Department of Neuroscience/Psychiatry

Research Fellow in Psychiatry

Salary range: Starting at £32,004 and rising to £38,183 per annum

It is normal to appoint at the first point of the salary scale.

Expected start date: 1 February 2017 or as soon as possible

Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS) seek a postdoctoral researcher to work within the academic psychiatry group within Department of Neuroscience on an interdisciplinary project “Aligning Dimensions of Interoceptive Experience (ADIE) to prevent development of anxiety disorders in autism” This project is funded by MQ: Transforming mental health, PsyImpact grant https://www.mqmentalhealth.org/articles/psyimpact. The Research Fellow in Psychiatry 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 within the scope of the project, with support from more experienced members of staff. This post is funded at 100% FTE for 21 months.

The project will implement an innovative therapy for adults with ASCs to target trait levels of anxiety,. This therapy is grounded on evidence of interaction between anxiety and interoception, particularly the perception of bodily arousal: We have identified a specific psycho-physiological mechanism for anxiety in ASCs as a treatment target. The postholder will help conduct a clinical trial testing the efficacy of ADIE on anxiety symptoms in adults with autism, comparing ADIE to an active control condition. The postholder will oversee a parallel neuroimaging study that will quantify brain signatures of therapeutic response, to guide the optimisation of the therapy. Lastly, the postholder will be involved in work developing a robust software platform to disseminate ADIE and similar intervention. To a wider clinical population who may benefit

The postholder will be dedicated to this exciting project and work under the supervision of Prof Hugo Critchley and Dr Sarah Garfinkel, in partnership with co-investigators Dr Yoko Nagai (BSMS), Dr Clara Strauss (Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust), and collaborators in the Sussex Clinical Trials Unit, NIHR Research Development Service South East, Sussex Innovation Centre, software developers, clinical partners and third sector organizations.

Informal enquiries to s.garfinkel@bsms.ac.uk and h.critchley@bsms.ac.uk

Closing date for applications: 16 January 2016

For full details and how to apply see:

www.sussex.ac.uk/jobs www.brighton.ac.uk/jobs www-bsms-ac-uk

We are committed to equality of opportunity

The Universities are committed to equality and valuing diversity, and applications are particularly welcomed from women and black and minority ethnic candidates, who are under-represented in academic posts in science, mathematics, medicine and engineering at Sussex and Brighton.
Department: BSMS Neuroscience
Section / Unit: Psychiatry
Location: Trafford Centre, BSMS University of Sussex (UoS) Campus
Job Reference: 1406
Grade: 7.1
Responsible to: Hugo Critchley
Responsible for: Coordination and delivery of the research and associated goals of the MQ PsyImpact project “Aligning Dimensions of Interoceptive Experience (ADIE) to prevent development of anxiety disorders in autism.”

Purpose of the post:
The postholder will finalise the design and implementation of the therapy and control intervention in a clinical trial of adults with high functioning autism. With colleagues the postholder will undertake the training of participants during the trial, and be responsible for the neuroimaging component of the study. The postholder will input into the design and development of a refined robust software platform to deliver the therapy to a wider population. Evaluation (data gathering) relevant to success of the therapy will be undertaken by a separate postdoctoral research in order to ensure unbiased ‘blinding’ within the protocol.

Key Responsibilities:

1 Research, Scholarship & Enterprise

1.1 Pursue and develop research objectives, within the Aligning Dimensions of Interoceptive Experience (ADIE) to prevent development of anxiety disorders in autism at acceptable levels, with assistance if required.

1.2 Conduct the clinical and neuroimaging research tasks individually and in collaboration with others.

1.3 Analyse and interpret research findings and draw conclusions on the outcomes.

1.4 Coordinate with research group and external partners on the project to facilitate opportunities for clinical development, enterprise activity, knowledge exchange income and/or consultancy.

1.5 Build internal contacts and participate in internal networks and relevant external networks in order to form relationships and collaborations.

1.6 Produce high-quality research outputs for publication in monographs or recognised high-quality journals, or performance/exhibition, as appropriate, and contribute to the School’s Research Excellence Framework submission at acceptable levels of volume.
and academic excellence.

1.7 Contribute to the preparation of proposals and applications to external bodies, for example for funding purposes.

1.8 Continually update knowledge and understanding in field or specialism, and engage in continuous professional development.

