, in a bid to drive down our IVH rates and further reduce our mortality rates. I also lead our network neurodevelopmental follow up workstream and have a key interest in our morbidity outcomes too. I feel I have a wealth of neurodevelopmental experience I could bring to this special interest group.

As mentioned above, I have led on the creation and roll out of our network IVH bundle. This involved complex multidisciplinary working across the 14 neonatal units in our region along with close working with our PAG. I have previously held secretary, vice chair and chair roles within our professional body's Neonatal Physiotherapy committee over a period of 12 years and have extensive experience of running meetings and projects, as well as setting up and running MDT conferences. I also represented AHPPPs at the Neonatal Implementation Board over a five year period and have led on writing national guidelines and professional standards. These roles have showcased my strong communication skills, both written and verbal, and my ability to work in a multiprofessional team as an advocate for multiple professional groups. I have a wealth of experience in developing and delivering education and training at local, regional and national levels.

**END OF STATEMENTS**