



Meet the Team

Sally Giles

Research Fellow, Core theme

Firstly, please tell us a little bit about your background and your role in the Greater Manchester PSTRC.

I started off my academic journey in the north west with a Geography degree at Liverpool University. This was where I encountered my first experience of health research, when I opted to take a module in medical geography. In order to make a bit of extra money, I worked as a healthcare assistant in a large hospital during the university holidays. Seeing both excellent and not so good aspects of care, this led me to develop an even stronger interest in health research, and to choose a dissertation topic focussing on community care and the elderly. My passion for health research continued when I decided to do a Masters at the Royal Liverpool University Hospital. After an 18 month break working and travelling overseas I came back to the North West, this time to start my first research job in the NHS. This was my first real encounter with patient safety research. I was lucky enough to do a PhD whilst I was working and this was a study looking at staff reporting of patient safety incidents. After about seven years working in Manchester, I spent five years in Bradford working on research projects that related to patient involvement in patient safety. It was in Bradford that I developed a real interest in and really began to see the value of involving patients in research. I started working for the Greater Manchester PSTRC in 2013 as Research Fellow in the Core theme. My work here has mainly focused on the evaluation of patient and public involvement within the Greater Manchester PSTRC and research studies looking at involving patients in patient safety research in primary care.



How did you first get involved with patient safety research and what do you find most challenging about it?

I first got involved in patient safety research when I started my first research job in 2001. Having worked on the front line in hospitals, I could see first-hand what some of the patient safety issues were and felt that I wanted to be involved in research that could potentially make healthcare safer. The most challenging thing about patient safety research is that it's very broad and it can sometimes be hard to translate research ideas into research questions.

What do you think will be the biggest changes in primary care in the next five years?

I think there will be more of a focus on the transition between different care organisations, rather than individual care settings. Seeing the health care system as a whole will be the future that primary care will face in the next years.

What are you hoping to achieve with your research?

The knowledge and experience of patients is a valuable source of information about patient safety issues. I'm hoping to make more use of this to improve patient safety.

Tell us about someone who has influenced your choice of career (and why)

My mum mainly as she worked as a midwife and health visitor. She prompted me to develop an interest in working in the NHS and ultimately health research and patient safety.

When you are away from work, how do you spend your time relaxing?

I enjoy travelling and seeing new countries.

What is your party trick (or hidden talent)?

I show my Burmese cats, who occasionally win 'Best Burmese'.

If you could give one piece of advice to those interested in a research career, what would it be (and why)?

Make sure you are really interested in the area you choose to research. If you have a passion for a topic, the rest follows much more easily.