

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

1. Advertisement

Post Title: Research Fellow x 2

School/department: School of Education and Social Work, Department of Social Work and Social Care

Hours: Part time hours considered up to a maximum of 0.5 FTE per week, per post. Requests for [flexible working](#) options will be considered (subject to business need). Potentially one person could be appointed to both posts.

Contract: Fixed term until 03 November 2023

Reference: 2416

Salary: starting at £33,797 and rising to £40,322 annum, pro rata (if applicable)

Closing Date: 29 October 2019. Applications must be received by midnight of the closing date.

Expected Interview date: November 2019

Expected start date: As soon as possible

The Department of Social Work and Social Care, within the School of Education and Social Work, has been awarded a major grant by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), entitled 'Improving social care systems and practices for young people at complex safeguarding risk: what promotes and sustains innovation?'. The four year project will examine innovation in services and interventions to address complex safeguarding risks faced by adolescents, such as child sexual and criminal exploitation, gang involvement, and unmet mental health needs. The project as a whole is led by Professor Michelle Lefevre (Principal Investigator) with a team at the University of Sussex, working in collaboration with the Universities of Bedfordshire and Oxford, Research in Practice (www.rip.org.uk/), Innovation Unit (www.innovationunit.org/) and 'Become' (www.becomecharity.org.uk/).

To support this work, we seek to appoint two 0.5 FTE Research Fellows (NB one person could potentially be appointed to both posts). In year 1, they will contribute to literature reviews and practice surveys, and the development of a project website and research tools. Fieldwork will be conducted in years 2 and 3 with six local authorities or social care organisations across the UK which have developed practice services or systems based on the approaches of Trauma-informed Practice, Contextual Safeguarding or Transitional Safeguarding. One of the Research Fellows will work primarily with the project strand of Trauma-informed Practice (two case studies) (working with Dr Kristine Hickle, Dr Carlene Firmin, and Dr Reima Ana Maglajlic), while the other will work particularly with the Transitional Safeguarding strand (Professor Gillian Ruch, Dr Susannah Bowyer, Dr Jeri Damman). Year 4 will primarily involve the Research Fellows in analysis and dissemination, impact generation and capture.

The Research Fellows will have a core role in conducting 'embedded ethnography' (observing practices within organisations, often for several days at a time), undertaking creative interviews with vulnerable young people and their parents/carers, and interviewing professionals. The work will be influenced by feminist, participatory and psychosocial principles. The role will involve substantial travel and some overnight stays to the locations of the case study organisations, which could be based anywhere in the UK. In addition, the Research Fellows will conduct literature reviews and surveys, assist with analysis of administrative data, contribute to the generation of research impact by face to face and online engagement, and provide general research support to the project.

The project offers the opportunity for the Research Fellows to be involved in the generation of new knowledge for the discipline and sector, and in the preparation of project outputs, including journal articles, blogs, vodcasts, and research briefings. Although these two Research Fellow posts are advertised as separate opportunities, it would be permissible for one person to apply for, and be appointed to, both posts.

For full details and how to apply see www.sussex.ac.uk/jobs

The University of Sussex values the diversity of its staff and students and we welcome applicants from all backgrounds.

2. Senior leadership and management

The Vice-Chancellor (Professor Adam Tickell) is the senior academic officer and, as Chief Executive, is responsible to the University Council for management of the University. He is supported by an executive group which includes the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the three Pro-Vice-Chancellors, the Chief Operating Officer, the Director of Finance and the Director of Human Resources. The Heads of the Schools of Studies at Sussex report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

The Chief Operating Officer heads the Professional Services of the University. In addition, under the University Statutes, the Chief Operating Officer is Secretary to the University Council. The Director of Finance reports to the Vice-Chancellor, the Director of ITS and the Librarian report to the Chief Operating Officer.

3. The School / Division

The School of Education and Social Work was created in August 2009, bringing together two long-established and thriving departments — the Department of Education and the Department of Social Work & Social Care. The School occupies dedicated accommodation at the heart of the campus, benefitting from recent major investment by the University in teaching accommodation, library, IT infrastructure, and other facilities. The Department of Education provides programmes of pre-initial and initial teacher education, international education, and doctoral education as well as undergraduate programmes in childhood and youth and in primary and early years education. The Department of Social Work & Social Care provides programmes of initial qualification and continuing professional development, alongside a thriving research programme. The School has a large number of both home and international doctoral students, and is a core member of the ESRC SeNSS Doctoral Training Partnership.

