



## ABN SPOTLIGHT – THE VITAL WORK OF JOB PLANNING

ABN Honorary Secretary Biba Stanton talks to Arani Nitkunan, Chair of the ABN Services Committee.



*Dr. Arani Nitkunan: ABN Services Chair, Consultant Neurologist Neurology Lead at Croydon University Hospital & Secondary Care Co-Chair for SWL Neurological Services Network.*

Read the ABN Job Planning Document here.

### WHAT IS JOB PLANNING?

Job planning is a structured process for regularly reviewing whether consultants use their time efficiently and effectively. It is a professional as well as a contractual obligation for consultants and their employers in the NHS. Neurologists internationally won't have the same system, but might be interested to look at how consultants in the UK work.

The ABN has been proactive in this area for many years, publishing

guidance as early as 2013. This initial document, led by Dr Lucy Kinton and the late Dr Gareth Llewelyn, set the foundation for neurology job planning. The ABN Services Committee has led work to update this document to reflect current working practices.

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT FOR NEUROLOGISTS?

Effective job planning within departments helps ensure services meet the needs of local populations while promoting equity among consultants. It also ensures effective management and development for neurologists, such as recommending adjustments to work patterns, and gives the opportunity to explore individual career goals. If successful, this should result in more rewarding careers, and increased well-being and retention. Additionally, mature job planning processes can assist departments in planning for longer term challenges such as succession, stability in levels of care and continuity in service provision for patients.

### WHAT IS IN THE ABN'S DOCUMENT?

The revised document details the time required from neurologists to undertake various activities. It addresses the evolving work environments of neurologists, recognising roles in District General Hospitals, Regional Neuroscience Centres, or a combination of both.

For outpatient work, the document also discusses outpatient clinic templates including time for Patient Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU) support and highlights the importance of allowing sufficient time allocation for acute neurology liaison activity.

Time for administrative tasks, such as triaging referrals and managing advice requests, is also considered, stressing the importance of robust administrative support to prevent consultants from being overwhelmed by tasks better suited for other staff, with the aim of reducing burnout. Allied staff and resident doctors need to be

supervised appropriately for safety and effectiveness, and this document also considers the optimal time for this. Supporting Professional Activities (SPAs), including leadership and supervision roles, are discussed, emphasising their contribution to mitigating burnout and maintaining patient safety.

### WHAT WENT INTO PUTTING THIS DOCUMENT TOGETHER?

One of the strengths of this document is that it is the result of collective endeavours and many hours of effort from a dedicated workstream within the ABN Services Committee, including Dr. Lucy Kinton, Dr. Sophie Molloy, Dr. Louise Richardson, and myself, with input from the ABN Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee via Dr. Mahinda Yogarajah. Following the drafting process, the document underwent reviews by the ABN Council and Executive before approval. I am deeply grateful to my colleagues for their contributions and hard work.

### HOW CAN NEUROLOGISTS AND TRUSTS USE THE JOB PLANNING DOCUMENT IN PRACTICE?

The document serves as a vital benchmark for consultants and trusts, allowing them to align expectations and practice standards. By implementing its recommendations, we hope to optimise outcomes for patients with neurological conditions while ensuring adequate support for neurologists.

### WHAT IS THE NEXT PRIORITY FOR THE ABN SERVICES COMMITTEE?

From the beginning of my tenure as chair in 2023, I've been keenly aware of workforce disparities across the UK, particularly regarding input from other health professionals like nurse specialists, physiotherapists, and occupational therapists. Currently, we're drafting a proposal outlining the workforce

requirements for a population of 100 000.

### HOW CAN NEUROLOGISTS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING THIS KIND OF WORK GET MORE INVOLVED?

The success of the ABN Services Committee depends on the dedication and enthusiasm of its members. Each of the 20 regions across the UK is currently represented (bar one), ensuring comprehensive coverage. If you're an Ordinary Member of the ABN and interested in joining, keep an eye on the newsletter for committee and council vacancy announcements or contact me via the ABN office at <https://www.theabn.org/>.

The Association of British Neurologists membership offers support, training, development and networking opportunities to neurologists and affiliated specialists in the UK and Ireland: Join Here

### JOIN US THE ABN ANNUAL MEETING 2025-REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN 6-9 MAY 2025 | LIVERPOOL

Our meeting includes:

- ▶ International Expert Speakers
- ▶ Engaging Platforms & Posters
- ▶ Lunchtime & Silent Symposia
- ▶ Special Interest Group Sessions
- ▶ Interactive Exhibition
- ▶ Exciting Social Activities

This year's event will be held in-person to foster meaningful

connections and networking opportunities. All main sessions will be recorded and made available exclusively to registered delegates for on-demand access. Don't miss the chance to be part of this experience in the heart of Liverpool. Register now and secure your early bird spot today! **Early Bird Deadline: 25 February 2025, 23.59.**

### UPCOMING ABN VACANCIES

#### Honorary Secretary

Putting together the ABN page for Practical Neurology is one of the responsibilities of the ABN honorary secretary. Providing a vital role on the ABN executive team, the honorary secretary has oversight on ABN's external communications, supports the Executive Director in managing our office team and works with the executive committee to ensure that the voice of neurologists is heard at a national level. My personal highlights of being the honorary secretary have been:

- ▶ working with a fantastic group of enthusiastic colleagues
- ▶ putting my (slightly nerdy) interest in NICE technology appraisal processes to good use
- ▶ knowing I have come a long way from my first ABN conference as a trainee where I felt a bit intimidated and out of place

I hope that those of you who are ABN ordinary members might feel motivated to apply for this and

other important vacancies on the ABN Council.

More information, other roles and how to apply

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