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**Adult and Children’s Social Care Practitioner Researcher Programme Awards 2023**

## **Guidance Notes for Candidates**

**Programme Overview**

The programme provides award holders with an introduction to essential aspects and roles within practitioner research from research design and data management through to undertaking research. It is designed to provide dedicated time to enable participants to gain a broad understanding of the world of social care research and thereby help them to determine if this is an avenue for their further personal and professional development. The programme is a unique opportunity to enable award holders to ‘dip their toes’ into practitioner research, often referred to as research into practice or practice-based research.

The programme content will be informed by the Researcher Development Framework (RDF) developed by VITAE, the empirically validated theoretical framework used extensively within higher education to provide a sound underpinning to the development of any academic or practice-based researcher. The Programme will adapt and enrich the method previously developed and now used extensively by NHS R&D NW in its work to support the research career development of nurses, midwives and allied health professionals employed in the NHS.

The programme comprises of up to 30 days of release from award holders’ substantive roles. An additional equivalent of a further 6 days (3 X 2-day residentials) will be spent participating in a structured educational programme with other awardees in which the nature of practice-based research roles is explored in more depth. This will be delivered by NHS R&D W and its associates.

Up to £4,000.00 will be made available to awardees in the form of a personal award. Subject to approval, this can be used in a variety of ways e.g. visiting experts in the field in your research question area, attendance/presentation at conferences, expenses, purchase of research related resources.

Up to £3,000 is also available to the award holder’s employing local authority for backfill if required. This must be claimed retrospectively by the Local Authority. Evidence of expenditure incurred will be required.

An additional fee of £1,000 will be paid to the academic supervisor’s employing organisation to cover the costs of supervision.

All funding will be available for 12 months from the start of the programme, any unclaimed/unallocated money at the end of the 12 months will be returned to the scheme.

What are the aims of the programme?

The programme aims to:

* Provide an opportunity for adult and children’s social care professionals to develop skills and expertise in essential aspects of practitioner research.
* Further enhance social work and social care practice skills.
* Enableawardees to apply newly acquired research skills and become a research champion in his/her employing organization.
* Enable awardees to make an informed decision about the future of his/her practice-based research career.
* Enhance awardees’ ability to apply successfully for further research training opportunities.

What is involved in the programme?

There are 2 key components:

* supervised research experience and mentorship
* a structured group educational programme

***Research Experience***

Rather than locating the programme within a single university or other research organisation, the programme has been designed to enable you to negotiate the timing and nature of your placement relevant to your area of research interest. This may include a placement within established research group.

It would be particularly useful therefore to identify a relevant host organisation and make contact prior to application to the programme. ***(Please note that if you are unable to identify a suitable academic supervisor, NHS R&D NW will assist you in this – please let us know at the earliest opportunity.)*** This supervision will provide you with both the opportunity to begin to share your research ideas with experienced researchers but also to begin to develop relationships with supervisors and mentors. These may continue beyond the period of the programme.

Once you have identified a supervisor, it will be up to you and your supervisor to agree a programme of work for the duration of your award. It is expected that you will gain exposure to working within an academic research environment to increase your knowledge and understanding of research skills such as:

* structured literature review
* methods of data collection and analysis
* project development and design issues including matters relating to ethical approval and costing strategies.
* oral presentation, writing for publication and other audiences, communication skills.

Up to 30 days have been assigned to this aspect of the programme and provided completed normally before the end of April 2024, these days can be configured to meet your needs, your employing organisation, the host organization and delivery of the agreed programme of work. For example, this could become dedicated time of 1 day a week over 30 weeks or in blocks of time as necessary.

***Who can supervise my research work?***

The supervisor will work with you to develop and deliver your personal learning plan.

The person who supervises must

* Be actively involved in research and hold a **minimum** of a Masters degree in or by Research or hold an equivalent qualification.
* Have experience of supporting and supervising Masters degree (by research) or PhD students to completion.
* Commit to your supervision and line management throughout the programme.
* Accept the responsibility for coordinating your placement including facilitating access to the wider academic research community if appropriate.
* Commit to meeting with your line manager at the start and end of the programme.
* Sign off the final report.