Both departments are led by a Head of Department, appointed on fixed-term rotation basis from within the senior faculty, and the School's work is supported by internal directorships with oversight of teaching and learning, student support, doctoral studies and research & knowledge exchange. The academic work of the School is supported by professional services staff located within the School and led by the School Administrator, as well as by a range of central university services.

The School's overarching strategic goal is to maintain and further develop a thriving and sustainable environment that contributes at the highest level to the disciplines of education and social work. The School has a commitment to the value of contributing to social justice at the global, international and national levels in terms of our research, teaching and professional education activities. Research in the School of Education and Social Work at Sussex is organised around research centres, including the Centre for Higher Education and Equity Research (CHEER), the Centre for Social Work Innovation and Research (CSWIR), the Centre for Innovation and Research in Wellbeing (CIRW), the Centre for International Education (CIE), and the Centre for Teaching and Learning Research (CTLR). The School is also a partner in the University's Rudd Centre for Adoption Research and Practice. Research in childhood and youth is led from the cross-University Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth (CIRCY), which has its base within the School.

The Department of Social Work and Social Care has 25 members of staff, delivering a portfolio of programmes and continuing professional development activities, alongside a thriving research programme. The Department has been ranked 1st for social work in the UK by The Guardian University Guide 2014 and 2015, and The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2014. It was ranked 2nd in the UK by The Complete University Guide 2014 and 5th in The Guardian University Guide in 2018. In the 2014 REF Social Work was ranked joint 31st out of 62 submissions in the combined UoA for Social Work and Social Policy.

The Department is home to courses in Social Work, Childhood and Youth and Wellbeing at undergraduate, postgraduate and research levels. Alongside our qualifying and post-qualifying social work programmes, the MA in Childhood and Youth Studies attracts home and international students and is closely connected to the cross-School BA in Childhood and Youth Studies.

We have excellent relationships with local employers and social work placement providers ensuring a good range of learning opportunities, including under the auspices of the South Coast Regional Centre for Social Work Education, a Department of Education funded Teaching Partnership. Our commitment to high-quality teaching and pedagogic innovation is evidenced through our league table successes and the number of academic faculty holding local and national teaching awards. Our excellent partnerships with local social welfare employers have also led to a strong portfolio of Continuing Professional Development courses, and underpin many of our research and knowledge exchange activities.

4. Job Description

CORE JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Research Fellow in Social Work, (two posts, each at 0.5 FTE)

Grade: Research Fellow I, Grade 7

School: ESW

Location: Essex House

Responsible to: Professor Michelle Lefevre and Head of School

Direct reports: n/a

Key contacts: Principal Investigator and other members of the research team at Sussex, plus collaborators at Research in Practice, University of Bedfordshire, University of Oxford, Innovation Unit and Become).

Role description: Research Fellow I is an early career-grade research position. Post-holders will be expected to contribute to the work of the research team, and also to develop their research skills with support from more experienced members of staff.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

1. To engage in collaborative research activity in this 4-year ESRC-funded project, including a core role in literature reviewing, embedded ethnography and qualitative research with young people, parents/carers and professionals, as well as contributing to surveys, administrative data analysis, the generation of research impact and general research support to the project.
2. To contribute to School and Departmental activities, where required.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Role-specific duties

- 1.1 To contribute to a focused review of policy and practice guidance concerning complex safeguarding risks facing adolescents, and the approaches of Trauma-informed Practice and Transitional Safeguarding.
- 1.2 To contribute to a rapid evidence assessment of complex safeguarding interventions.
- 1.3 To support the design, distribution and analysis of surveys through the project.
- 1.4 To support impact building online and face to face with the Learning and Development Networks formed through the project.
- 1.5 To undertake fieldwork which will include national travel and overnight stays, in order to conduct 'embedded ethnography', undertake creative and participatory interviews with vulnerable young people and their parents/carers, and interview professionals.
- 1.6 To assist with analysis of administrative outcome data in case study organisations.
- 1.7 To provide general research support to the project as directed.

- 1.8 To ensure adherence to the highest ethical standards for the work, including child participation, confidentiality and informed consent.
- 1.9 To analyse and interpret research findings in collaboration with the PI and the project team.
- 1.10 To implement systems for secure data management for the project, including arrangements for data sharing within the project team.
- 1.11 To communicate and collaborate with the project team in developing analysis over time and across components in the research design.
- 1.12 To support and participate in meetings, including cross-site research team meetings, with case study organisations, and with the research advisory group.
- 1.13 To contribute to high-quality research outputs for publication and dissemination of the methodological and substantive findings of the research.
- 1.14 To build internal contacts and participate in internal networks and relevant external networks in order to form relationships and collaborations.
- 1.15 Continually update knowledge and understanding in field or specialism, and engage in continuous professional development.

