

Job Description

Post Title	Research Associate
Band	6
Directorate	Research and Innovation
Location/Base	Rawnsley building with some remote working from home
Responsible to	Chief Investigator/Study Lead
Accountable to	Chief Investigator/ Head of R&I

Job Summary/Purpose

Description of the Unit or Project –

The aim of this 2 year, project is to provide evidence for the need and acceptability of routine sensory motor assessments and treatment for autistic adults without Learning Disabilities and to identify and map appropriate intervention pathways.

Autism is a life-long developmental condition that affects how a person communicates and interacts with people. Sensory motor difficulties (SMD), such as hypersensitivity, poor manual and eye-hand coordination and unstable balance occur in at least 80% of autistic individuals and have significant negative impact on daily living activities and emotional wellbeing. Despite this, SMD in autistic adults are not routinely assessed and supported during or following autism diagnosis, and there is limited clinical guidance for SMD once autistic adults are referred. This project will assess the acceptability of, and inform the development of, an SMD assessment and support pathway for autistic patients, bringing existing resources together to be later tested in a definitive study to determine effectiveness and cost effectiveness

In phase 1 of the study, autistic adults will be recruited from two diagnostic clinics in the Northwest. Participants will be offered a SMD assessment by an Occupational Therapist and will receive a report detailing findings including any support recommendations. All participants will be asked to return for a follow up visit to collect proof of concept and feasibility data on the assessment and report using a survey and open-ended questions. This data will allow us to understand the need for assessment and intervention and obtain acceptability and feasibility data to design future studies.

In phase 2, a toolkit containing guidance on appropriate SMD assessments and intervention options will be developed through workshops and a survey involving research team members and stakeholders.

The project is funded by an NIHR Research for Patient Benefit grant.

Job Summary/Purpose –

The Research Associate (RA) will join a multidisciplinary team who have experience in autism research, Occupational Therapy, Patient and Public Involvement (PPI), delivery of complex interventions and economic evaluation. They will be responsible for monitoring participant recruitment, communicating with the OTs, research team and participants and collating the assessment reports and questionnaires into spreadsheets. The RA will perform quantitative and qualitative analysis (i.e. framework analysis) on the data and work with the Chief Investigator to develop, run and contribute to the workshops and survey. They will help design the toolkit and be involved in disseminating study findings through publications, presentations, PPI and clinical material. The study team has a strong track record of PPI and the RA will be involved in this throughout the project.

Specific skills that would be desirable for the project are experience of working with autistic adults and/or experience conducting research with autistic adults, experience of co-producing research with autistic people and experience of sensory motor research. Knowledge of the brain and cognitive underpinnings of sensory and motor difficulties in the autistic population would also be desirable.

The post-holder will receive line management support from Dr Emma Gowen, Chief Investigator, The Body, Eye and Movement (BEAM) lab, The University of Manchester in Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (GMMH). This includes regular line management supervision, clear objective setting for 3, 6 and 12 months and annual appraisals thereafter (depending on continued funding for the post)

Main Duties & Responsibilities

Heading	Duty/Responsibility
Research grants writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assist with writing of funding applications for research
Communication and networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To regularly liaise with the study collaborators and other stakeholders to identify and recruit eligible study participants; • To assist with the promotion of the research to stakeholders; • To contribute towards and write papers about the research in high profile reports and publications; • To help present information on research progress and outcomes to management groups; • To assist with the presentation of research findings at internal and external meetings, and conferences nationally and internationally; and • To liaise with research colleagues and support administrative staff on routine matters.
Research and administrative activities to support funding bids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To conduct and write systematic reviews and/or meta-analyses for publication and to inform future research and grant applications. • To contribute to the development/design of qualitative and quantitative studies with the members of the team. • To assist with the running of any pilot trials or research studies conducted within the team. • To liaise with relevant funding bodies, research support network (e.g. NIHR Research Design Service) and R&I departments of partner organisations • To assist with the running of any focus groups or consultation groups with service users and/or other stakeholders to inform research. • To assist in servicing meetings, including production of agendas, writing of minutes and reports and taking follow-up action as required. • To support the Lead and team members on other relevant research/administrative activities as required.
Research management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To populate, maintain and manage relevant and accurate databases on a daily basis, ensuring they represent a comprehensive and accurate record of the ongoing research.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work effectively under time-pressure in order to meet tight deadlines and project milestones • To retrieve complex data from relevant quantitative databases and analyse research outcomes to produce summary reports on research activity for a variety of purposes. • To implement research policies / standard operating procedures for their own work area and to be able to propose improvements to research policies/procedures where relevant. • To assume responsibility for the safe and secure use of research equipment including digital recorders and computers where relevant. • To provide advice or demonstrate own research activities or workplace routines to new research staff or temporary researchers working on the project. • To contribute to the production of accurate information and timely submission of the Progress Reports to the relevant bodies (e.g. funders, the Trust). • To organise their own day-to-day tasks and activities; the post holder must be able to take significant responsibility for planning and implementation of specific elements of the research activities conducted by the Unit. • To have a reliable method of transporting themselves independently to the Unit's site and willing to travel to meetings with other team members and relevant stakeholders in the North West area. • To be aware of national developments, attend national events and undertake any necessary and relevant training to keep up to date with research developments and related issues as required. • Comply with data management and quality assurance according to regulatory guidelines (ICH GCD and Data Protection Act 1998). • Comply with departmental policies concerning security, safety and patient confidentiality and to ensure that procedures are carried out with safe systems of work and current legislation. • The post holder may be required to carry out other related tasks that may not be specifically mentioned above. The job description may be reviewed and amended at a later date. Changes will be made in consultation with the post holder and the Lead.
<p>Trust Mandatory On-going Requirements - to be met by the candidate after commencing in post, these will not be</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To undertake any other reasonable duty, when requested to do so by an appropriate Trust manager. • To understand and comply with all Trust policies, procedures, protocols and guidelines. • To understand the Trusts Strategic Goals and how you can support them.

