



My Experience of the Local Authority SPARC Scheme
Bryony Porter



Overview

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- The application
- My Placement Experience
- Learning and Outcomes



My background



2015-2019

NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration
East of England

2020-2022

Public, Community,
Involvement,
Engagement and
Participation Lead
ARC EoE

2015



2018-2020

LA SPARC
April 2022 – August 2022*

2023

October 2021 – March 2023

Building research capacity in and partnership with Local Authorities

What is the NIHR LA SPARC scheme?

Building research capacity in and partnership with Local Authorities and supporting practitioner academic careers

- Supporting individuals working in Local Authority settings and [NIHR Academy Members](#) to design and apply for funds for short placements to allow them to move between NIHR and Local Authority in either direction
- An opportunity to enhance careers, skills, knowledge and capabilities to co-create research that is more meaningful and better connected with practice
- A bespoke short placement, light touch application, up to £15,000 (as of 2022)
 - Salary support (for individuals coming from local authority settings only),
 - Travel, accommodation, subsistence in order to travel and undertake the placement.
 - Any specific short training courses
 - Relevant placement outputs (e.g. an infographic, informative video etc.).



The Application

- First meeting with Norfolk County Council on Thursday 28th October 2021
- Submitted application on 18th November 2021

A 'light touch' application

- Overview of research experience and / or career and experience to date
- Proposed Placement Plan including professional development opportunities
- Outline the likely benefits and impact of the placement on your research, training and career and how you will know if the placement has been successful
- Statement of support from host
- Timeline (1 day per/week for 5 months), budget, CV



SPARC Placement Objectives

My placement had four key objectives for success:

1. The development of a research steering group of key stakeholders to develop future research projects
2. The outline of a proposal for grant application e.g., NIHR Research for Patient Benefit programme, Research for Social Care annual call.
3. To support the evaluation of projects to support Social Care staff wellbeing in Norfolk County Council.
4. Completion of Oxford Women's Leadership Development Programme.



Group Clinical Supervision for Social Workers Pilot Project

April 2022: 12-month pilot for clinically facilitated group supervision for social workers

- Support the evaluation, bring together a team of key stakeholders, develop funding application

Funding applications

UEA Health and Social Care Partners Research Capacity Building Programme Funding Call 2022-23 (*not funded)

Aim: To independently evaluate the staff perceptions and experiences of the pilot project and the impact on individuals, teams and how staff work with children and young people with mental health conditions in Norfolk.

Norfolk and Waveney ICB Research Capability Funding (RCF) 2022/23 (funded September 2022- March 2023)

Aim: To explore the existing evidence of psychological wellbeing support for social workers, to consult with relevant stakeholders about experiences of the pilot supervision approach and psychological wellbeing support.

Training

University of Oxford Women's Leadership Development Programme

6 weeks, online, £2,200

- A global intake of women
- Increasing confidence and impact as a person in a leadership position
- Addressing barriers that must be overcome to pursue ambitious leadership and management roles
- Self-reflective, develop critical leadership skills, online community, mentoring and mentorship opportunities



Learning and Outcomes

1. How to develop a project team with key stakeholders and lead the team through research funding applications and projects
2. Tailoring research funding applications to specific requirements of funders
3. Understanding of how local authorities work and the experiences, demands and pressures of social workers



Overview

- Learning and working in another environment really helped me to understand how the local authority worked and have a deep and new level of understanding for the challenges facing the social work workforce
- A great stepping-stone for further collaboration and work together, the time was so short it just started to build momentum and there was a drive to continue the work.
- Funding for professional development opportunities for you as part of SPARC– a great opportunity