2. Contribution to School & University

- 2.1 Attend and contribute to relevant School and project meetings.
- 2.2 Undertake additional duties, as required by the Principal Investigator and/or Head of School.

This Job Description sets out current duties of the post that may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the post or level of responsibility entailed.

3. Decision making and Problem Solving

The specifics of the research tools will be co-designed by the Research Fellows in conjunction with the PI, Co-Investigators and other members of the research team. However, the fieldwork in years 2 and 3, in particular, will offer a number of complex challenges to the Research Fellows which will require proactive and independent work. The successful candidates will be observing practices within organisations, including for several days at a time, on their own. They will need to work personally and creatively with vulnerable young people to find ways of engaging them in the work which go beyond the simple design of an interview schedule. They will need to conduct sensitive interviews with the parents/carers of vulnerable young people who may have very complex and contested histories of professional intervention. They will be interviewing busy professionals at all career stages and need to be able to understand and work with the agendas that influence the participants. As detailed in relation to key responsibilities, this work will involve decision-making and problem solving at all stages of the research process, from methodological development to analysis and reporting.

To meet these responsibilities, the post holder must be able to work individually on their own initiative and without close supervision, and as part of a team, maintaining clear communication and lines of decision-making with the PI and the Co-I leading their project strand. They must be able to exercise a degree of innovation and creative problem-solving and have the ability to prioritise and meet deadlines.

4. Major deliverables, projects, processes, responsibility areas etc.

The primary responsibility of each Research Fellow in year 1 will be to undertake literature reviewing as directed, contribute to the design, distribution and analysis of practice surveys, contribute to the design of fieldwork methods and materials, and support the development of a project website. In years 2 and 3, the primary responsibilities will involve conducting embedded ethnography, undertaking creative, participatory interviews with vulnerable young people and their parents/carers, and interviewing professionals. In year 4, the Research Fellow will primarily contribute to finalising research analysis, developing and disseminating research outputs, and generating and capturing impact from the findings.

In addition, the fellow will be expected to participate as a full member of the research team, supporting and contributing to team meetings and undertaking other tasks related to the project as appropriate - for example, updating literature reviews, liaising with the Learning and Development Network, conducting regular surveys, writing blogs, and helping design video outputs.

INDICATIVE PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

1. A PhD or equivalent scholarly or relevant professional activity, preferred.
2. Pursuing a line of research which is consistent with the aims and research themes of this project.
3. Initiating, developing or participating in links between the University and external bodies such as business and industry, the professions, community organisations and policy-makers.
4. Evidence of writing for academic or professional publications.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

The following qualifications, knowledge, experience, skills and competencies are required:

Essential criteria

1. Normally educated to masters or doctoral level, or other equivalent qualification, or appropriate level of experience, as appropriate to the discipline (see role-specific criteria below).
2. Evidence of engagement in high-quality research activity relating to young people and families, and//or social care services to meet their needs.
3. Able to engage and communicate effectively with: vulnerable children and young people; parents and carers; academic colleagues; social care professionals; and external audiences.
4. Excellent oral and written presentation skills, including in on-line media, and for academic and public audiences.
5. Ability to work individually on own initiative and without close supervision, and as part of a team.
6. Ability to exercise a degree of innovation and creative problem-solving.
7. Excellent organisational and administrative skills.
8. Ability to prioritise and meet deadlines.
9. Excellent IT skills.

Essential role-specific criteria

1. Knowledge of statutory and non-statutory services for young people at risk, and their families.
2. Understanding of complex safeguarding risks in adolescence.
3. Expertise in qualitative methodologies.
4. Experience of participatory research with vulnerable young people.
5. Experience of initiating, developing or negotiating links with external bodies such as local authority service providers and non-governmental organisations.
6. Knowledge of literature reviewing approaches.
7. Experience of presenting research at academic and/or practitioner conferences

Desirable criteria

1. Skills in survey design.
2. Skills in quantitative analysis.
3. Knowledge of feminist, participatory and psychosocial methodologies.
4. Experience of undertaking ethnography.
5. Skills in public engagement through online media.
6. Experience of high-quality writing for external audiences, including academic publication, research briefings or other relevant outputs.
7. Knowledge of the antecedents and effects of trauma, and familiarity with the approach of Trauma-informed Practice.
8. Awareness of the new approach of Transitional Safeguarding.

SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES:

- a) Able to undertake travel for national fieldwork in England including overnight stays.
- b) Appointment depends on enhanced Disclosures and Barring Service (DBS) clearance.