



# Spotlight on...

Clinical Fellow to the Chief Allied Health Professions Officer, NHS England

**Joanne Fillingham**

## What does your role involve?

I lead projects on behalf of Suzanne Rastrick, the Chief Allied Health Professions Officer (CAHPO) for NHS England. It is a unique and exciting opportunity to gain an insight into her work and her commitment to developing the next senior leaders. I am fortunate to be mentored by Suzanne, her team and other senior staff with whom I work both within and outside the organisation. I also work with teams from NHS England and arm's length bodies.

## What does NHS England do?

It sets the priorities and direction of the NHS and encourages and informs national debate to improve health and care. It commissions contracts for GPs, pharmacists, dentists and specialised services as well as supports Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). As CAHPO Suzanne leads the development of AHPs to ensure the commissioning of AHP services achieves high quality care for all.

## What are the key messages for AHPs in NHS England's Five Year Forward View?

The Five Year Forward View identifies three 'gaps'; care and quality, health and wellbeing and funding and efficiency. AHPs have innovative solutions to these challenges, some of which will be showcased at the #CAHPO16 Conference this year. For me, the key messages for AHPs are:

- be open to change - care delivery is changing and will continue to change which may require different skill sets and new ways of working
- break down boundaries and integrate - we do not experience life and health in monocultures so we should not experience care delivery in that way
- we need to make prevention our business - the future health of populations requires it to be at the core of care delivery.





## What factors have shaped your career?

The most fundamental experience was the birth of my eldest son. Born with transposition of the great arteries and a ventral septal deficit he received lifesaving open heart surgery at one week old and compassionate care from skilled health care professionals. However, the experience of navigating services to ensure he had the care he required was an eye opener. It confirmed to me that we need to break down walls between organisations, services and professions to ensure that our populations receive the very best care delivery, at the right time and by the right people.

## What did you learn about leadership through the Nye Bevan programme?

I entered the programme, delivered by the NHS Leadership Academy, thinking I needed to develop a more directive approach which is not my natural leadership style. I learned that it is important for me to know what I think, feel, believe, value and understand and what my biases and blind spots are. Reflective practice is the tool which supports me to do this on a day to day basis and helps me to be a better leader.

## You advocate using social media to improve healthcare. What are your top tips for digital leadership?

Having digital skills should be seen as a basic human right which guarantees equity of access to many public services including health. I am inspired by what my children are learning about iPad coding at school. They are part of the next generation of digital leaders and I am responsible for ensuring they have the skills to live in a digital nation. As health care professionals we too should be equipped with skills so that we can be role models to others including our patients. To do that, my top tips are to listen, engage, learn, inspire and be inspired.

## What advice would you give AHPs seeking to develop leadership skills?

Leadership is about people, relationships and change. Rob Webster in his video for #WGT16 said: "Leadership is a contact sport; you have to engage with people and have a conversation." This resonated with me. My advice would be to listen to, and understand yourself before you can do that for others. You should care compassionately about staff and colleagues. We cannot ask them to care for patients if we do not offer care ourselves.

## How do you relax and shake off work pressures?

I am a slow but keen runner which helps me to appreciate living in the moment. I love the time I spend with my children. Watching them grow, learn and develop, being part of and responsible for that, warms my heart and is a huge privilege.

