

Nominees for BBS UK Board of Trustees



Emma Hughes
Nominee: Chair

Emma lives in a small village outside Petersfield in Hampshire, with her husband Phillip, two sons Charlie and Archie, dog Max and cat Zebe. She enjoys spending time with family and friends particularly going to live music and comedy gigs, finding new places to eat and movie nights at home with her children.

Emma has worked at Thomas Pocklington Trust, a national sight loss charity, since 2008 and has been at the forefront of the development and delivery of their services. In her role as Director of Services, Emma is passionate about ensuring that blind and partially sighted people are at the centre of all their activities. The Sight Loss Councils, Student Support Service, Works for Me employment service and Get Set Progress internship programme have all involved blind and partially sighted people in their formation. Emma believes that the voices of lived experience are essential in providing responsive, effective services and support.

Emma is excited about the prospect of working alongside the trustees, staff team and volunteers at Bardet-Biedl Syndrome UK, and to continue their inspiring work to support people with BBS, their families and carers.



Chetan Meshram, Vice-Chair
Nominee: Vice-Chair

Chetan joined BBS UK as a trustee in late 2022 and has been an active member for over a decade. Residing in Buckinghamshire with his wife and three daughters, one of whom, Yukta, was diagnosed with BBS at birth, Chetan's personal experience continues to fuel his passion for supporting the BBS community.

Professionally, Chetan works as a Lead Business Analyst in the technology division of a major UK bank, with over 16 years of volunteer experience with St John Ambulance

(SJA). He has played a crucial role in the SJA National Vaccination Programme and has led numerous initiatives focused on healthcare and community support. His background spans Strategy, Transformation, Technology, Financial Services, and Volunteering, giving him a well-rounded approach to problem-solving. Chetan is approachable and welcomes conversations with parents, professionals, and advocates who share similar struggles.



Tazeem Abbas, Treasurer
Nominee: Treasurer

Tazeem lives in Cumbria with her husband and two boys, now young men. She was introduced to BBS via her sister when it was thought that she might have BBS. They then attended a clinic together at Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham (QEH) before lockdown. Her sister is currently waiting for the outcome of genetic testing.

Tazeem recently joined BBS as a Trustee in 2023 and is a qualified accountant with experience of running a hospitality business. She has recently taken up an interest in livestock farming and is supporting a family member who is a farmer.



Dianne Hand, Secretary
Nominee: Secretary

Dianne has been a trustee since April 2015 and BBS UK Secretary since 2020, she says, “George, the youngest of my two sons, was diagnosed with BBS at the age of 14 in 2010. After receiving tremendous support from people connected with the Charity and learning so much at the first conference she attended, Dianne wanted to show her gratitude by supporting others and felt that being a trustee enabled her to do that.

Dianne is now retired, but for many years was a teacher and Special Needs Co-ordinator in a primary school in Stockport. She has been able to pass on useful advice and information from Stockport’s Sensory Support Service.

Dianne is currently the Secretary for BBS UK, a member of the HR and Fundraising sub-committees and gives support to the Service User Advisory Group.

“I am proud to be part of such a hard-working team that is committed to making a difference to the lives of people affected by BBS.”

On a personal note, Dianne is also a member of the Stockport Branch of the RNLI. She loves ice hockey (and wishes she were young enough to learn how to play!) and adores Manchester City FC.”



Rachael Zimbler, Trustee

Nominee: Trustee

Rachael joined BBS UK as a Trustee in April 2018 and is the lead for the Service User Advisory Group, as well as a member of the HR and fundraising subgroups. She lives in Stockport and was diagnosed with BBS in 2012.

Rachael is a volunteer for Retina UK, facilitating the local Manchester Peer Support group and is a befriender on the telephone Talk and Support Service. She is also a volunteer on the Greater Manchester Sight Loss Council advocating for other Blind and Partially Sighted people in her local area.



Bilaal Ali

Nominee: Trustee

Bilaal Ali is a young man with BBS who is registered blind. He's currently in the placement year of an Accounting and Finance degree at Sheffield Business School, is an avid sports enthusiast and plays blind football and tennis. Bilaal was recently featured in a Financial Times article entitled 'Dismantling barriers to disabled business students' and has also shared his



experiences on the radio as well as at the BBS UK Conference this year.

“I would like to become a trustee because, having lived with BBS since birth, I have valuable experience in key areas like education, employment, sports, and social connections. I’m passionate about supporting others with BBS, helping them feel comfortable with the condition and enjoy their lives. I would also like to enhance the social aspect of BBS UK through more events and meet-ups for people with BBS.”