

## Guidelines and Practice Committee

**Sarah Birkhoelzer**

***Supporting Statement:***

I am a cardiology registrar with a subspecialty interest in heart failure and MRI, currently based in Wessex. My clinical and academic background has been shaped by national and international experiences in research, education, and service development. I am standing for election to the BCS Clinical Standards Committee because I believe in the power of high professional standards, collaborative leadership, and policy-shaping to drive excellence in cardiovascular care across the NHS. During my Clinical Research Fellowship at the University of Oxford, I led advanced imaging studies investigating cardiac and skeletal muscle energetics using multinuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy. These findings were presented at ISMRM, SCMR, and ACC, and I was honoured to receive the British Society for Heart Failure Early Investigator Award in 2024. My research is translational and patient-centred, with the goal of closing diagnostic and therapeutic gaps in heart failure. I have worked closely with industry partners to develop and implement integrated heart failure pathways across the NHS, with a current focus on establishing and optimising amyloidosis services. This has given me first-hand insight into the complexities of aligning national standards with local implementation, and I am passionate about ensuring equitable, high-quality care through evidence-based policy. My commitment to the BCS and wider cardiovascular community is longstanding. I was selected as the UK Centennial Ambassador for the BCS, representing the Society on a 12-day visit to the Virginia Chapter of the American College of Cardiology to experience the US healthcare system. Building on this, I was recently awarded the prestigious BCS–Heart Research UK Clinical Fellowship to undertake research at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, one of the world’s leading academic centres. This opportunity will allow me to deepen my expertise and bring back valuable insights to help shape UK cardiovascular care and standards. I bring experience in clinical governance and quality improvement, having led several initiatives, including remote arrhythmia detection and lung-protective ventilation projects. I’ve also served on national and international committees including the BCS Women in Cardiology Committee, EACVI web and communication committee, Cardiorenal Forum, and contributed to editorial boards such as JACC Case Reports and Echocardiography. My leadership experience includes designing a national mentorship programme for women in cardiology (WIC) during my time as the BJCA WIC—now adopted by both the BCS and British Society for Heart Failure. I work diligently, communicate promptly, and thrive in collaborative environments. I understand the importance of responsiveness, especially within a committee whose work is primarily conducted via email. I am well connected within the national and international cardiology network and committed to making meaningful contributions. If elected, I will bring clinical insight, academic rigour, and a strong work ethic to support the committee’s goal of ensuring safe, contemporary, and equitable cardiovascular care. It would be a privilege to serve and contribute to shaping the future of cardiovascular standards in the UK.