

I am a paediatric surgeon from Newcastle, and wish to be considered for president of the association.

I have served two terms on the executive committee as the representative for the North of England, and have a good understanding of the workings of the association, and believe I can articulate some of the challenges we face.

My first priority if selected would be to communicate with the considerable number of UK consultant paediatric surgeons who are not members of BAPS. Why do they feel unable to participate in their national association? What are the barriers to their coming forwards and joining their colleagues? How can we enhance their experience to bring back them into their professional home?

Paediatric surgery is a small surgical discipline. Because of this, we often struggle to make our needs and concerns heard both locally and nationally. Despite this, we as surgeons are too keen to divide ourselves into ever smaller groups. My second priority would be to try to bring all paediatric surgery together within the auspices of the association without alienating special interests. I think it regrettable that urology, oncology, and minimally invasive specialists have felt it necessary to set up their own professional associations. It is in no one's interest to have the already small discipline broken into factions.

I believe the strength of UK paediatric surgery is the provision of specialist surgical care for all children wherever they may live. I do not support centralization of services when there is no evidence to support improved outcomes from such moves. Colleagues in smaller centers need support and encouragement from their national association, and are ill-served by misguided attempts to de-skill them.

I hope you share these principles and that you will support my candidacy for the privilege of being president.