We recommend the supervisor meets with you and your line manager, either in person or via an online platform both at the start of the programme to agree your learning plan and at the end to review your learning. The primary purpose of this is to explore how your learning can be transferred into practice and to consider how your future research career can be progressed.

***Structured Educational Programme***

During the programme, you will come together with other award holders on 3 occasions. The dates are provided below. You will be expected to participate in all aspects of the educational programme.

The focus of the workshops will be upon;

* The consolidation of learning from the programme.
* The context of practitioner research.
* Your personal development and research career progression.
* Learning with and from each other.

The residential workshops will be held in the North West. There will be one at the beginning of the programme, one at the mid-point and one towards the end.

Alongside the residential workshops you will also be required to take part in group coaching calls between the residential workshops and a final call 3 months after completing the programme.

By coming together in these ways, we also hope that you will develop as a community with the potential to continue as a support group beyond the duration of the programme. NHS R&D NW will facilitate this.

What will I be required to produce at the end of the programme?

At the end of the programme, you will be required to;

* Deliver an oral presentation of your project during the final residential to your manager(s) and academic supervisor and other awardees.
* Produce a 3,000 - 5,000-word report.
* Present a poster summarizing your internship at a forthcoming research Celebration event to be confirmed.

***Who can apply?***

The scheme is open to adult and children’s social care professionals who:

* Are employed by a local authority or a service commissioned by a local authority in the North West of England or
* Are social care professionals registered with Social Work England or with the Health and Care Professions Council.
* Have no prior formal research qualification such as a Masters degree by research, MPhil, PhD, or professional doctorate. (An MSc or MA in Social Work is not a research degree)
* Have clear potential for engaging in research that will be of benefit to service users and/or the public. *This could include reviews of adult or child safeguarding processes, the use of advocates, promoting equality and social justice, examining ways to increase the stability and numbers of foster carers, the implementation of the Mental Capacity Act 2005.*

What is involved in preparing an application?

It is essential that you obtain support from your line manager/employer from the outset and as part of this identifypotential areas of skills development or service improvement that could be addressed during the programme.

You should then, if possible, identify a suitable academic supervisor and agree an outline work schedule to be undertaken.

***If you do not have supervision arrangements in place at the point of application, NHS R&D NW will help you to identify a suitable supervisor. Please advise us at the earliest opportunity***

Your completed application must be signed by your line manager and academic supervisor (if identified).

To inform potential candidate about the programme and the application process, we will be holding 2 online Q&A sessions open to anyone who wishes to know more about the scheme and raise any questions. These will each be an hour in duration, 12pm – 1pm, and held on MS Teams. The dates of these sessions are:

6th June, 2pm -3pm [Click here for joining link](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_ODM4OWZlYzYtMzhjMi00Njk1LWEyOTEtODQ1ZmU0ZGNkYzcx%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%229a12677e-c2e9-4deb-a58a-ee1c59ac0161%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%223df92cf2-562a-4dff-9209-58eb4f0b94e0%22%7d)

19th June, 10am – 11am [Click here for joining link](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_M2Q2ZjZlZTItYWE1ZC00ODhmLTgzMDItYTRiMjI2OWMyMzdk%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%229a12677e-c2e9-4deb-a58a-ee1c59ac0161%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%223df92cf2-562a-4dff-9209-58eb4f0b94e0%22%7d)

Assessment of Applications

Following the submission deadline, all applications will be checked for completeness and eligibility. CHECK BOTH THIS AND OTHER DOCUMENT

Successful applicants will be notified by **28th July**.

* Deadline for applications **Friday 14th July 2023**

Date of first 2-day residential **11th & 12th October 2023, Lancaster House Hotel, Lancaster**

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application via email. It can take up to 10 working days for application outcomes to be issued. Feedback can be made available to unsuccessful applicants on request.

If you require further information, please contact Leanne Gregory:

[leanne.gregory@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk](mailto:leanne.gregory@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk)

Please submit completed application forms to [heather.pearson@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk](mailto:heather.pearson@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk)

Prof Bill Campbell, Director of Capacity Development, NHS R&D North West

Prof Hugh McLaughlin

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