NIHR SPHR Summer Internship in Public Health Research (2 x posts)

Grade 4, spinal point 12, £11.85/hour (including holiday pay)

The NIHR School for Public Health Research (NIHR SPHR) ([https://sphr.nihr.ac.uk/](https://sphr.nihr.ac.uk/)) is providing the opportunity for two promising undergraduate students with an interest in a career in public health to undertake a summer internship hosted by the Liverpool and Lancaster Collaboration for public health research ([www.lilac-healthequity.org.uk](http://www.lilac-healthequity.org.uk)). Based within the Division of Health Research at Lancaster University the successful candidates will work on one of two NIHR SPHR funded research projects detailed below. Candidates must indicate a preference for one project during the application process.

The research

The first project led by Dr Rebecca Mead (SPHR post-doctoral fellow) and Professor Jennie Popay (Professor of Sociology & Public Health) is titled ‘Shifting multi-sectoral governance structures in local authority areas: locating Local Resilience Forums (LRFs)’. Local Resilience Forums (LRF) are existing multi-sectoral governance structures in police boundary areas with responsibility to prepare for and respond to local emergencies. COVID-19 has created unprecedented challenges for LRFs, for example, supporting clinically vulnerable groups, containment and incident management, death management and vaccination. The role of LRFs is likely to remain important in the future given the increasing frequency of climate and other local emergencies. Yet governance and accountability arrangements for LRFs are unclear. This project will give students with an interest in public health the opportunity to gain experience in ethnographic mapping methods, using existing literature and interview transcripts to construct a map of existing formal governance structures in at least one local authority area and to locate the LRF within this decision-making landscape. We will support you to develop qualitative analytical skills and engage with some of the major debates in public health research.

The second project led by Adam Mars (NIHR PhD Candidate) and Dr Paula Holland (Senior Lecturer in Health Research) is titled ‘How has the infrastructure and labour force associated with social prescribing adapted to COVID-19 and lockdown?’. In recent times, policy makers have looked to redesign the demand side of the National Health Service. This has largely involved a proposed shift in philosophy, moving away from a service which provides things to patients to one that does things with patients. Within this re-prioritisation, a number of policy proposals have looked to underpin ‘personalised care’, ‘partnership’ work and ‘co-production’. One such policy change is a social movement known as ‘social prescribing’. Social prescribing is primarily, but not solely, based in primary care settings, and looks to move patients or ‘service users’ away from “what is the matter with you?” to “what matters to you?”.” Through the
mechanism of a link worker, social prescribing aims to improve people’s wellbeing, by connecting them to assets within local communities.

As a result of the recent lockdown, social prescribing has had to adapt and change in order to meet demands. Link workers have had to re-orientate their services, with many moving to virtual groups or telephone support online. Whilst the ultimate effects of the lockdowns cannot be known for sure, there looks set to be a significant scarring effect, with those in most need of support being put at further risk. This project represents an exciting opportunity to become a valued member of an experienced research team, with the findings offering a valuable and urgent contribution to the growing evidence base on social prescribing. As social prescribing seems to be increasing in popularity, these findings can help ascertain if social prescribing can, or, indeed, cannot, meet the health and wellbeing needs of communities in a post COVID-19 society. In line with these goals, the successful candidate will undertake a ‘rapid’ review of relevant published and grey literature, synthesising the literature and drawing conclusions on how the infrastructure and labour force associated with social prescribing has adapted during the pandemic.

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 three established departments and their associated centres: Biomedical and Life Sciences; Health Research and Lancaster Medical School.

The Faculty provides 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 healthcare organisations and work closely with institutions in the region and beyond. We have successfully built our reputation in several key areas such as ageing, end of life care, mental health, neurodegenerative disease, developmental biology and disability research, where our academic staff are at the forefront of their fields.

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 blended learning courses and are working with healthcare organisations to provide customised Continuing Professional Development.

The Faculty’s research environment was ranked joint first in the UK in the field, in the 2014 Research Evaluation Framework, with a 100% score on everything from investment in staff and facilities to research income and collaboration. Overall, 89% of the Faculty’s research was judged world leading or internationally excellent, with 84% of research outputs being categorised as 3* and 4*. This places the Faculty among the elite universities in this field.

The Faculty also performed well in The Times Higher Education’s research intensity league table which recognises the proportion of staff which are research active, finishing 3rd overall in the UK.
The Faculty is committed to pursuing world-class research. It brings together biomedical, medical, and social science researchers to tackle key challenges of the 21st Century within health and medicine.

Ranked third in our field in the 2014 Research Assessment Exercise on the 'intensity weighted' score, equal first in 'research environment' and in the top 10 for 'research power', the Faculty offers an ideal academic environment to develop your research career.

The Faculty achieved an Athena Swan Silver Award in 2014 (renewed April 2018).

**Division of Health Research**

Established at Lancaster University in 1996, 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. DHR has a vibrant research community comprising of over 100 staff from a range of academic and applied backgrounds including: sociology, social policy, health 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, ageing, disability, illness, the delivery of health and social care and interventions and actions to promote population health and health equity.

Members of the Division of Health Research come from a wide range of academic disciplines and professional backgrounds. We have a well-established reputation for conducting excellent academic research that is both interdisciplinary and translational.

Research groups in the Division work closely with our colleagues in the rest of the Faculty of Health and Medicine on the Faculty’s core interdisciplinary research themes: Ageing; Mental Health; Health Information, Computation and Statistics; Infectious Disease Transmission and Biology and Social and Economic Inequality in Public Health.

The Division has good relationships with NHS and social care partners, and the voluntary sector. We also host the regional and local centres for the NIHR Research Design Service for the North West.

Lancaster University is the lead institution (with the Universities of Liverpool, Manchester and Central Lancashire) in a collaborative delivering the NIHR Research Design Service North West (RDS NW), which has just been funded for a further 5 years to 2023. The RDS NW provides free design and methodological support to applied health and social care researchers in North West England to develop grant applications to NIHR and other national and international research funders. This advice is largely provided by academics, funded for part of their time by the RDS to co-ordinate and deliver the necessary advice, and there are opportunities for academics within DHR to engage in RDS work.

In the 2014 Research Assessment Exercise our research was ranked 3rd (intensity weighted score) and 1st for research environment nationally in UoA 3.

The educational programmes delivered by the Division range from postgraduate research degrees (PhDs), professional doctorates such as the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology, and a
suite of blended learning Masters and PhDs in ageing, dementia, palliative care, public health, organisational health and well-being, health economics and policy, and mental health. DHR has over 270 students registered on its full-time and part-time postgraduate programmes. We collaborate with Lancaster University Management School to deliver several courses and also contribute to teaching in Biomedical and Life Science, Medicine and Psychology.

Lancaster University

Lancaster is a top 10 UK university and top 10 in all three major national league tables. Its 10th place ranking in The Guardian University Guide 2021, 8th place ranking in The Complete University Guide 2021 and 10th place ranking in The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2021, as well as the winning of the coveted University of the Year award in 2018, cements its place as an elite UK university. Lancaster has a world-class reputation as a centre for excellence in teaching, scholarship and research and is highly ranked in international league tables such as the QS World Rankings. We were named International University of the Year 2020 by The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2020.

The Lancaster University campus occupies a beautiful 360 acre parkland site at Bailrigg, just three miles from Lancaster City Centre. £450m 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. Set near to the Lune Valley and the Forest of Bowland – areas of outstanding natural beauty – and on the edge of the Lake District, 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.