

NIHR Research Funding and Career Development Opportunities



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OVERVIEW

- National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Role & Mission 
 - What we do at the NIHR Academy
 - How we work with Local Authorities
 - Our career development awards and programmes:
 - Overview of the Local Authority Short Placement Award for Research Collaboration (LA SPARC)
 - Overview of the Local Authority Academic Fellowship (LAAF) Programme
 - What makes a competitive fellowship application/hints and tips
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- 



What is the NIHR's mission?



We fund, support and deliver high quality research that benefits the NHS, public health and social care



We engage and involve patients, carers and the public in order to improve the reach, quality and impact of research



We attract, train and support the best researchers to tackle the complex health and care challenges of the future



We invest in world-class infrastructure and a skilled delivery workforce to translate discoveries into improved treatments and services



We partner with other public funders, charities and industry to maximise the value of research to patients and the economy



We fund applied global health research and training to meet the needs of the poorest people in low and middle-income countries

How we work with Local Authority settings

We work with local authorities to develop research that improves health and care, wellbeing, supports independence and reduces health inequalities.

We do this in three ways:

- funding public health and social care research
- sharing evidence and best practice guidance
- **providing research training and career development opportunities for individuals working in local authority settings**

What we do at the NIHR Academy

NIHR | Academy



Develop and coordinate NIHR academic training, career development and research capacity development

Manage national competitions for training and career development awards

Attract, train and support the people conducting leading-edge research focused on the needs of patients and the public

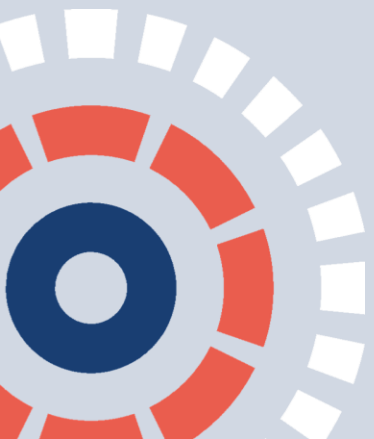
Develop the skills of the next generation of health and care researchers to find lifesaving solutions to key emerging health and care problems

NIHR RESEARCH CAREER PATHWAYS	PRE-DOCTORAL	DOCTORAL	POST-DOCTORAL (EARLY)	POST-DOCTORAL (SENIOR)	CHAIR
Research Training Schemes	Pre-doctoral Fellowship	Doctoral Fellowship	Advanced Fellowship		Research Professorship
			Development & Skills Enhancement Award		
Practitioner Academic Training Schemes	HEE/NIHR Pre-doctoral Clinical and Practitioner Academic Fellowship	HEE/NIHR Doctoral Clinical and Practitioner Academic Fellowship	HEE/NIHR Advanced Clinical and Practitioner Academic Fellowship		
	NIHR Pre-doctoral Local Authority Fellowship	NIHR Doctoral Local Authority Fellowship	NIHR Advanced Local Authority Fellowship		
	In-Practice Fellowship		Clinical Lectureship		
	Academic Clinical Fellowship				
Additional Opportunities	Biomedical Research Centres • Applied Research Collaborations Patient Safety Translational Research Centres • NIHR Schools • Health Protection Research Units				

NIHR Local Authority Short Placement Award for Research Collaboration (LA SPARC)



Launches annually in September



Aim of the LA SPARC Scheme

- Opportunities for both individuals working in Local Authority settings and NIHR Academy members* to undertake short placements and move between NIHR/academia and LAs in either direction.
- Enables individuals to enhance their careers by developing a bespoke placement to further their skills, knowledge and expertise to work at the interface between practice and academia.

*early career researchers currently undertaking a formal research training award (e.g masters or PhD students) in NIHR Infrastructure or an NIHR School



Who is the LA SPARC scheme aimed at?

- **Individuals based in a local authority setting** who are interested in enhancing their careers, experiencing research from a different perspective and perhaps considering developing a practice academic career

- Must hold a **minimum level of qualification at degree level (BSc/BA)** or equivalent, as well as a **contract of employment in England** with a local authority, provider of local authority commissioned services, non-profit organisation or an NHS organisation

- **NIHR Academy members/ECR's** funded in a part of NIHR Infrastructure or NIHR School who are interested in hearing first-hand the issues and challenges being faced in local authority public health/social care teams, sharing knowledge and experience and looking to shape potential future research partnerships and collaborations.

Where can I undertake a short placement?

Lots of different parts of the NIHR:-

NIHR Biomedical Research Centres (20 sites)
NIHR Patient Safety Research Centres (6 centres)
NIHR Applied Research Collaborations (15 centres)
NIHR Health Protection Research Units (15 units)
NIHR School for Public Health Research
NIHR School for Social Care Research
NIHR School for Primary Care Research
NIHR Policy Research Units (PRU)

NIHR Health Determinants Research Collaborations
NIHR Programme Grants (e.g NIHR Social Care Programme etc.)

Individuals may wish to consider....

Spend time with a research team in a part of the NIHR, **find out about academic research and the research they are involved in**, meet with potential supervisors and mentors **that might help support a future fellowship application** (e.g to support a Masters qualification or a PhD/doctoral application),

Spend time in an NIHR Applied Research Collaboration, NIHR School etc. to **explore innovative ways of using data that would enable you to further develop your career, skills and knowledge.**

How long should a placement be for?

