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

Role – Research & Innovation Lead

Instructions

BAPM has received the following application statements from members wishing to join the Committee in the role of RESEARCH & INNOVATION LEAD.

Please read the statements and cast your vote using the online form by **11:59pm, Wednesday, 2nd December 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**

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

Research & Innovation Lead (2 applications)

Dr Michelle Fernandes

Clinical Lecturer and Post CCT Fellow, Oxford University Hospitals and University of Oxford

I am a post-CCT Neonatologist and Clinical Lecturer at Oxford, with specialist expertise in foetal and newborn brain science, neonatal neurology, and neurodevelopmental follow-up. My clinical experience spans three tertiary neonatal units across the Thames Valley and Wessex ODN, where I have advanced brain-oriented neonatal care through clinical practice, quality improvement, education and research. I have led local and regional service improvements addressing therapeutic hypothermia for HIE, neonatal seizures, severe intraventricular haemorrhage prevention, and developmental care pathways – and have worked closely with BAPM, over the past year, on its IFCDC framework.

I am an academic neonatologist: I lead the F1000 Research Group at Oxford University's Department of Paediatrics. My research applies cross-disciplinary methodologies to study brain growth, health and development during the first 1,000 days of life (a window of heightened neuroplasticity, spanning conception to age 2), mapped across mechanistic, measurement science, and intervention workstreams. Over the past decade, I have led several large, international research projects (including INTERGROWTH-21st, INTERBIO-21st, and BRAINENDEVR) that have yielded novel mechanistic insights into pathways leading to typical and atypical early brain development as well as pioneering research outputs of clinical significance including (i) three novel early child development (ECD) assessment toolkits for rapid, standardized neurodevelopmental surveillance (most notably the INTER-NDA, now implemented in >50,000 children across 32 countries); (ii) the first prescriptive, international neurodevelopmental standards constructed according to WHO guidelines (iii) a normative fetal brain atlas with accompanying gestational age-specific standards for global and regional fetal brain growth and (iv) novel imaging (fetal) and metabolomic (maternal and newborn) markers of atypical brain development and developmental risk during infancy. With international collaborators, I have developed evidence-based community-centric interventions (Omama and Saving Brains Grenada) to rescue neurodevelopment in at-risk children, and am extending this work to NICU populations. These outputs were highly commended at the MRC's Impact Prize Ceremony in 2024.

I hold an MRC Clinical Research Training Fellowship for BRAINENDEVR, a multi-country project using advanced data science approaches for population-level risk-profiling of atypical functional brain outcomes during infancy. Last month, together with Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich, I established a UK-European partnership to architect precision approaches for the early detection, risk stratification, and targeted treatment of brain disorders and developmental delays during critical windows in infancy and early childhood.

I am passionate about newborn brain health-focussed capacity development and advocacy: towards this, I co-founded regional ECD centres in Grenada, East Africa and the US, with ongoing work in Eastern Europe, India and Nigeria.

My wider leadership roles include serving as scientific advisor to the WHO's GSED Initiative; research lead at BANNFU, Director of Early Brain Science at the Oxford Maternal and Perinatal Health Institute (integrating global perinatal, newborn & child health research) and an editor at ADC.

My funding portfolio includes awards from the MRC, NIHR, NIH, and Gates Foundation; in 2025-2026 I received Neonatal Update's David Harvey Young Investigator Award and the Neonatal Society's Rising Star Award.

Leveraging my track record and large international network in neonatal research, I would bring strategic research leadership in priority setting, facilitating multicentre research, supporting dissemination of research, promoting evidence-based innovation in newborn brain care and strengthening cross-speciality and cross-network

collaborations to support delivery of the best brain care for every newborn in the UK.

Osheen Kuttikottayil Joy

ANNP, Nottingham University Trust

I am writing to express my interest in the Education & Training Lead and Research & Innovation Lead roles within the BAPM Newborn Brain Care Group. As an Advanced Neonatal Nurse Practitioner with a particular interest in research and neurodevelopment, I would welcome the opportunity to contribute to equitable, evidence-based newborn brain care.

I recently completed the NIHR Associate Principal Investigator Scheme through the COMET trial, investigating therapeutic hypothermia for babies with mild hypoxic-ischaemic encephalopathy (HIE), and continue to support its delivery. My involvement has included promoting trial awareness, facilitating staff training, obtaining parental consent, supporting research documentation and reviewing potentially missed eligible cases. Through regular discussions with the central trial team, I have helped explore recruitment challenges and ways to improve engagement. This experience would support contributions to multicentre research, dissemination and addressing practical barriers to research participation.

For my dissertation, I critically reviewed eight studies examining neurodevelopmental impairment in neonates with congenital gastrointestinal anomalies. I shared the findings at our Grand Round and through a poster at the BAPM Annual Conference. This strengthened my skills in evidence appraisal and communicating research, which I would bring to developing educational resources and sharing emerging evidence across the group.

My education experience includes working as a clinical educator preparing internationally educated nurses for OSCE examinations, teaching Qualified in Specialty neonatal nurses and supporting new doctors with practical skills, including central line insertion. These roles have developed my ability to adapt teaching to different learning needs and professional backgrounds. I would draw on this experience to support accessible multidisciplinary education, case-based learning and study events.

I am also contributing to a local audit of HIE management, with a view to developing a quality improvement project from its findings. During my MSc in Paediatric Nursing in India, I supported projects to increase kangaroo mother care and reduce delays in treating children with hypovolaemic shock. These experiences would help me contribute to identifying variation in practice and translating evidence into achievable improvements.

My earlier qualitative research into adolescents' psychosocial adjustment following permanent disability also shaped my appreciation of the lifelong impact of illness and the importance of family perspectives.

I would bring a nursing and advanced practice perspective, collaborative working skills and a commitment to connecting research, education and clinical improvement. I would be pleased to contribute actively to the committee's meetings and workstreams, while learning from colleagues to advance newborn brain health and long-term outcomes.

END OF STATEMENTS