

BAAT Chair's Update – May to July 2020

When I stood as Chair of BAAT in May this year, I said that one of my main aims would be to increase engagement with members and to work towards using more consultation and co-design in our work on Council. I really believe that this is vital for us to be able to support members effectively, particularly in the current situation with so much change and uncertainty. It is clear that we will need to work even more collaboratively as a profession in the months and years ahead, so that we can harness the passion, energy, skills and experience of all art therapists and to use this to be able to support one another, to challenge our thinking, and to develop our practice. We are also committed to increasing diversity in our profession and have begun a process of questioning our practice and some of the ideas that underpin our clinical thinking, so that we can start to address the racism and inequality that exists in our community.

There are many different strands to our work and I am getting to know each of these in turn more fully. I have also responded to issues, as these have arisen.

1. Engaging with BAAT Members:

I have started to engage directly with BAAT members and plan to continue this in August, by arranging drop-in sessions for those who would like to get in touch with me. I have Chaired two of the online BAAT CPD lectures and co-facilitated a training that aimed to support students, or those looking to move into a new sector, to understand recruitment processes and how to engage with these effectively and creatively. While meeting online and using technology certainly is challenging at times, it has also enabled us to support BAAT members across the UK more easily and to be more responsive to their needs and that is very welcome.

2. Engaging with BAAT Groups

- a) Special Interest Groups: I have been in touch with all of BAATs SIG coordinators and so far, I have attended two SIG meetings - ARC and SIPPSIG. These meetings were both very interesting and I was able to listen to members' concerns, share information, and answer some of their questions. There were several proposals that come out of these meetings, which would be helpful to develop – some right away and others as part of the next phase of our work, when our new CEO starts in post.

Issues arising from SIGs:

- i. *BAAT Members' Survey*: Last year BAAT surveyed members about supervision and about BAATs structures and communication with members. There is also an annual survey of newly qualified art therapists, to help us to understand issues being faced in the workplace. Members suggested that it would be useful to carry out another survey, so we can understand in some more depth the areas of work and resources are currently working well for members, to identify areas that could be adapted, and others that may need to be developed. This is a helpful suggestion, which can be implemented when our new CEO starts in post.
- ii. *Policy on Equality, Diversity and Equal Opportunity*: I have received a letter from members of SIPPSIG, which set out their feedback about BAATs BLM Statement. It also suggested that BAAT develop an Equality, Diversity and Equal Opportunity policy. We do currently have a policy for BAAT staff, but it could be helpful to develop this to address all of our work.
- iii. *BAATs Structure/ Links with other Bodies* – Some members aren't clear how BAAT is structured or how our work fits in with other professional membership bodies, partners and regulators. Our President, Di Waller, and I have spoken about offering to run sessions for each of our SIGs to explore this, as this may help people to understand more fully the landscape in which we work.
- iv. *Consulting SIGs*: Members of our SIGs would like to contribute more actively in our work, for example, giving feedback on relevant policies being reviewed or

developed by BAAT. As a first step, the CEO will circulate the reading list and resources she has gathered together to the ARC SIG, before these go out to members.