<p>assessed at the recruitment stage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand the need to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and adhere to all principles in effective safeguarding. • To carry out all duties and responsibilities of the post in accordance with Equal Opportunities, Equality and Diversity and dignity in care/work policies and principles • To avoid unlawful discriminatory behaviour and actions when dealing with the colleagues, services users, members of the public and all stakeholders. • To access only information, where paper, electronic, or, in another media, which is authorised to you as part of the duties of your role. • Not to communicate to anyone inside or outside the NHS, information relating to patients, services users, staff, contractors or any information of a commercially sensitive nature, unless done in the normal course of carrying out the duties of the post and with appropriate permission. • To maintain high standards of quality in corporate and clinical record keeping ensuring information is always recorded accurately, appropriately and kept up to date. • To ensure their day to day activities embrace sustainability and reduce the impact upon the environment by minimising waste and maximising recycling; saving energy; minimising water usage and reporting electrical faults, water leakages or other environmental concerns to the facilities department or their line manager. • Take reasonable care of the health and safety of yourself and other persons • To contribute to the control of risk and to report any incident, accident or near miss • To protect service users, visitors and employees against the risk of acquiring health care associated infections. • To take responsibility for your own learning and development by recognising and taking advantage of all opportunities to learn in line with appraisal and supervision.
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Further Information for Postholder(s)

This job description is not exhaustive, but is intended to give an overall picture of the role. Other duties within the general scope of the post may be required from time to time. The duties of the post and job description can be reviewed through the agreed process. All information obtained or held during the post-holders period of employment that relates to the business of the Trust and its service users and employees will remain the property of the Trust. Information may be subject to disclosure under legislation at the Trust's discretion and in line with national rules on exemption.

All Trust sites have been designated a no smoking area. The post holder is therefore advised smoking is not permitted within the hospital premises or grounds or whilst representing the Trust in the course of their duty. While the Trust will not discriminate against employing smokers, all prospective employees should be aware of this policy

Person Specification

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Job Summary/Purpose	
<p>The RA will join a multidisciplinary team who have experience in autism research, Occupational Therapy, Patient and Public Involvement (PPI), delivery of complex interventions and economic evaluation. They will be responsible for monitoring participant recruitment, communicating with the OTs, research team and participants and collating the assessment reports and questionnaires into spreadsheets. The RA will perform quantitative and qualitative analysis (i.e. framework analysis) on the data and work with the Chief Investigator to develop, run and contribute to the workshops and survey. They will help design the toolkit and be involved in disseminating study findings through publications, presentations, PPI and clinical material. The study team has a strong track record of PPI and the RA will be involved in this throughout the project.</p> <p>Specific skills that would be desirable for the project are experience of working with autistic adults and/or experience conducting research with autistic adults, experience of co-producing research with autistic people and experience of sensory motor research. Knowledge of the brain and cognitive underpinnings of sensory and motor difficulties in the autistic population would also be desirable.</p>	

Essential Criteria - The qualities without which a post holder could not be appointed.	Desirable Criteria - Extra qualities which can be used to choose between candidates who meet all the essential criteria	How Assessed – AP = Application form IN = Interview OA = Other Assessment
Education / Qualifications		
Good Honours Degree in Psychology (2:1 or above) and a Master's Degree or equivalent experience	PhD in Psychology or a relevant and related field	AP
Experience - to be able to complete the duties as laid out on the Job Description		
The post holder should have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of conducting quantitative research • Experience of conducting and analysing qualitative research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expertise of working with colleagues in NHS settings • Experience of management of randomised controlled trials of complex interventions 	AP IN

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of conducting research in mental health • Experience of statistical and qualitative computer packages (e.g. SPSS, STATA or an equivalent statistical package and nVivo) • Experience of conducting PPI events and public engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of complex psychological interventions • Experience of writing grant applications • 	
Knowledge - to be able to complete the duties as laid out on the Job Description		
<p>The post holder should have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge/experience of analysis and interpretation of statistical/analytical research outcomes • 		AP IN
Skills and Abilities - to be able to complete the duties as laid out on the Job Description		
<p>The post holder should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent Communication skills (written and verbal) • Ability to form effective working relationships with colleagues from a diverse range of backgrounds • Ability to organize own day to day tasks and activities • Ability to take responsibility for planning and implementation of specific elements of research studies • Computer Literacy – advanced skills in database (eg Microsoft Excel) and word processing packages • Ability to prepare and present research reports and presentations • Excellent interpersonal skills • Ability to work independently with regular supervision, using initiative • Excellent organisational skills • Attention to detail • Ability to work under time-pressure and meet strict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrable capability of working with large volumes of complex, sensitive and highly confidential information • Experience extracting and coding data from clinical case notes • Experience of public speaking • Experience of writing to publications. 	AP IN OA (e.g. presentation at interview)

<p>deadlines and prioritise accordingly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to maintain high standard of integrity and confidentiality • Show initiative and enthusiasm, and proactively contribute to the culture of the team 		
<p>Other Requirements - to be able to complete the duties as laid out on the Job Description</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proven track record of high quality publications in peer review journals • Reliable method for traveling independently across the wide footprint of the Trust and occasionally the North West region to attend meetings and events relevant to the role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of national and international research collaborations 	<p>AP IN</p>

The Trust will consider any reasonable adjustments to the recruitment and selection process and to employment for applicants who have protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

Drawn up by:
Designation:
Date: