Introducing Sam Walters

Sam Walters has recently joined the ATM administrative team as the new executive officer.

Watching SpaceX land the world’s first reusable rocket was one of those special memory-making moments in my household. All crammed round the screen, breath-held, glued to the stats dashboard running alongside that miraculous image then an eruption of screaming and jumping when it elegantly touched down so effortlessly on the tiny target. I remember thinking, can you just imagine the mathematics behind that.

Please allow me to introduce myself properly, my full name is Samantha Walters. I much prefer to be called Sam. A graduate in physics with mathematics and a Masters in Business, I have come from a 26-year long career in the National Health Service (NHS).

Before joining the NHS I was employed in the private sector for Rolls Royce and Associates and British Rail, messing around with submarines and trains. During my NHS career, I have held positions in a wide range of disciplines including finance, governance, public health and commissioning as well as senior roles managing community services and leading one of the country’s largest cancer networks. I also have a range of knowledge arising from working with different sectors across local government and the charity sector.

My previous role was Chief Officer for four NHS organisations in Nottinghamshire, this was a statutory position appointed by and directly accountable to the government for commissioning the delivery and transformation of local health services.

An overriding passion of mine was to gather patient experience and stories and use them to make positive changes to local services and the wider NHS for everyone. The motivation to improve the NHS included also doing it for my family, for my friends and then for me too.

My proudest organisational achievement was being awarded national accelerator status for NHS transformation, one of only nine areas, successfully bidding for £6m over two years to drive our local change programme with the ultimate aim of countrywide roll-out. My proudest personal achievement was stepping in for a parent’s child to be able to access the services they desperately needed when the guidelines, process and computer said no. It had become a corporate nonsense requiring surgery itself.

Working in the NHS has been incredibly exciting and exceedingly challenging with the scale of change unprecedented, however, after many years of service, I was looking for different cause to champion. I was drawn to the ATM for three reasons: working for a Charity; helping to inspire others by supporting teachers in their profession and, for me personally, “mathematics”.

If I were to drill down to two things that hooked me into the role, it was the killer combination of mathematics and enjoyment. The fact that the word enjoyment features so prominently in the ATM’s aims makes me feel like I have come home. My parents always said it was only a matter of time before I came back into the fold. My mum is a retired teacher, my father lectured part-time and my brother is a university lecturer in cybersecurity.

Changing tack briefly, I am married to a very patient husband and mother to two young children; one of each flavour. A keen outdoors enthusiast, I love running, hiking, climbing, windsurfing and indulging in the odd extreme obstacle course race. My more sedentary pastimes include copiously digesting any sci-fi books I can get my hands on and sewing.

I have been told I have fearsome resolve, with flexibility in approach and that I am people oriented. I consider spending time on developing emotional intelligence equally as important as expanding technical skills. I aspire to improve, listen and actively seek feedback at an organisational-level so I will be approaching members for their thoughts and suggestions for ATM moving forwards.

Coming into the ATM is exciting, we are on a brilliant positive upward trajectory. Our membership is growing, conference early bird bookings are high, the new CPD courses are flourishing and our finances firmly on track with a surplus predicted for 2019.

Teaching is one of the most valuable vocations, aimed at building our future. I have retained a life-long love and fascination with mathematics and physics. It simply is a part of me and I fervently want to help promote the same positive relationship with mathematics, for the benefit of others.

I consider myself so very lucky to have served Nottinghamshire and the NHS, that’s credit banked. Now I feel that working with the ATM will fulfil a different need. The opportunity to make a difference in influencing mathematics teaching directly and indirectly, appeals to my urge to make a difference and facilitate improvement. I love mathematics, I respect teaching and above all I am honoured to be able to contribute to supporting the ATM and its mission.
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