- v. *DBS Check for PP*: This is now required by BAAT for private practice applications and while being keen to support safe and rigorous practice, SIPPSIG members don't see what this actually offers in practice. It adds additional expense at a difficult time and they highlighted that they can't access an enhanced disclosure, without applying through an organization.
- vi. *Supervision Guidelines*: Some very useful ideas were shared from a SIPPSIG working group, which highlight the value of having a structured programme and procedure set out for policy reviews and to consult with SIGs, as part of the re-drafting or development process.
- vii. *Diversity in Training and Students' Experiences of Working with Difference*: Members wanted to think about diversity in our practice and in particular, in relation to art therapy training across the UK – how diverse trainings are, what is included in the curriculum, and how these issues can be addressed with students. SIGs also wanted to be able to support trainings to grapple with the complex issues that arise from talking about and working with difference directly. They suggested that as a profession, we could draw upon members' skills and experiences in these areas more directly. I arranged for Reps from ARC to attend the Educators meeting this week – see below.
- viii. *BAAT website*: Members suggested that it would be helpful to update the website, so that it can represent fully the dynamic creativity of our work as art therapists and highlight the voices of our clients/ service users. Some of the functionality could be developed to keep up with changes in how people are now accessing informing and networking. This was already planned to due to start this Spring, but had to be delayed due to lockdown. Volunteers with expertise in this area have come forward to join the working group, which is very welcome.
- ix. *BAAT Forums*: Some members have found these really helpful, as one can access the work being done by all of the SIGs and share resources. Others have struggled to engage with the forums and found them more difficult to use in practice. It would be helpful to explore these issues more fully, so that we can all use a single system that can ensure that BAATs work is all GDPR compliant.
- x. *BAAT Email Addresses*: There appear to be some differences in practice between SIGs, with some making more use of these emails than others. These were implemented to meet our responsibilities under GDPR, so this will need to be explored more fully.

I also responded to a complaint that arose from within a SIG. This didn't fall within the terms of our complaints policy, so I explored the issue with everyone involved to understand what had occurred and to think about how to address the issues constructively. I'm pleased that we were able to find a positive way forward.

- b) Regional Coordinators: I am looking forward to meeting our regional group coordinators online, over the summer.
- c) IJAT-Inscape: I was pleased to attend the last IJAT Editorial Board Meeting. It was impressive to see how much work has been done over the past few years to raise the profile of the journal and to increase readership. The upcoming special issues seem very well suited to support members to understand how to work within the challenging context we find ourselves in at present.
- d) Educators' Group: I attended the recent meeting and arranged for representatives from the ARC SIG to attend this too, so they could share ideas about working with diversity and issues raised by the BLM movement. They presented a very helpful summary of ideas of

areas to consider and to develop. The discussion as very interesting and also highlighted the need to interrogate our history and some of the ideas that we use to underpin our thinking, so that the valid criticisms of some of these are also shared with students. Issues remain about accessibility and the cost of training – this is something that we can explore as a council over the coming year. The meeting was very positive and we have been sharing resources and taking time to consider the challenges faced in the sector and thinking too about how BAAT can best support students and the trainings.

3. BAAT Staff

I've spoken regularly with our CEO in order to keep abreast of issues that have arisen and feedback from my other meetings. I have also liaised with our incoming CEO about her new role so we could plan together for this. I'm looking forward to speaking with the rest of the staff team, as they start to come back into post.

4. BAAT Council

I have now spoken with all of our elected members of Council in order to understand their areas of interest and experience, so we can shape our workload to be as effective as possible as a team. I've spoken with members of the BAAT Council working groups, which were set up in June 2020, to find out how their work is progressing and what resources they may need to deliver these. I've also liaised regularly with BAAT Vice-Chair.

5. HCPC, Partners and Stakeholders

- a) Our CEO and I met John Barwick (CEO of HCPC) and Christine Elliot (Chair of HCPC) this week. I found this a constructive meeting, which explored some of the issues faced and how we can work together most effectively. The HCPC is keen to build on their existing relationships with AHP bodies, which is very positive.
- b) Our CEO has also kindly introduced me to the Chairs and CEO of our fellow HCPC Arts Therapies professional bodies, HEE and AHPs networks. I've spoken with some of these already and have arranged times to speak with the others, so that we can explore shared areas of interest or concern.

Next Steps

As I said at the AGM, at times like this we really need to be able to work together and stand together. We need to be able to speak out with a clear voice in national debates and to continue to use our shared endeavours to show what it is about our work that provides such a unique resource for clients and service users. I am looking forward to meeting more of our members over the coming months, so that their experiences and expertise can help to inform our shared work on BAAT Council.