

President's Letter



Mary Stocker

I write this in the hope that as the snow thaws across Dartmoor and the South West is once again connected to the rest of the country the severe pressures experienced across the NHS this winter might also begin to subside. I am sure that like us your trust has been on the highest levels of alert on many occasions already this year. It is at times like that that the value of having efficient and effective day surgery services are truly appreciated, whilst the rest of the NHS is struggling to cope with the enormous pressures, our day surgery units continue to do what we do best day in and day out, that is, deliver high quality care to an increasing number of patients on the day scheduled without delays and cancellations. In order to do this it is imperative that our day surgery units are not used for “escalation purposes” and we have recently heard at our national meetings a number of examples where this has been allowed to happen resulting in decimation of the day surgery process and staff demoralisation. I was pleased to hear earlier in the year that National Emergency Pressures Panel were recommending that in times of increased demand day case procedures should be ramped up to take pressures off in-patient beds. However, of some concern was their statement that day-case facilities could be used flexibly to provide inpatient care to help with the expected surge. I am this week delighted to report that after conversation with this team it appears that that was a misunderstanding and there is complete appreciation of the need to protect our precious day surgery facilities at times of escalation. I am delighted to report that BADS will hopefully be contributing to future discussions so hopefully our message will continue to be supported.

Council have been working hard on a variety of projects over the last few months. Of note our work with the NHS Improvement Model Hospital Project is paying huge dividends. We hope that they will shortly be launching their day surgery compartment which will enable trusts to benchmark their performance against all the procedures within the BADS Directory. There will also be the ability to identify the top performers in terms of day surgery rates for each of the individual procedures which will give us the opportunity to learn from our best performing colleagues.

Each year we learn of teams who are introducing more complex procedures into the day surgery arena, last year it was the neurosurgical teams from Southampton who told us about their pioneering work introducing day surgery craniotomies. This year's focus is day surgery arthroplasty with teams from Northumberland and Hull leading the way. The team from Hull will be presenting their work in June at our ASM and in September we are running a “joint” conference in association with Health Care Conferences where teams from Northumberland, Hull and Torbay will be showing us how to transform our arthroplasty service into one which embraces day surgery.

At this time of year, we start looking towards the future and in particular considering recruitment to our council. We anticipate having three places on council this year and would be delighted to welcome applications from any current BADS members who would like to become more involved in the organisation of our Association. We will be sending out a message shortly inviting you to apply for a position on council so now is the time to start thinking about it. More information can be found under the news section of the website.

Finally we are endeavouring to update our directory of day surgery units with the correct contact details of medical and nursing leads for all the units across the UK. I am sure you appreciate this is

a difficult task. If each member (ie you!) were able to contact Nicola at bads@bads.co.uk with the name of the medical and nursing lead for day surgery in your own trust and one or two adjacent trusts we could have 60% of the information we need in a very short time. Do it now – this week, if you put it off it will never happen!

Thank you again for the support you give to BADS and we look forward to seeing many of you in Sheffield in June.

Mary Stocker