

**Division of Health Research  
Faculty of Health and Medicine  
Lancaster University**

**Research Associate**

The Division of Health Research (DHR) within Lancaster University's Faculty of Health and Medicine is seeking to appoint a Research Associate. The successful candidate will be working on a project within LiLaC, the Liverpool and Lancaster Collaboration for Public Health Research, which is one of eight academic centres of excellence comprising the NIHR School for Public Health Research (SPHR).

**Background:**

**Faculty of Health and Medicine**

Established in 2008, the Faculty of Health and Medicine brings together a critical mass of expertise in teaching, research and outreach from four established departments and their associated centres: Biomedical and Life Sciences; Centre for Training and Development (CETAD); Health Research; and Lancaster Medical School.

The Faculty is well-positioned to provide research and teaching in an innovative and distinctive blend of subjects across the health and medicine spectrum. We have established links with private, public and third sector organisations in the health and health and social care fields and work closely with institutions in the region and beyond.

The Faculty offers a diverse range of both undergraduate and postgraduate taught and research programmes in biology, biomedicine, medicine and the social aspects of health. We deliver innovative distance-Learning courses and are working with organisations in the fields of health and social care and public health to provide customised Continuing Professional Development.

While preserving traditional disciplinary strengths we see considerable advantages in bringing together researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds, since contemporary approaches to health and medicine typically demand expertise from scientists with different perspectives, whether substantive or methodological.

Since 2008, staff in the Faculty have attracted over £10 million in research funding, and facilities range from recently refurbished laboratories and equipment in Biomedical and Life Sciences to the Clinical Anatomy Learning Centre in Medicine. Many of the research areas within the Faculty are related to fundamental issues, with major research topics including the study of end-of-life care, disability, mental health, well being, ageing, public health and health inequalities, health economics, epidemiology, cancer biology, neurodegenerative disease, immunology and microbiology.

Alongside this, the Faculty also has important partnerships with other parts of the University that carry out related research in, for example, neuroscience (Psychology), medical ethics (Law), NHS leadership (Management Faculty), disability studies (Applied Social Science) and environment and health (Lancaster Environment Centre).

## **The University**

Lancaster University is approaching its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a world-class reputation as a centre for excellence in teaching, scholarship and research. In the latest THE World University Rankings, Lancaster has been ranked 131st, with Arts and Humanities at Lancaster ranked 44th in the world. Lancaster continues to sustain its reputation for teaching and research excellence both nationally and internationally.

The University is set near to the Lune Valley and the Forest of Bowland – areas of outstanding natural beauty – and on the edge of the Lake District. £50m has been invested into the estate since 2002, transforming the campus. Key developments include: new academic centres of excellence, student social facilities, improved teaching spaces and one of the largest student residences projects in the UK. The campus is located a short distance from the vibrant and historic city of Lancaster, which has excellent schools. Lancaster is easily accessible by road (M6 Junction 33) and rail (west coast mainline). It is approximately an hour to Manchester International Airport, and about 2.5 hours by train to London.

## **Division of Health Research**

The Division of Health Research was established at Lancaster University in 1996 and is now one of four divisions within the Faculty of Health and Medicine. The Division of Health Research (DHR) is a multidisciplinary department that promotes health-related research and education across the University, the North West, nationally and internationally. The DHR has a vibrant research community comprising 50 academics from a range of academic and applied backgrounds: sociology, social policy, geography, public health, psychology, health economics and nursing. We share an interest in the perspectives that the social sciences bring to an understanding of health and health inequalities, disability, illness, the delivery of health and social care and interventions and actions to promote population health and health equity. Innovative work around service user involvement is supported within research and education activities.

The Division is host to a number of specialist groups including the Centre for Ageing Research, the Centre for Disability Research, the Centre for Organisational Health and Wellbeing, the International Observatory on End of Life Care, the Spectrum Centre for Mental Health Research, and the Centre for Health Equity Research and Knowledge Exchange. Research interests include the social determinants of health (in)equality, the evaluation of public health policy and practice, end of life care, mental health and wellbeing, disability studies including learning disabilities, and the social aspects of ageing. In the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise 95% of the Division's research was rated as of international importance or higher. The Division works in partnership with a wide variety of academics, clinicians, policy makers and practitioners within and outside the University locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. The Division also hosts the regional co-coordinating centre for the NIHR Research Design Service for the North West. Our staff also contribute to the Cumbria and Lancashire local research design service, one of three local services in the region.

The educational programmes delivered by the Division range from postgraduate research degrees (PhDs), taught doctorates such as the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, and a new set of taught PhDs in palliative care, public health, organisational health and well-being and mental health. DHR has around 30 students registered for full-time and part-time postgraduate study, a further 72 students registered for the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology and students studying for an MRes/MSc delivered through e-learning. We collaborate with Lancaster University Management School to deliver an innovative Masters in Hospice Leadership. We also contribute to undergraduate and postgraduate teaching in Biomedical and Life Science, Medicine and Psychology.

## **Lancaster and Liverpool Collaboration for Public Health Research and the National Institute for Health School of Public Health Research**

The post holder will be working on a project reviewing evidence on a public health intervention referred to as 'Men in Sheds' and developing plans for a large scale robust evaluation of this initiative.

*Men in Sheds* aims to address social isolation amongst older men by bringing them together to undertake practical activities. This is one of a number of studies that will be undertaken within the Liverpool and Lancaster Collaboration for Public Health Research funded through our membership of NIHR School for Public Health Research (SPHR). SPHR was launched in April 2012 and is a collaboration between eight leading academic centres with excellence in applied public health research in England. The NIHR School for Public Health Research will aim to increase the evidence base for effective public health practice by:

- Conducting research to increase the volume and quality of applied public health research and evidence, including evaluations and;
- Creating an environment where first class applied public health research, focused on the needs of the public, can thrive.

The School will draw on their expertise and will place emphasis on what works in practice and can be applied nationally. At the core of the School's vision is the intention to be the mechanism by which a step change in the volume and quality of public health research evidence is published. The School will complement existing NIHR funding streams. The National Institute for Health Research provides the framework through which the research staff and research infrastructure of the NHS in England are positioned, maintained and managed as a national research facility.

### **About the Post**

The post holder will be a highly motivated individual who will provide long term sickness cover on a multi-centre project assessing the feasibility of evaluating an intervention that aims to improve the health and wellbeing of older men. The appointed researcher will work collaboratively as part of a team based within Lancaster and Liverpool Universities to undertake a systematic review of published and grey literature on gendered social activity interventions for older men. The review will assess the evidence for the effectiveness of gendered social activities, and the Men in Sheds intervention in particular, for influencing health and wellbeing amongst older men. The researcher will be required to work closely with a second researcher, based in Liverpool, who will also be working on the project and to attend regular project meetings. The post will also involve working closely with Age UK in order to complete a mapping of existing 'Shed-type' interventions across England in preparation for Phase 2 of the planned research.

The researcher will be affiliated to the interdisciplinary Centre for Ageing Research at Lancaster University and will be encouraged to take an active part in its activities.