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**Introduction**

The National Institute for Health Research, Clinical Research Networks (NIHR CRN) North West Coast (NWC) and Greater Manchester (GM) in partnership with NHS R&D NW, are pleased to announce the recruitment to cohort 4 of the Early Career Researcher Development Programme (ECRDP).

This programme supports the Health Education England (HEE) (NHS England Workforce, Training and Education) Research & Innovation (R&I) strategy which emphasises the need to develop educational strategies to ensure future professional staff are technologically literate and able to promote the adoption and spread of research and innovation, particularly in respect of long-term conditions and their prevention. It also recognises that a research active workforce leads to research active healthcare organisations which we know have better patient outcomes (<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/health-and-care-professionals/engagement-and-participation-in-research/embedding-a-research-culture.htm>).

A strategic goal of the NIHR local CRNs NWC & GM is to increase the opportunity to participate in high quality clinical research across all health and care settings and across the population of the combined regions through the development of research capability and capacity in the health and care workforce.

By funding this Early Career Researcher Development Pathway Programme for health and social care professionals we aim to develop the researchers of the future who will target the health needs of their local population.

**Early Career Researcher Development Pathway (ECRDP)**

The ECRDP programme is a 12-month programme based on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework that supports the specific development of research interested individuals from health and social care as future research leaders in the region with aspiration to deliver research within local services. The programme also supports development of future Principal and Chief Investigators providing a pipeline of future health and social care professionals as applicants for the CRN NWC Research Scholars programmes.

**Course Aims**

* To understand the drivers, policy context and value of research in health and social care across the North West region and nationally.
* To understand the role of the NIHR local CRNs and how to involve patients and organisations in research.
* To introduce the knowledge, intellectual abilities, and methodologies to do and lead research.
* To understand how to engage and influence otherstoensure the wider impact of research.
* To understand the factors/dimensions that create and enable leadership in research.
* Develop thepersonal qualities and approach to be an effective researcher.
* Haveknowledge of the standards, requirements, and professionalism to do research.
* To identify and fulfil personal development needs/learning outcomes.
* To create a personal network that will progress and promote the research leadership journey.
* To engage with current Principal and Chief Investigators in the region and understand their role and its impact.
* To develop reflective practice skills and be able to critically review personal researcher development.
* To develop aspirational goals and an initial 3-5 year career plan to achieve research leadership potential.

**Eligibility criteria**

The programme will offer up to 30 places to successful applicants who: -

* Are employed by a health or care organisation in the North West region or deliver services as part of a contract for a health or social care organisation in the North West region. If you are unsure, please contact leanne.gregory@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk (NHS R&D NW)
* Can demonstrate a significant interest and commitment to health and social care research and an ambition to become a research leader (application form and interview).
* Can demonstrate a research interest in a specific area and/or specific research experience. Previous research experience is an advantage but not essential (application form and interview).
* **Applications from all disciplines will be considered but we particularly encourage applicants who wish to target the health needs of their local population and are interested in levelling up with regards to health inequalities** (application form and interview).
* Educated to degree level or equivalent portfolio demonstrated in CV (application form).
* ​​Be qualified and/or in a professional role for at least two years or more (application form).
* Work in an environment where your potential as a clinical/social researcher can be fostered and supported by your organisation (application form and interview).
* Have discussed their ambition to do research and reasons for applying to the ECRDP with their line manager and have support from their employing organisation with agreement to provide at least two days per month study time **(must attend 90% of programme dates)** (application form).

Selection will be by application and interview; this will be a competitive process.

