

Martin Hogg, Consultant Clinical Oncologist, Rosemere Cancer Centre, Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

I'm really pleased to be involved with the Clinical Senate. The work is really interesting and very different from my day job. We all like a new challenge from time to time, just to add a bit of perspective, and I think this is a great opportunity.

My Chief Exec encouraged me and some colleagues to apply, as he was really keen for our Trust to be involved. The half-day selection process involved an interview, reviewing some mock reports and project assessments.

Being involved has allowed me to think out of the box and reflect on some of the changes that happen in the NHS that we can't always easily impact upon. We get to see where things are done well and think, "Gosh, why aren't we all doing it like that?" and to applaud that – but we also get to see where things are a little different and where they could be improved upon.

Often, as employees of a Trust, we find a change has been implemented without us being able to influence that change. As part of a Senate clinical review, you're able to provide some constructive feedback to Trusts early on, while plans are not set in stone. We can rethink and re-challenge.

I think it's really interesting that you can do so much for patients to make sure they get the best deal when big organisations make changes. That's key and ultimately why we're here.

In our day jobs, our relationships with patients can be quite intense; they are often terribly worried and terribly unwell. As a critical friend on a clinical review, we can ask the question: "Have you really thought about the people your ideas will impact upon?" I've also been able to consider my own family's experiences to look at how we might improve patients' interactions with the health service.

It's absolutely fascinating looking at the process people go through when they're thinking about these large-scale changes – and it's great to have a voice. So often we feel we don't have voices and this is a way of constructively adding comments. It is challenging and thought provoking and it also gets you to question your own practice, thoughts and feelings.

It's also good to meet people outside your normal line of work, because in the NHS we don't often do that. Often the reviews we carry out on the Senate involve people from lots of different backgrounds – from hospital medics, nurses and pharmacists to GPs, community nurses and people from the third sector.

It's good to have that breadth of thinking and we could definitely benefit from more nursing and AHP input. They are so good on quality of life issues and how to live with illness. Having more pharmacists and third sector representatives is really important too. They provide such valid input because so much of patient care these days is not just within the four walls of a hospital or general practice. Mental health expertise is important too.

However, we need **motivated** people - people who are keen to do it. I can say it's definitely worth getting involved. It's challenging, not too demanding of time and fascinating work. It's such a good opportunity to impact positively on decisions and plans that are being made.