2 Teaching & Student Support

2.1 Undertake teaching duties, if required.

2.2 Assist in the assessment of student knowledge and supervision of student projects if required.

2.3 Assist in the development of student research skills, for example as part of a postgraduate supervision team.

4 Role-specific duties

4.1 The main priorities for the appointment are for the postholder to coordinate the research and development associated with the MQ PsyImpact grant "Aligning Dimensions of Interoceptive Experience (ADIE) to prevent development of anxiety disorders in autism": The idea is encapsulated by the following summary:

Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASCs) affect 2% of the population and are characterized by lifelong difficulties in social functioning with restricted patterns of behaviour and interests. People with ASCs are vulnerable to anxiety; at least 1 in 4 develops a co-morbid anxiety disorder, which may be resistant to typical psychopharmacological and psychological approaches. We will implement an innovative therapy for adults with ASCs to target trait levels of anxiety, and mitigate the high risk of clinical anxiety disorders that further compromise psychosocial function. Our therapy is grounded on theoretical advances and fresh experimental evidence about interaction between anxiety and the perception of bodily arousal: We identified a specific psycho-physiological mechanism for anxiety in ASCs as a treatment target. Our therapy (Aligning Dimensions of Interoceptive Experience; ADIE) improves misaligned perception of bodily arousal signals (interoceptive trait prediction error) driving anxiety. We will conduct a clinical trial testing the efficacy of ADIE on anxiety symptoms, with secondary outcomes including anxiety disorder diagnosis, medication and function one year later. The neurodevelopmental ‘organic’ nature of ASCs may suggest intractability to psychological interventions. To challenge this misperception, we will use state-of-the-art neuroimaging to quantify brain signatures of therapeutic response to ADIE, also guiding ways to optimise the therapy. For rapid dissemination of ADIE, we will develop a software platform to deliver ADIE to more patients if the trial demonstrates efficacy. This tool will retain intrinsic impact enabling the characterisation of factors that underlie risk and relapse of anxiety disorders among the wider population in clinical settings.

4.2 Research and coordinating role: The postholder will work with the PI lead (Hugo Critchley) and Lead CoPI (Dr Sarah Garfinkel) in a co-ordinating / managing role to provide day-to-day oversight of the project’s execution, including coordination with partners in prototype development, testing, market evaluation, reporting and IPR strategy.

4.3 Communications: The postholder will ensure effective communications, providing regular status reports to Project Lead(s), and organising monthly project review meetings with (cross disciplinary) Project Team, including scheduled kick-off
and milestone (closeout) review meetings and technical Design Review meetings as needed.

4.4 *The postholder* will plan performance evaluations, and coordinate with Project Partners to ensure project execution and functionality of deliverables comply with quality standards.

4.5 **General**

4.5.1 Ensure the highest standard of record keeping, maintaining accurate and appropriate research patient records, including strict confidentiality.

4.5.2 Attend departmental and other meetings as appropriate.

4.5.3 As duties and responsibilities change, the job description may be reviewed and amended in consultation with the post-holder.

4.5.4 The post-holder will carry out any other duties as are within the scope, spirit and purpose of the job as requested by the line manager (Professor Hugo Critchley).

4.5.5 The post-holder will actively follow BSMS policies of the Universities of Sussex and Brighton, including Equal Opportunities policies.

4.6 **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 the level of responsibility entailed.**
### Person specification

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<tr>
<th>Skills and abilities</th>
<th>Essential</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neuroimaging</td>
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*Skills in the design and undertaking of functional neuroimaging research studies leading to publication*

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<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Essential</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Good understanding of human psychophysiology</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>At least masters-level knowledge of human psychology</td>
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<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Essential</th>
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<tr>
<td>Previous experience working with clinical environments with clinicians and patients</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Previous experience working with and/or within commercial entities e.g. SME for software development</td>
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<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PhD or equivalent</td>
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<tr>
<th>Personal attributes and circumstances</th>
<th>Essential</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Willingness to work flexibly in part-time role</td>
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<td>Enthusiasm for translational neuroscience</td>
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<td>Excellent interpersonal skills with capacity to work across disciplines</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Excellent organizational skills including time keeping and troubleshooting solutions</td>
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Senior leadership and management

The Vice-Chancellor 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 three Pro-Vice-Chancellors, the Registrar and Secretary, the Director of Finance and the Director of Human Resources. The Heads of the Schools of Studies at Sussex report to the Pro-Vice-Chancellors.

The Registrar and Secretary heads the Professional Services of the University. In addition, under the University Statutes, the Registrar and Secretary is Secretary to the University Council. The Director of Finance reports to the Vice-Chancellor. The Director of ITS reports to the Registrar and Secretary, and the Librarian reports to one of the Pro-Vice-Chancellors.

The Medical School

The School is an equal partnership between the Universities of Sussex and Brighton together with NHS staff throughout the South East Region. The arrangements for the School’s governance reflect this approach and students are awarded joint degrees of both Universities.

