

## Job Description

<b>Job Title:</b>	<b>Research Assistant in Mental Health</b>
<b>Job Ref:</b>	<b>HED528</b>
<b>Campus:</b>	<b>Hendon</b>
<b>Grade:</b>	<b>Grade 6</b>
<b>Starting Salary:</b>	<b>£37,357 per annum inclusive of Outer London Weighting rising to £42,653 incrementally each year</b>
<b>Hours:</b>	<b>35.5 hours per week, actual daily hours by arrangement</b>
<b>Period:</b>	<b>Fixed Term Contract - 21 Months (If you are applying as an internal candidate to do the temporary post as a secondment please discuss this with your line manager first and read our Secondment Guidelines.)</b>
<b>Reporting To:</b>	<b>Head of Department or Lead Researcher</b>
<b>Reporting to</b>	
<b>Job Holder:</b>	<b>None</b>

### Role Summary

The role will be held by a graduate, postgraduate or post-doctoral researcher with experience of qualitative research in healthcare settings.

### Job Purpose

To work as research assistant on the following National Institute for Health & Care Research (NIHR) funded research study:

*The DISCOVER Implementation (DI) Study: Investigating the sustainability and scale up of a schools-based intervention to improve mental wellbeing of 16–18 year olds across five regions in England*

DISCOVER is a schools-based mental health intervention for 16–18 year-olds. In a recent trial DISCOVER was shown to be effective in reducing symptoms of depression when compared with usual care at 6 months follow-up. It was also shown to be likely to be cost-effective, especially for those who had elevated depression. Building on this evidence, the DI study aims to identify the factors that support the effective implementation of DISCOVER in routine practice. The study focuses on the work of Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) – which provide mental health services for younger people in schools and colleges across England – and the schools within which DISCOVER is delivered.

Guided by the Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research (CFIR) this multi-site, mixed-methods research programme aims to identify key barriers and facilitators to the implementation of DISCOVER and produce guidance to support its nationwide implementation.

The study is being delivered across five English NHS regions and involves working with MHSTs and schools in each region. We will also work with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) who are responsible for the training of MHST clinicians.

The project comprises five work packages that focus on the development of an outcome measurement framework (Work Package 1); the implementation of DISCOVER and the provision of training (Work package 2), a mixed method investigation of the process of implementation (Work package 3) and a cost analysis (Work Package 4).

Work stream 5 will conclude the project and will focus on bringing together learning from the other work packages to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the implementation process.

The postholder will work directly on WP3 and collecting both survey and qualitative data (from interviews and/or focus groups) from MHST practitioners and school staff and analyse these data to provide a theoretically informed analysis of the process of implementation. It is also anticipated that the postholder would contribute to WP5 by conducting key informant interviews (e.g. with national stakeholders or policy stakeholders) and participating in workshops to explore the implications of our research finding for ongoing implementation, national policy and develop implementation guidance.

This is a collaborative project that has a central project team led jointly by investigators based at King's College London and University College London (Prof June Brown & Prof Jenny Shand respectively). There are also collaborating centres in each of the 5 participating regions. Each has a local lead investigator and a research assistant.

The postholder will work under the day-to-day direction of Dr Tim Weaver at Middlesex but would be expected to operate as a member of the central project team and participate in regular project management meetings. The role will also involve liaison with investigators and researchers working in the regional sites throughout England in order to maintain an overview of activities across the project.

The DI Study is a three-year NIHR funded project which commenced in April 2025. The postholder would ideally take up the post in July 2026 (or as soon as possible thereafter) and would be offered a 21-month contract concluding at the current project end-date of March 31<sup>st</sup> 2028. (There is a possibility that this end date may be extended by several months.)

## **Main Responsibilities**

### Research:

- Individually or with others, contribute to The Discover Implementation (DI) Study by administering surveys, and completing interviews and/or focus groups
- To plan and conduct qualitative interviews and focus groups with MHSTs and school staff involved in the delivery of DISCOVER and HEI staff (or others) responsible for training MHST staff
- To contribute to the development of CFIR-informed analytic framework and complete an analysis of both survey and qualitative data obtained as part of WP3
- To plan, conduct and analyse qualitative interviews with key stakeholders (e.g. national stakeholders, policy stakeholders, or cross-site stakeholders) as part of WP5.
- To maintain familiarity with relevant literature and undertake literature reviews to support the production of research reports, conference papers, and peer-reviewed journal articles
- To liaise with project partners to support the delivery of the research project and/or programme as required by the central project team.
- To liaise with researchers based in each region (supporting their qualitative data collection where applicable), practitioners in MHSTs and school staff to ensure the smooth and efficient completion of research procedures.

