

## Member profile for QNI Community Nursing Research Forum



**Name:** Sarah Redsell

**Job title:** Associate Professor and Deputy Director, Children and Young People's Health Research Centre (CYPHR)

**Employing organisation:** University of Nottingham

**Country of residence:** England

### How would you describe your current role and research interests?

I have a clinical background in nursing and health visiting and research skills in applied health psychology. I currently lead the Community Health and Well-being theme in the Children and Young People's Health Research Centre (CYPHR) in the School of Health Sciences, University of Nottingham. My research focuses on developing ways in which we might identify and support parents of infants at greater risk of developing childhood overweight and obesity. We have developed evidence-based resources for health visitors, namely the Infant Risk of Overweight Checklist (IROC) and Babies at Greater Risk of Overweight (BabyGRO) and are exploring ways to implement these into practice.

### How did you first get involved in doing clinical research / your own research?

Whilst working as health visitor I came across a part-time role at the University of Nottingham to develop a multi-media intervention to support children and young people with bedwetting. The role was supported by my employer as a one-year secondment. Later I was offered the opportunity to support a randomised controlled trial of the bedwetting intervention, alongside a PhD. Following this I returned to practice and identified challenges in managing babies who grew too fast. I decided to research obesity prevention during infancy; I assembled a multidisciplinary research team and have now led several externally funded projects in this field.

### What difference has your research training and experience made to your career / clinical practice / academic practice?

My early research training was quantitative, and psychology based. This taught me critical appraisal skills which I still use in aspects of my academic role. As my career progressed, I learned the importance of collaborative working; I still enjoy receiving constructive feedback and see this as a way of improving my work. I have received excellent mentorship within academia which has helped to develop my confidence to pursue my own research agenda. I have learned to listen, particularly to seldom-heard groups and I firmly believe it is important to include everyone, irrespective of background, in our research endeavours.

## What has been your favourite research experience so far?

I returned to working at the University of Nottingham in December 2020 to lead the Community and Well-being theme in the Children and Young People's Health Research Centre (CYPHR). The Centre is led by Professor Jane Coad, and I am Deputy Director alongside Dr Joseph Manning and Laura Holiday who leads our child health team. I have really enjoyed our team working on the Centre set up from decisions about themes to our brand identity and launch. We have an inclusive philosophy around membership and actively support everyone around developing a research career.

## How did you develop your research career?

I am passionate about pursuing research that contributes to addressing inequalities in healthcare provision particularly for young children and their families. This stems from working in a community setting in a deprived area in Nottingham and witnessing the struggles children and families face on a regular basis. I undertook my PhD project to learn more about the research process and discovered the challenges of community-based research.

I started researching obesity prevention as a result of my health visiting experience and early on discovered a paper linking risk factors in infancy and later childhood obesity. I was initially quite shocked that the risk factors were known in academic circles but that I was unaware of them in practice. It struck me that work was needed to better inform health visitors (and other health professionals) about the evidence around infant feeding and obesity prevention. Initially, I undertook research to identify what health professionals and parents already knew about obesity risk factors in infancy (and antenatally). Later I developed tools and training to strengthen health visitors' knowledge and understanding (BabyGRO). I am currently working on a NIHR-RfPB funded project to co-produce Caregivers intervention around Responsive Infant feeding Behaviours to prevent childhood obesity (CRIB).

## What are your top tips for anyone wanting to become a clinical academic / become more research active?

- *Ensure that you are passionate about whatever you research. When times are tough that drive will see you through.*
- *Try and view any constructive criticism as a gift to help you improve.*
- *Team working is vital to academic progression. Build your skills in collaborative working.*

## Where can we access your recent work?

My personal webpage and my open access publications:

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/healthsciences/people/sarah.redsell>

Babies at Greater Risk of Overweight resources can be found here:

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/helmopen/rlos/practice-learning/communities/babygro/risk>

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/helmopen/rlos/practice-learning/communities/babygro/supporting-parents/index.html>

**[Find out more about the QNI's Community Nursing Research Forum.](#)**