The School is fully committed to the principles of GMC: Standards of Promoting Excellence; it endorses the value of medical education in a multi-professional context, and promotes the highest possible standards in its three pivotal components of teaching, clinical practice, and research (both fundamental and applied).

There is an annual intake to undergraduate medicine of approximately 138 students. BSMS has proved exceptionally popular and has regularly achieved one of the highest application rates of any UK medical school. Students spend their first two years primarily on the universities’ campuses at Falmer; thereafter the focus shifts to the associated teaching hospitals in Brighton and the surrounding area. There are purpose-built teaching facilities in all areas.

The curriculum emphasises early clinical involvement, a broad range of experience and a firm foundation in basic science. A wide range of teaching and learning approaches are employed, tailored to the particular circumstances; we are not committed to a single method of delivery. Feedback from the National Student Survey has demonstrated an exceptionally high level of student satisfaction, with BSMS being consistently amongst the top 10 performing schools in the country with scores of over 90%.

The research undertaken at BSMS aims to make a genuine contribution to the evidence and science underpinning clinical practice, and to benefit people and patients in their health and wellbeing. We expect our key domains of research strength to be recognised on the international stage and these are represented by the new departments of Global Health and Infection (including HIV and sexual health) and Neuroscience (including mental health and neurology). We have made significant investments in research infrastructure, including a world-class Clinical Imaging Sciences Centre (CISC) housing a 3T and 1.5T MRI and a PET-CT scanner and a Clinical Investigation & Research Unit (CIRU) dedicated to patient-orientated research and early clinical trials.

Following the appointment of Professor Malcolm Reed as Dean in December 2014, the Medical School has undergone a strategic review and is now reorganised into the following Departments for the academic year 2016/17:

Neuroscience
Clinical and Experimental Medicine
Global Health and Infection
Primary Care and Public Health
Medical Education

**Administration.** The Medical School’s Administration is led by the Medical School Secretary. The School’s 60+ support staff offer support to a range of functions including curriculum development and delivery, admissions, library and IT, communications, student welfare, human resources, research and finance.

**The Universities**

The Universities of Brighton and Sussex have formed a highly effective and successful partnership that has resulted in the creation of this first new medical school in the South East region outside of London. Each institution has its own distinct culture and each is proud of its history and achievements but they have a long and successful history of collaboration.

**Research and teaching**

Both universities are committed to excellence in teaching and research.

Sussex is a progressive university delivering innovative thought and action, with a worldwide reputation for excellence in research and discovery. Its distinctive approach leads to the development of high quality new research which crosses traditional boundaries, benefits and enriches society, and influences policy at international, regional and national levels. Sussex research has a positive impact on people’s lives. In the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2016, Sussex was ranked 23rd in the UK and 140th in the world for research influence.

The results of the government-commissioned Research Excellence Framework (REF) in 2014 show that over 75% of research activity at Sussex is categorised as ‘world leading’ (4*, 28%) or ‘internationally excellent’ (3*, 48%) in terms of originality, significance and rigour, whilst 98% of research activity at Sussex is categorised as either ‘world-leading’, ‘internationally excellent’ or ‘internationally recognised’.

The University of Brighton has a long and distinguished history of applied research. This serves to sustain and nourish its mission to help form professional and vocational careers. Ultimately, the university aims to transform the lives and experiences of people and their environments with research that matters. In the REF2014, 92% of its research was judged to be world-leading or internationally excellent in terms of the impact it makes, putting it in the top 25% for the sector. 38% of the university’s work in the Health Sciences was rated as world-leading.

BSMS made a major contribution to its host universities’ submissions in the most recent Research Excellence Framework (REF2014). The majority of BSMS staff submitted contributed to Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience, and Biological Sciences at the University of Sussex, both ranked 10th, or the joint submission with the University of Brighton (Allied Health Professionals, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy – ranked 27th). A smaller number of academics were submitted with Sociology and English at Sussex.

**Brighton & Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust**

Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals (BSUH) is the regional teaching hospital working across two sites: the Royal Sussex County Hospital in Brighton and the Princess Royal Hospital in Haywards Heath. The Brighton campus includes the Royal Alexandra Children’s Hospital and the Sussex Eye Hospital, and the Haywards Heath campus includes the Hurstwood Park Regional Centre.
for Neurosciences.

In May 2014 the UK Government agreed the release of £420m to redevelop the Royal Sussex County Hospital site. The plans will see the site’s 19th century buildings replaced with new, modern facilities for the delivery of healthcare, for teaching and for research.

Revised August 2016 (PP-D)