

## [NIHR Three Research Schools - Seminar Series](#)

### **The challenges of accessing and working with marginalised, vulnerable young people.**

18th October 2022

#### **Speaker**

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[Download the presentation slides \(.pdf\)](#)

#### **Summary**

My research is focused on exploring links between mental health, experience of school and gang membership of 11-18 year olds across England. I am currently in the scoping phase of the research, involving extensive consultation with a range of stakeholders including policy, practitioners, experts by experience and academics. I will discuss the innovative qualitative methodologies I am planning to use reflecting on both the challenges and opportunities. In particular I will look at issues of reflexivity and positionality reflecting on my position as a white, middle aged, entitled woman.

#### **Speaker biography**

Rhiannon Barker is a research fellow at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and affiliated to the NIHR School for Public Health. Rhiannon, who has previously worked in the statutory and third sector, was awarded a fellowship by the NIHR mental health in underserved communities programme for her project, “Exploring the links between mental health, school exclusion and gang culture from the perspective of young people”. The focus of her present study on gang involvement grew out of interviews with teachers and young people undertaken as part of a NIHR-funded exploration of the relationship between [school culture and mental health](#). Rhiannon’s PhD research, a realist evaluation of [national policy for end-of-life care](#) took her to the opposite end of the lifecourse.

#### **Seminar series editor commentary and highlights**

In her presentation, Rhiannon reflects on what she, with her specific biographical and social characteristics, brings to her fellowship and her research with this particularly marginalised group of gang-involved young people. Specifically, she considers how her positionality affects her credibility and subsequently her access to and ability to engage young people. Rhiannon’s observation that different agendas and perspectives will lead to different outcomes is a particularly important one, emphasising the need to avoid conflating difference with value or quality.

Rhiannon speaks from the perspective of someone still in the scoping phase of the project, where she is building networks and relationships and working with advisory groups to shape her approach. Although ongoing, Rhiannon explains how this foundational work has already had an impact: the advisory group has interrogated her positionality and encouraged her adoption of less traditional research methods and outputs.

## References and resources

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## Link:

- [Link to YouTube recording Seminar](#)