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The Patient Safety Specialist and Patient Safety Partner programmes: a national evaluation

Individuals in safety-related roles or with extensive knowledge of these roles

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Key things to know

- We are exploring the development and implementation of the Patient Safety Specialist and Patient Safety Partner programmes in the NHS in England.
- This research project aims to understand how best to support and improve these two roles and provide recommendations for future policy and strategy regarding patient safety.
- **As part of this project, we seek to interview individuals with experience in safety-related roles in high-risk industries or with extensive knowledge of such roles.**
- We are interested in perspectives from industries including, but not limited to, aviation, nuclear power, and oil and gas, including regulation, education and management. This includes both people directly involved in these roles, and those with an overarching perspective on them.
- We are also interested in hearing from people who have knowledge of specialised safety roles in healthcare systems other than the English NHS.
- Your experience with the development of safety roles will provide valuable insights for the NHS and healthcare, while contributing to broader understanding of safety leadership.
- Participation is entirely voluntary. If at any time you decide you do not want to take part, that's not a problem – just let us know.
- If you take part in an interview, we will ask for your consent to record it.
- The researchers will maintain your confidentiality at all times. When reporting findings from the study, the researchers will take care not to include information that could allow participants to be identified.
- This leaflet explains the study in more detail.

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Made possible by The Health Foundation

About this study

Patient safety remains a major challenge in the United Kingdom and globally. Accounting for recent developments in the theory and evidence behind patient safety, the National Health Service (NHS) in England has introduced two new roles: the **patient safety specialist** and the **patient safety partner**. Patient safety specialists act as 'experts to lead on safety' and work collaboratively within and beyond their organisations. Patient safety partners are patients, carers and other 'lay' people who provide a critical external perspective on patient safety. Together, the two roles represent a major investment for the NHS. They have much promise but they have yet to be subjected to sustained evaluation, which this research project seeks to provide. The research project as a whole involves an evaluation of the two roles and the interactions between them to help optimise the roles, support role-holders and secure best value from the NHS's investment.

As part of the wider project**, this study focuses on deriving learning for the NHS from various high-risk or safety-critical industries that have deployed similar roles in pursuit of improved safety**. This includes sectors other than healthcare and healthcare systems other than the NHS. Through document review and qualitative interviews with those with experience of and insight into such roles, we will examine how they have been designed and implemented and how they have evolved. We will seek to use insights and best practices from different industries to inform the ongoing development of the patient safety specialist and patient safety partner roles.

What will happen and how will you be involved?

We would like to invite you to take part in an interview.

If you agree to participate, we will arrange the interview on an online platform such as Microsoft Teams or by telephone. In advance of the interview, we will ask you to sign an electronic consent form.

During the interview, we will ask questions that will help us understand, for example, the degree to which safety roles in your area have been professionalised, the approach to regulation and the support available for the development of role-holders. The interview will be recorded and it will take 45–60 minutes.

The recorded interview will be transcribed by a third-party transcription service which is subject to the data protection processes of the University of Cambridge. The transcripts will have any identifying details removed. Quotations from the transcripts may be used in reports, but it will not be possible to trace back any particular statement to you.

Your contribution will not be attributed to you personally or the organisation you work in. No one in your organisation will be told whether or not you have taken part.

What are the benefits of this study?

There will be no direct benefit to you from taking part in this study. However, the study will inform ongoing work in the NHS in England and potentially other healthcare systems to improve patient safety and its management.

Are there any risks?

No harm is anticipated as a result of participating in this study. It is not an assessment of individual performance, and we will seek to ensure that no information is reported that could identify individuals. The risks in this study are minimal. It is unlikely the content of the interview will cause any distress and, if there are topics you would rather not discuss, we can skip questions you would rather not answer. You can also stop the interview at any point.

What do I do if I want to withdraw from this study?

If you change your mind about taking part in the study, you can withdraw without giving a reason. If you want to withdraw from the study after completing the interview, please email the research team at pss-psp@thisinstitute.cam.ac.uk. Please note that you cannot withdraw from the study once data analysis has started; this will begin no sooner than two weeks after the completion of your interview.

How will my information be kept confidential?

The University of Cambridge is the sponsor for this study based in the UK. We will be using information from you in order to undertake this study and will act as the data controller for this study. This means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. This information will be stored securely by The Healthcare Improvement Studies (THIS) Institute, University of Cambridge.

The audio-recorded interviews will be transcribed (written out) and anonymised (identifiable information removed) by a third-party transcription service which is subject to the University's data protection processes. The anonymised transcripts will be stored on the University of Cambridge secure server. Once data collection is completed and transcripts have been checked, interview recordings will be permanently deleted. Anonymised transcripts from the interviews will be retained for a period of seven years after the study has ended (defined as the point at which data collection has finished). These will be stored securely on the University of Cambridge secure server. Identifiable information (consent form and information such as job role and organisation name) will be kept for two years after the study has ended on the University of Cambridge secure server.

Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the study to be reliable and accurate. If you withdraw from the study, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained. To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personally identifiable information possible. You can find out more about how we use your information here: https://www.information-compliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/data-protection/research-participant-data.

If you agree to take part in this study, the information we gather may be shared anonymously with academic and commercial researchers external to the study in and outside the UK. This is so that our research can be used to support other likeminded researchers. Any partners will hold a data agreement with THIS Institute and will be bound by the same ethical requirements.

What will happen to the results of this study?

In addition to summaries of findings for key groups involved, such as patient safety specialists and patient safety partners themselves, we hope the results of this study will be reported in peer-reviewed journals and presented at conferences. We will email you these publications if you wish to be kept informed. No personally identifiable information will be included in any reports or other outputs of the study: any quotations used in reporting will be completely anonymised.

Who is organising and funding the study?

This study is run by an independent and highly experienced team from the University of Cambridge, University of Leicester, Loughborough University and the University of Nottingham. The wider project is led by Professor Graham Martin and Dr Robert Pralat from THIS Institute at the University of Cambridge. The project is funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research's Health and Social Care Delivery Research programme (reference NIHR164453). THIS Institute is supported by the Health Foundation, an independent charity committed to bringing about better health and healthcare for people in the UK.

Who has reviewed this study?

This study has received ethics review from the Cambridge Psychology Research Ethics Committee (reference number TBC).

Get in touch

If you have any queries about this study, please email the research team at pss-psp@thisinstitute.cam.ac.uk.

For any complaints or concerns

If you have a complaint about any aspect of the study, please contact the director of THIS Institute, Professor Mary Dixon-Woods (mary.dixon-woods@thisinstitute.cam.ac.uk). If you are still not satisfied, you can contact the University of Cambridge Data Protection Officer at dpo@admin.cam.ac.uk.

If you are not happy with their response, or believe they are processing your data in a way that is not right or lawful, you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (www.ico.org.uk or 0303 123 1113).

Researchers

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