### **Administration:**

- Support the Central Research Team with the coordination of research activity, as agreed
- Provide administrative support to the project to include but not limited to the organisation of fieldwork, secure storage of data, project meetings and the dissemination of information to stakeholders.

### **Fixed Term Contract**

This temporary appointment is for the following allowable reason:

- Short term funding available for post

Therefore, this appointment has a defined end date of 21 Months.

If you are applying as an internal candidate to do the temporary post as a secondment please discuss this with your line manager first and read our [Secondment Guidelines](#).

**Leave:** 35 days per annum plus eight Bank Holidays and seven University days taken at Christmas (pro rata for part-time staff) which may need to be taken as time off in lieu.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

**Post Title: Research Assistant in in Mental Health**

Essential Requirements:

### **Knowledge, Skills and Experience**

- Appropriate academic qualifications and experience (normally a postgraduate degree or equivalent)
- Understanding of health services research methods and implementation science.
- Experience of qualitative research and/or mixed methods research in a relevant health field including use of relevant qualitative data analysis methods (ideally supported by use of Nvivo).
- Experience of working and communicating with mental health service staff and / or secondary school staff who have roles in relation to student wellbeing and mental health OR the ability to demonstrate understanding of the issues involved in working with these groups.
- Evidence of ability and track record of undertaking substantive interviews and focus groups with mental health service practitioners.
- Ability to demonstrate an appreciation of the value of experiential knowledge in research, together with an understanding of, and a commitment to co-production with stakeholder groups in the design, conduct and analysis of research. These stakeholders may potentially include MHST practitioners, schools staff, HEI staff providing MHST training, policy makers and students.
- Ability to communicate effectively within a team and externally, orally and in writing.
- Evidence of ability or aptitude to work within a multi-disciplinary research team.
- Proven computer literacy in standard office software applications.
- The ability to work as part of a team but also organise and undertake a schedule of work on his/her own initiative.
- Evidence of work directly relevant to supporting the production of research reports and/or journal articles within an academic environment.
- To be comfortable undertaking interviews using Zoom or Teams and being willing to travel and undertake fieldwork (as circumstances permit.)

### **Parking at Hendon campus**

There are currently *Regular Parking Permits and Pre-Paid Parking options* available to new joiners. *Further details are available on the Travel and transport page on the staff intranet. Please note if the number of applications becomes oversubscribed these parking options could be withdrawn at any point.*

### **Information for Disabled Staff**

Staff and visitors with their own current blue badge have access to free parking on campus. All blue badge holders should present a copy of their blue badge to the security office in the Quad. Holders will be given car park access up to the date of expiry of their blue badge.

### **Public Transport**

Our Hendon Campus is well served by public transport with buses, London underground and British Rail services all within a short walk of the campus. You can get detailed journey information from TfL ([www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk)) and have a look at our directions and location to help plan your travel: <http://www.mdx.ac.uk/aboutus/Location/hendon/directions/index.aspx>

We offer an interest-free season ticket loan, interest-free motorbike loan, and bicycle and motorbike parking and changing facilities.

**We value diversity and strive to create a fairer, more equitable work environment for our staff and students.**

**We offer a range of family friendly, inclusive employment policies, flexible working arrangements, staff diversity networks, campus facilities and services to support staff from different backgrounds.**

The postholder should actively follow Middlesex University policies and procedures and maintain an awareness and observation of Fire and Health & Safety Regulations.

### **Standard paragraphs for posts requiring a DBS certificate**

This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and requires a Disclosure and Barring Service certificate. You are therefore required to disclose details of any criminal record. ALL criminal convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings, even if they would otherwise be regarded as spent under this Act must be disclosed, as well as any other information that may have a bearing on your suitability for the post, including pending prosecutions.

The University will apply for a DBS certificate before your appointment is confirmed.

### **What Happens Next ?**

If you wish to discuss the job in further detail please contact Dr Tim Weaver, Associate Professor of Mental Health (Research), via email at [t.weaver@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:t.weaver@mdx.ac.uk)