Where can I go?

Guide to Transdisciplinary Placements
The University of Sheffield was established with the aim of improving the wellbeing of our local population. Our School of Health and Related Research (ScHARR) – a vibrant, multidisciplinary department of over 300 staff and over 100 postgraduate research students – leads the University’s applied public health portfolio, working closely with colleagues across numerous departments, particularly Sociological Studies, Psychology, Systems Engineering, Computer Science, Economics, Urban Studies and Planning.

We work collaboratively to conduct world-class research, training and knowledge translation across a range of public health and related issues. Our core mission is to work with policymakers and practitioners to deliver research which improves the health of the population and tackles inequality. ScHARR is renowned for its wealth of methodological and topic expertise, with a track record of major research programmes in health inequalities, evidence synthesis and knowledge mobilisation, economic modelling and evaluation, alcohol, diet and physical activity, and mental health.

We bring a unique perspective from working in a city with diverse communities and stark health inequalities. Regionally, our work extends across both the Yorkshire and Humber and the East Midlands, covering a wide spectrum of urban and rural populations, from the affluent to the very deprived. Much of our research is undertaken in collaboration with practitioner and community partners. We have well established collaborations with public health practice colleagues across local government, the NHS, third sector and the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. Professor Liddy Gooyer is both the Sheffield lead for SPHR and academic lead for the Yorkshire & Humber Practice & Research Collaborative (PaRC) which supports collaborative research programmes and knowledge mobilisation across the region.

There is a specific opportunity to join a multi-disciplinary research team which works on commercial determinants of health (food, alcohol, tobacco, gambling). This is a field that hugely benefits from collaborations with other disciplines, for example: lawyers working on regulation and legislation for harmful products; systems engineers developing complex system modelling to test theory, explore change over time or assess intervention effects; AI experts working on simulation methods; marketing/advertising specialists working on current trends and innovations in marketing of harmful products.

To enquire further, contact: Liz Kitchin liz.kitchin@sheffield.ac.uk
The PHRESH Consortium in the West Midlands provides a highly supportive public health research and training environment. Our 70 key researchers, from a range of professional and disciplinary backgrounds spanning sciences, economics, education, geography and business, are each linked to a wider network and teams actively engaged in applied public health research and capacity building, making this the ideal location for beginning your move towards Public Health Research.

Underpinned by the fundamental principles of inclusivity, equality and social justice, our collaborative research teams address the breadth of public health challenges using the scientific methods which can be used to work with communities, key agencies and local government to develop solutions. This wealth of expertise provides an excellent environment from which to learn about the breadth of Public Health Research, allowing you the opportunity to identify the area you would like to establish yourself in.

In the last 5 years, we have received over £170m from a range of UK funders to deliver research. This has led to >1,700 scientific papers and reports which have contributed to changes in policy to improve people’s health and wellbeing. We work in a region with a relatively highly deprived, superdiverse and high ethnic mix population, and geographic diversity, containing the largest UK urban conurbation after Greater London. This allows us to undertake transformative public health research, informed by, and with our local communities. The chance to work with these communities means you can realise the impact of the research and see the difference Public Health Research can make.

Embedded within our consortium, we have established facilities and infrastructure to support flexible and blended training in public health at all levels. Over the last 5 years, we have trained >180 postgraduate research students in public health and applied health research and 40 funded fellowships were awarded. We are looking forward to adding our first cohort of Transdisciplinary Placement students to this. Our transdisciplinary students will be part of a vibrant research environment, with access to a range of academics with different topic areas and methodologies.

Specifically, students with PHRESH will gain knowledge in PPIE activities and their role in public health research, systematic review training and health economics models. Access to these disciplines will be embedded in our ongoing Public Health projects, for example, the FUEL study, SMART schools, our workplace research. With the onset of SPHR projects in January and April of 2023 there will be plethora of projects for our students to be involved with concerning all four theme areas; Public Mental Health; Healthy Planet, Healthy Places; Children, Young People and Families; and Health Inequalities. PHRESH are excited and ready to welcome a transdisciplinary student to explore new connections and identify new ways of thinking to answer complex public health questions.

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The School for Public Health Environments Research at Exeter (SPHERE) leads the University of Exeter’s membership in the School for Public Health Research. Based in the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, SPHERE is a multidisciplinary hub for expertise in public health research from across the University’s three Faculty. Our public health research spans a broad range of topics including; the impact of the natural environment on health, social prescribing, making sure children have a fair start in life, making communities healthier places to live and helping the ensure schools and families are safe environments.

We have particular expertise in:

- Environment and human health
- Healthy children and families
- Behavioural science
- Involving the public

Public engagement and involvement is at the core of our work, and we hold several long-running NIHR investments focused on providing responsive, timely and policy-relevant research to shape national decision making in health.

We are able to offer transdisciplinary placements across a range of disciplines, including:

- Children & schools, school-based trials
- Food systems
- Active travel policies and practices
- Urban greening to mitigate air pollution
- Co-production/involvement and engagement
- Weight management, overweight and obesity

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Fuse, the Centre for Translational Research in Public Health

Universities of Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria, Sunderland and Teesside

Fuse is the UKCRC Centre of Excellence for Translational Research in Public Health which offers SPHR a portfolio of high-quality applied public health research spanning the five North East universities (Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria, Sunderland and Teesside).

