

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

1. Advertisement Ref:

Post Title: Research Fellow

School/Dept: School of Education and Social Work /Department of Social Work and Social Care

Hours: Part time hours considered up to a maximum of 0.2 FTE. Requests for [flexible working](#) options will be considered (subject to business need).

Contract: Fixed term 25 months

Reference: 9229

Salary: starting at £35,333 to £42,155 per annum, pro rata if part time

Placed on: 22 July 2022

Closing Date: 05 August 2022. Applications must be received by midnight of the closing date.

Expected Interview date: TBC

Expected start date: 01 October 2022

The Department of Social Work and Social Care, within the School of Education and Social Work, was awarded a contract in early 2022 from the Children's Society to evaluate their national Disrupting Exploitation (DEx) Programme. The three-year evaluation project is lead by Dr. [Kristine Hickley](#) (Principle Investigator) with University of Sussex colleagues Professors Michelle Lefevre and Lisa Holmes.

The DEx programme aims to take a systems approach to child criminal exploitation (CCE) in England by directly providing services to children and young people who are vulnerable to (or have been victimised by) CCE alongside working with practice systems to create new practices, policies, and approaches to keeping the physical and social contexts surrounding young people safe from harm. Over the next two years, Sussex will be evaluating the contribution of the DEx Programme to outcomes for young people affected by CCE in three geographic areas: London, Birmingham, and Manchester.

To support this work, we seek to appoint a part-time 0.20 FTE Research Fellow to replace the current researcher. They will work closely with the project lead (Hickley) and be expected to carry out a majority of the field work in the three sites until approximately midyear 2024.

This will include ethnographic observation of meetings and practices, both online and in person (which will involve travel and some overnight stays), undertaking participatory interviews with vulnerable young people and their parents/carers, interviewing professionals, case file and other documentary analysis, and surveys.

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. The School / Division

Please find further information regarding the school/division at <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/esw/>.

3. Job Description

CORE JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Research Fellow in Social Work (0.2 FTE, fixed term for 25 months)

Grade: Research Fellow I, Grade 7

School: ESW

Location: Essex House

Responsible to: Dr. Kristine Hickle and Head of School

Direct reports: n/a

Key contacts: Principal Investigator and other members of the research team at Sussex and lead contact at the Children's Society.

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 during the two remaining years of this 3-year evaluation project, including taking a core role in ethnography and qualitative research with young people, parents/carers and professionals, contributing to surveys, publications, and the generation of research impact, and providing 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 undertake fieldwork which will include national travel and possible overnight stays, in order to conduct ethnography, undertake participatory interviews with vulnerable young people and their parents/carers, and interview professionals.
- 1.2 To conduct file analysis and documentary analysis
- 1.3 To support the design, distribution and analysis of surveys as part of a wider data collection strategy.
- 1.4 To analyse and interpret research findings in collaboration with the PI and the project team.
- 1.5 To communicate and collaborate with the PI and project team in developing analysis over time and across components in the research design.
- 1.6 To provide general research support to the project as directed.

- 1.7 To ensure adherence to the highest ethical standards for the work, including child participation, confidentiality, informed consent, data sharing, and data protection.
- 1.8 To contribute to high-quality research outputs for publication developed from the evaluation research.
- 1.9 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 role offers a number of complex challenges to the Research Fellows which will require proactive and independent work. The successful candidate will be observing practices within organisations, in person and online, on their own. They will need to work personally and in participatory ways 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.

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. 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 Research Fellow will primarily contribute to completing fieldwork and research analysis, and will also contribute to developing and disseminating research outputs and practice resources. The fellow will also be expected to participate as a full member of the research team, supporting and contributing to team meetings.

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 voluntary sector organisations.
- 4. Evidence of writing for academic or professional publications.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

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

Essential criteria

1. A PhD or equivalent scholarly or relevant professional activity
2. Evidence of engagement in high-quality and complex research activity relating to young people and families.
3. Expertise in qualitative methodologies.
4. Proven ability to work individually on own initiative and without close supervision, and as part of a team.
5. Proven ability to exercise a degree of innovation and creative problem-solving.
6. Excellent organisational and administrative skills.
7. Proven ability to prioritise and meet deadlines.
8. Excellent IT skills.

Essential role-specific criteria

1. Understanding of child criminal exploitation and 'county lines' as forms of extra-familial harm in adolescence.
2. Knowledge of statutory and non-statutory services for young people at risk, and their families.
3. Experience of participatory research with vulnerable young people.
4. Able to engage and communicate effectively with: vulnerable children and young people; parents and carers; academic colleagues; and social care professionals

Desirable criteria

1. Skills in survey design.
2. Knowledge of participatory, feminist, and/or, psychosocial methodologies, critical realist evaluations or case study design.
3. Experience of undertaking ethnography.
4. Experience of presenting research at academic and/or practitioner conferences.
5. Experience of high-quality writing for external audiences, including academic publication, research briefings or other relevant outputs.
6. Excellent oral and written presentation skills, including in on-line media, and for academic and public audiences.

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.