

# ...with Joanna Cantle



Head of Clinical Trials Pharmacy. EDGE user since the very beginning in 2002.  
Contact: [Joanna.Cantle@uhs.nhs.uk](mailto:Joanna.Cantle@uhs.nhs.uk)

## How and why did you move into clinical research?

I moved into clinical research from a district general hospital in Poole to a large teaching hospital. I applied for the R&D lead for the pharmacy at University Hospitals Trust, as it sounded like an exciting challenge. I had no real idea about research or what the job would entail as it was a new post. I took a leap of faith and have stayed in research ever since, as it is an ever evolving environment which underpins the clinical standards used across the UK and internationally.



## What does your role as Head of Clinical Trials in Pharmacy, UHS, entail on a daily basis?

Well, I can honestly say that no two days are the same! I am Head of the Clinical Trials pharmacy, which is a dedicated team of 20+ members of staff, ranging from pharmacists, technicians, administrators and dispensers. My responsibilities are to ensure that the team delivers an exceptional service to our patients and research community.

My day can consist of meeting with sponsors for feasibility/site selection visits, liaison with research teams/PI for specific studies, strategic development of the team, budget management, costing clinical trials for commercial and non-commercial sponsors, liaison with our CTU on site for new protocol development, plus the usual HR load from having a team of 20+ staff.

I am also a member of the National Clinical Trials Pharmacy Advisory Group, which leads on developing clinical trials as a profession. From that, I am one of the pharmacy representatives on the NIHR Industry costing group, which has many remits including the National Costing Template.

## How do you utilise EDGE in your daily role?

We are very busy developing EDGE workflows for all pharmacy related activity currently. We have used EDGE to give our greenlight process for several years. However, we want to expand this to encompass the whole process from protocol receipt to study close down.

## How can using EDGE help pharmacy departments?

Pharmacy are an important cog within the massive research machine, and we sometimes get overlooked as just a support department. However, any research that is classified as a CTIMP should have some degree of pharmacy support to ensure that the medicine involved in the study is managed in accordance with GCP.

All research active organisations should ensure that there is a robust process for ensuring that IMPs are managed appropriately as required by the MHRA. EDGE can be a useful tool in ensuring that support departments such as pharmacy are informed of a new potential study that requires pharmacy support.

Built in processes within EDGE can ensure that SOPs and workflows are correctly followed ensuring patient safety and compliance with regulatory requirements.

## Which aspects of using EDGE in the pharmacy dept. provides the most pleasure and satisfaction?

Probably the most satisfying aspect of EDGE is seeing a long list of green ticks against a specific study showing that you have done everything you should have done!

## The quickest way for new users to become an expert using EDGE?

I would recommend that you actually just sit and play with EDGE to see what it can do for you and your teams. Every NHS pharmacy department works in a slightly different way. However, the fundamental requirements are the same for every NHS organisation. You just need to plug your key activities into a workflow after process mapping how you work and what you do! Easy!

## One hope for the future of EDGE and pharmacy:

I would love to see electronic accountability logs realized. Cut down on the amounts of bits of paper flapping around in folders!

## One thing that you love most about our job, and why:

My job is ever evolving – I'm not sure if it's the area I work in or just me but it is nowhere near the same job that it was 16 years ago!

**Describe one of the greatest achievements of your research team:**

My greatest achievement has been my team. When I came into post 16 years ago, there was just me and 0.5 WTE technician post to support clinical trials. Over the years, I have developed the service, the team, and a reputation across the UK which I am very proud of achieving.

**One great thing that you think clinical research has achieved, and why:**

That's like asking to choose your favourite child ... Pharmacy supports so much amazing research that really benefits patients across all specialities.

**How would you increase and enhance opportunities for patients to participate in clinical trials in the future?**

The social media platforms seem to have a strangle hold on reaching out to society, so I would imagine that this trend will embed within healthcare even further.

**The best life advice that you have ever received:**

Only buy something that you absolutely love or absolutely need. We all have too much 'stuff' in our lives.

**Your favourite place to go on summer holiday, and why:**

We like to travel as often as possible as we have just invested in a beautiful motorhome, 'Daisy Duke' as she is called. We will be off to France this summer in her.

**And finally, one piece of EDGE functionality that resembles your personality:**

You haven't developed the 'know it all' button yet... have you?