



Spotlight on...

Chair of the North West
Allied Health Professions Network
Norah Flood

What does your role involve?

I had the privilege of becoming Chair of the North West Allied Health Professions (AHP) Network in March 2014. I work very closely with Workforce Lead Sue Louth, and Programme Manager Naomi McVey. They are helping more than 12,000 AHPs to connect by developing network events and ensuring our website is up to date and as responsive to colleagues' needs as possible.

You are also an NHS Clinical Director. What does that involve?

My role is to focus on what we do for our patients and service users and ensure it is effective. It involves reviewing and continually improving our range of evidence-based clinical interventions, ensuring we maintain high quality care that delivers the best clinical outcomes and, most importantly, continually enhancing the patient experience.

What is the main role of the North West Network?

To give AHPs a sense of belonging and a collective voice. The role of the Network in promoting the AHP's role within patient pathways is essential. We do that through our conferences, events and our website. We also connect with other regions and at national level to represent the views of AHPs and support national strategy development.

Why are networks important for AHPs and healthcare?

It is very easy to become isolated even when working in a big department. It is equally difficult to find the time and resource to connect with colleagues who can help, guide and inspire us. To share our expertise, our frustrations and our questions only helps us all to learn and improve outcomes for our patients. I have always found networking an enjoyable and efficient way of reaching people with whom I would not normally come into contact. Sharing and quite frequently pinching ideas are other great benefits too!





What North West Network project are you most proud of?

There are too many to choose from! The momentum that gathered after our Network event on Public Health does stand out though. We took an afternoon to explore the role of AHPs in Public Health and from that has grown an education programme and a real opportunity for AHPs to be highly visible in this important area of healthcare.

What are the North West Network's key challenges and opportunities in 2016?

Keeping a sense of identity is both a challenge and an opportunity. It entails using our unique skills and knowledge as our core practice while also applying them to areas that have traditionally been the remit of other healthcare professionals. We will all face tough times as the financial position of NHS trusts comes under increasing scrutiny and promoting AHPs' value in the patient pathway will be essential. We also need to think creatively about how we can transform our services. AHPs are problem solvers and have a very positive outlook so I am sure we will rise to the challenge and take every opportunity to be more efficient and effective for our patients.

How can AHPs in the North West make the most of social media?

Embrace it and use it! I use Twitter - @NorahFlood1 and @NWAHP - and I cannot recommend @WeAHPs highly enough. Social media offers an easy way to see what others are doing and choose a conversation you want to join. Using it as professionals makes us more accessible to our patients and the public and I think we will see social media and technology supporting us with the demand on our services. To fully embrace the future possibilities our minds have to be like parachutes – they work better when they are open.

How do you relax when not at work?

I work long hours and am very lucky to have a supportive husband and two wonderful (nearly) grown up daughters. Keeping up with all their comings and goings certainly helps turn the work switch off. But if I am honest, my best way of relaxing is to curl up in front of the TV. I am an avid fan of anything to do with refurbishing houses and any programme with Phil Spencer in it.