Fuse was funded in 2008 by UKCRC to build capacity in applied public health research with the particular remit of translation. Fuse brought together a unique partnership of public health researchers in the five universities and practice and policy makers from across the North East creating a new environment to support world class research with a focus on translational research. We work in an area of the country with historically high levels of deprivation, social inequality and concomitantly poor health outcomes. Our cross-cutting strategic aim is to achieve better, fairer health across the life course and to conduct applied public health research to support the prevention and public health essential for health and prosperity. Fuse hosts the Equal England Network a community of academics, researchers and practitioners who share a common interest in addressing health and social inequalities, AskFuse an innovative responsive research and evaluation service, a national Embedded Researcher network and NIHR Fusion North funded Public Health Intervention Responsive Studies Team, which provides timely and accessible research to local authorities that wish to work with us and to have their interventions evaluated.

Fuse has widespread involvement in the NIHR SPHR Public Mental Health research programme. We would welcome placements from those interested in the promotion of public mental health generally, and in particular from those in disciplines or roles of relevance to ongoing projects. This includes those interested in public health policy, policy and health systems research and practice, those from VCSE and private sectors with an interest in public mental health, young people focused organisations and practitioners, economists with an interest in social return on investment models, and those interested in workplace interventions. We are also always keen to host those with creative, artistic, or community-engagement backgrounds.

There would be opportunities to have mentoring and training from researchers within one of the CYPF projects (Exploring food insecurity in pregnancy in a highly deprived region of the UK to inform future Public Health intervention needs), relating to qualitative research, and involvement in the project conducting and analysing qualitative interviews with pregnant women experiencing food insecurity. This project brings together academics (Fuse, PHRESH and LiLaC), public health practitioners and policy makers (Gateshead Council and Gateshead HDRC), maternity services (Gateshead NHS Trust) and 3rd sector organisations (Emergency Food Aid and Poverty Charities). This would provide an opportunity for the placements to get a broad experience of wider determinants of health and multi-sector translational research.

There would be opportunities to have mentoring and training from researchers within some of the HPHP projects (ranging from Commercial Determinants of Health, Air Quality and Dementia, Active Travel in Rural Communities, Sustainability, Occupational Health and Wellbeing Guidance in the hospitality sector; and the health impacts of climate change); this will involved mixed methods research with a range of partners from across the NIHR SPHR School, members of the public third sector partners, practitioners, and policy makers. These diverse projects are within the broad theme of Healthy Places, Healthy Planet and will provide experiences and opportunities across a range of sectors to develop new skills (innovative qualitative and quantitative research methods) and collaborate with new partners across academia and beyond.

Fuse also has good links with Geography, Town Planning (fit with HDRC’s), Engineering, Architecture.

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Consistently rated amongst the world's best universities, Imperial College London is a science-based institution with a reputation for excellence in public health teaching and research.

The School of Public Health combines world-class research at the local, national and international level, translating science and epidemiology into policy, health education and primary care. Together with its research, teaching and evidence-led policy work, the School of Public Health aims to address the major public health challenges of the 21st century. The School was rated joint top nationally in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF), in the "Public Health, Health Services & Primary Care" Unit of Assessment, with the proportion of world-leading and internationally excellent research combined graded at 91.

The placement holder will be based in the School of Public Health (Head, Professor Deborah Ashby) or the Centre for Health Economics and Policy Innovation (Head, Professor Franco Sassi). Both locations have a focus on promoting interdisciplinary research in population health, including on the social determinants, and health interventions in populations, as well as providing substantial training and teaching programmes. There are strong collaborative links with other academic departments of Imperial College and elsewhere in the UK and overseas as well as local and national public health organisations.

Further information is available at: https://www.imperial.ac.uk/school-public-health/

From March 2023, we will have an NIHR SPHR post-doctoral launching fellow working on a project about environmental issues and young people's mental health, so this placement could involve working with them on the initial literature review, scoping of and networking with potential partner organisations, project planning, and applying for ethical approval.

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University of Bristol

Bristol has an international reputation for research excellence in applied Public Health Research through its Centre for Public Health Research in Bristol Medical School: Population Health Sciences (PHS). There are strong collaborations with the Centre for Exercise, Nutrition and Health Sciences (ENHS) in the School for Policy Studies, as well as relationships with Experimental Psychology and Social Work and Care. The University is, uniquely, a member of all three NIHR Research Schools - Public Health, Primary Care and Social Care Research - providing excellent opportunities for cross-NIHR school collaboration.

The Centre for Public Health, led by Professor Rona Campbell, conducts research into the health of the population with the aim of promoting and protecting health and well-being, preventing ill-health and reducing health inequalities. It includes an NIHR Public Health Responsive Studies Team and works in close collaboration with the NIHR Health Protection Research Unit in Evaluation of Interventions and NIHR Applied Research Collaboration West. We have major strengths in conducting randomised trials of public health interventions, evaluating natural experiments to strengthen the evidence base for public health policy, process evaluation, evidence synthesis and applied public health studies on child and adolescent health, obesity, physical activity, nutrition, smoking, alcohol and drug misuse, sexual health, occupational health, environmental health, infectious diseases, and mental health.

The Centre for Public Health (CPH) has a strongly collaborative and multi-disciplinary ethos encouraging the participation of all. CPH holds regular meetings for all research staff, Fellows and doctoral students, including a monthly public health reading group, to provide opportunities to share knowledge and experience, discuss issues in public health research and policy and hone research ideas. In CPH we have excellent links with local public health policy and practice including public health staff who are co-located in PHS and local authorities.

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