**Application process**

* Applicants for the programme will complete a standard application form (see attached) and submit a brief CV by the programme’s **closing date of 5pm, 31st July 2023.**
* Applicants should provide with their application, written confirmation from their line manager/supervisor and a senior representative from their employing organisation that they will be released for this programme one day per month for 12 months and provide a further one study day per month to support programme study (a total of two days per month).
* Shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend an interview on either 30th August, 31st August, 1st September with the programme due to commence on 28th and 29st September 2023. The interview panel will consist of experienced researchers and senior leaders of the NIHR NWC & GM.
* Applicants will be notified by email by week commencing 14th August 2023, if shortlisted to attend for interview on the 30th, 31st August, 1st September *(please save these dates in your diaries).*
* Feedback will be provided for applicants that are not successful following interview if requested.
* Places on the ECRDP programme cannot be deferred.
* This programme is open to health and care professionals which includes, but is not limited to, registered nurses, midwives, allied health professionals, pharmacists, psychologists, clinical scientists, social workers, mental health practitioners, and professionals supporting research. If you need clarification regarding eligibility, please contact NHS R&D NW.

**Programme format and content**

The programme is a 12-month course based on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework and is delivered over 11 days (i.e., equivalent to 1 day per month). Online group coaching sessions will also take place in-between each workshop. Dates for coaching sessions will be arranged once coaching groups have been assigned at the residential.

The programme will embrace a blended learning approach with homework, assignments and mentoring ensuring that all relevant content is covered during the 12-month period.

The programme is led by NHS Research and Development North West, with input from the local CRN teams, leadership coaches, organisational development experts, facilitators and a range of visiting speakers who will cover specialist topics. The programme is a 20 credit, M level (level 7) module at the University of Liverpool providing full access to the universities virtual learning environment.

The programme consists of:

***Programme Launch Days 1&2***

The launch is a two-day residential stay taking place at a regional venue. The location of the residential is secret, and transport will be provided to ensure safe arrival at the venue.

***Day 1*** sets out the parameters of the programme, the learning objectives, and expectation of learners’ participation. It will establish the cohort as a community of practice building on the work of Wenger and Wheatley, embeds reflective practice and peer-to-peer learning. Pairing with mentors will be explored and the coaching groups will be formed. New learning tools will be introduced and other creative activities that will enhance the learning experience. The assignments, placements and expected outcomes for the programme will also be outlined at the launch.

***Day 2*** will start to address the drivers, policy context and value of research in health and care across the NW region. It will look at the development of the knowledge, intellectual abilities, and techniques to do and lead research and look at engagement, influence, and impact.

***One-day workshops***

A further 8 one day workshopswill be delivered over the 12 months to address the aims and objectives of the programme and will consist of leadership theory, guest speaker presentations, and development of reflective practice. There will be workshops to develop confidence, personal presence and establish individual values-based working. *Group* coaching will take place on line (2 hours) in between workshops and is designed to enhance learning through peer support and exploratory coaching conversations.

***The final day***

On the last day of the programme there will be a celebration event involving individual presentations and showcasing of future development opportunities. Mentors and coaches, CIs from placements and senior CRN staff will be invited.

**Accreditation.**

To pass the level 7 module, participants will be required to complete and submit two academic assignments prior to completion of the course. Assignments are designed to help consolidate learning from the programme and support the development of reflective practice and critical review skills.

**Course outcomes**

On immediate completion it is expected that each participant will: -

* Have a completed reflective diary.
* Have developed a personal career plan with set short-term goals (to be achieved in one year or less) and long-term goals (to be achieved in one to five years).
* Be more responsive and alert to opportunities for networking and developing reputation and esteem.
* Have developed links with the R&D director and department in their employing Trust.
* Have a foundation network of key people and organisations to support and enable their career plan.
* Have both theoretical knowledge and some practical application of research methods.
* An understanding of information literacy and management, research income and funding generation.
* Have increased skills and confidence in their abilities to lead in research.
* Have submitted two academic assignments to the University of Liverpool for accreditation at Level 7.

**Evaluation**

Before and after questionnaires will be administered to all participants and pre- and post-course telephone interview conducted to provide an immediate evaluation of the programme.

**Dates for Cohort 3**

Interview date: 30th August 31stAugust, 1st September 2023

Residential launch: 28th & 29th September 20230 (secret location)

Workshop dates for 2023/24:

19th October 2023

16th November 2023

14th December 2023

18th January 2024

15th February 2024

14th March 2024

25th April 2024

23rd May 2024

13th June 2024

We hope that workshops will take place in person, however if this is not possible, we will adapt and take the sessions online where necessary