

PERSON SPECIFICATION: RESEARCH CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT CO-LEAD REPORTING TO: RESEARCH CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT LEAD

Background

The NIHR Applied Research Collaboration for the East of England (NIHR ARC EoE) is a collaboration between Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust (the Host Trust), and the University of Cambridge, University of East Anglia, University of Hertfordshire, University of Essex and Anglia Ruskin University, working in partnership with other health and care organisations throughout the region.

At NIHR ARC EoE we are committed to improving health and care services by working together on priority health and care problems, training people to design and conduct innovative research, and putting findings into practice regionally and nationally. NIHR ARC EoE has received confirmation from the NIHR that it's funding has been renewed from 1 April 2026 until 31st March 2031.

What this role entails

The Research Capacity Development (RCD) Co-Lead will work closely with the current RCD Lead, Dr Naoko Kishita, to provide strategic leadership for the ARC EoE's RCD workstream, supporting the development of a thriving regional workforce in applied health and care research. The RCD Co-Lead will lead the ARC EoE Research Fellowship Programme, including its evaluation and ongoing refinement to ensure it meets regional needs and strengthens research capacity across health and social care organisations.

Working in partnership with the RCD Lead, the RCD Co-Lead will represent ARC EoE at national NIHR forums, foster strong relationships with key stakeholders, and also co-develop, lead, and oversee the delivery of other key capacity-building initiatives, such as postdoctoral awards. The role will also contribute to shaping regional research strategy and provide mentorship and support to early- and mid-career researchers across the ARC EoE.

The post-holder will work closely with the ARC EoE's RCD Lead and the Team Strategy and Operations Group (TSOG), which comprises the Director, Co-Director, five research theme leads and co-leads, the Academic Knowledge Mobilisation Lead, Implementation Lead, Patient and Public Involvement Engagement and Participation (PPIEP) Lead, Research Inclusion Lead, and members of the operational core team. The RCD Co-Lead will manage and co-supervise the RCD team, which includes a Fellowship Programme Coordinator, the Social Care Research Development Programme (ASCENT) Coordinator, and part-time administrative staff.

Key responsibilities:

Leadership

- Contribute strategic leadership to ARC EoE as part of the TSOG.
- Co-lead, implement, and evolve the ARC EoE RCD strategy in alignment with national priorities.
- Co-oversee the budget and resource allocation for the RCD workstream, including line management of programme staff.
- Offer accessible guidance and mentorship to NIHR Academy members regarding academic development and NIHR opportunities.
- Monitor and evaluate the RCD strategy to ensure continued impact and alignment with objectives.
- Establish and maintain strong and effective working relationships with partner organisations and other NIHR research infrastructure in EoE and with other ARCs.
- Promote equality, diversity and Inclusion in ARC EoE capacity-building activity.

- Contribute to the strategic planning of the ARC Network RCD theme, coordinating RCD teams across all ARCs.

Programme Oversight

Provide strategic direction and operational oversight for:

- Fellowship Programme: a 12-month development programme for health, care, and voluntary sector professionals in the East of England.
- Early Career Researcher Development: supporting researchers in building impactful applied research careers regionally and nationally.
- Co-oversight of any new programmes that fall under the ARC EoE RCD programme.

Governance and reporting

- Support the timely collection and reporting of information on NIHR Academy members, initiatives and objectives to NIHR.
- Report on progress within the ARC EoE governance structures.

Essential requirements:

- A post with University of Cambridge, University of East Anglia, University of Hertfordshire, University of Essex or Anglia Ruskin University is required due to contractual arrangements.
- A PhD in health sciences, social sciences, health or care research, science communication, healthcare policy, psychology, management or a related discipline.
- Proven track record of providing strategic input and leading capacity building initiatives in a health, care and/or academic setting and contributing to funding applications.
- Proven experience in successfully delivering programmes across complex, multi-organisational environments.
- Experience of budget and resource management and oversight.
- Supervision of PhD students to completion of their studies as the main supervisor and experience in supporting the career development of early-career and mid-career researchers working in a university setting.
- Understand research careers, both clinical and non-clinical, ideally demonstrating a good understanding of the NIHR Academy RCD agenda.
- Evidence of highly developed communication and interpersonal skills plus experience of working collaboratively with a range of stakeholders, and the ability to build and maintain these relationships.
- Good working knowledge of the NIHR research infrastructure and initiatives.

Time commitment

The role requires an average commitment of 0.20wte, including attendance at monthly TSOG meetings. It will primarily be based at the postholder's current employing university, with occasional travel required to various sites across the East of England.

The role will be funded by ARC East of England via the employing organisation and administered by the host organisation, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Foundation NHS Trust. This will be a fixed term role available until 31 March 2031 (aligned with the ARC EoE funding cycle).

Expressions of interest

Please send a CV and letter of application to Pel Fordham, Research Administrator, NIHR ARC East of England via email by P.Fordham@uea.ac.uk.

Please ensure your letter of application outlines how your skills and experience meet the requirements of this role by Monday 9th February. Interviews will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams on the 6th March 2026.

Informal enquiries are encouraged, please contact RCD Lead, Dr Naoko Kishita N.Kishita@uea.ac.uk to arrange.