- **Flexible** approach to placements/taster opportunities
- **There is no minimum or maximum duration for the placement/taster opportunity**; placements may range from 2/3 weeks to 4/5 months and this period can be broken up to allow flexibility for both the individual undertaking the placement and institution where the placement will be 'hosted'/based with a supervisor.
- Encourage individuals to **get in touch with their Line Manager/Head of Department** at their earliest opportunity to discuss potential placement ideas, the potential duration/time away and seek their permission and support first.

What funding is available to support my placement?

- Funding of up to **£15,000** can be applied for and could include; **salary support**, as well as funding to cover; **travel, accommodation, subsistence** in order to undertake the placement.
- This funding can also be used to **fund any specific training courses**, as well as any relevant placement outputs (e.g. an **infographic, informative video etc.**).
- Please note that a short letter of contract would be put in place with the applicants employing institution to say that NIHR will reimburse up to the awarded amount to the applicant's employing organisation after the placement is complete

Case Study – Local Authority Short Placement Award for Research Collaboration (LA SPARC) awardee



Hannah Cann, is a participation officer with looked-after children at Southampton City Council

“When I was a teacher and play therapist, I felt frustrated that education policy and practice did not always reflect up-to-date research. As my career has progressed, I have wanted to help bridge the gap between research, policy and practice, so we can support children and families in the most efficient and effective ways possible”

“This placement has been a wonderful experience and have had so many incredible opportunities; my placement supervisor has gone above and beyond and her passion and dedication are inspiring. I am excited about my future career and continuing to improve practice within Southampton City Council”

Opportunities for LA's to 'host' placements

Opportunities for LA's to 'host' an NIHR Academy member (masters, PhD or early career post-doc researchers) based within a part of the NIHR/academia at their Local Authority

- NIHR Academy members to gain first hand experience of being actively embedded and connected with practice/policy
- Use the opportunity to share ideas, expertise, skills and knowledgeable to help further areas of research between LA and NIHR, foster partnerships and collaborations for co-creating research that is better connected with practice.



NIHR Local Authority Academic Fellowship Programme



NIHR Academy Remit for Personal Awards

- The overall remit of the NIHR is early translational (experimental), clinical and applied health and social care research.
- For personal doctoral-level awards the proposal:
 - must be for clinical and applied health research, including social care research
 - must have clear potential for directly benefitting patients/service users and the public (but recognising the training element of the research)
 - can involve: patients/service users; samples or data from patients/service users; people who are neither; populations; health technology assessment; or health/social care services research
 - Early translational research at this level is funded through the NIHR Infrastructure.
- For post-doctoral awards, early translational (experimental) research is within remit. A clear and plausible path to patient/service user or public benefit must, however, be demonstrable.
- **NIHR does not support basic research or work involving animals or their tissue.**
- NIHR will also support educational research and methodological research provided it has potential for practical application, and the impact on patients/service users and the public is clear.

Integrated Pathways - Local authority based individuals

NIHR RESEARCH CAREER PATHWAYS	PRE-DOCTORAL	DOCTORAL	POST-DOCTORAL (EARLY)	POST-DOCTORAL (SENIOR)	CHAIR
LOCAL AUTHORITY & LOCAL AUTHORITY SUPPORTING SERVICE EMPLOYEES (EXCLUDING NHS EMPLOYEES) NIHR Local Authority Academic Fellowship Programme	NIHR Pre-doctoral Local Authority Fellowship	NIHR Doctoral Local Authority Fellowship	NIHR Advanced Local Authority Fellowship		

- Open to employees (excluding doctors and dentists) from local authority settings*
- supports the combination of health or social care research and research leadership with continued professional development

*Local Authority settings are considered to be Local Authorities, services commissioned by Local Authorities and those services that work in support of a local authority and its/their objectives through active collaboration (homelessness charities etc)

Local Authority Academic Fellowship Programme

The NIHR Local Authority Academic Fellowship (LAAF) Programme is open to all employees (excluding medically and dentally qualified individuals) of local authorities and local authority supporting services.

Its awards must be hosted by a partnership of a HEI and an LA / service

Applicants must hold a contract of employment* **in England** with either a:

- local authority;
- provider of local authority commissioned services; or a
- non-profit organisation (such as a charity) that provides services on behalf of a local authority, or that otherwise supports** a local authority in meeting its objectives.

* Fixed term contracts of any duration are acceptable, however, honorary contracts or bank work cannot be accepted.

** This support does not need to be commissioned or funded, but it does need to be co-designed with, or at the very least acknowledged and signposted by, the local authority/authorities in question.

Pre-doctoral Local Authority Fellowship (PLAF)

- supports aspiring practitioner academics (excluding doctors and dentists) from local authority settings to become competitive applicants for a doctoral fellowship
- composed of 2 distinct funding offers allowing applicants to propose the level of support most appropriate for their individual requirements:

“Standard PLAF”

(full time for 12 months, part-time over 24 months or 30 months)

- **salary costs** (time undertaking the Fellowship)
- up to £5,000 towards **Master’s level training**
- up to £1,000 for **conference/meeting** fees and associated travel and subsistence
- up to £1000 **PI&E** costs and **travel to supervision**

“PLAF Bridge”

(4 days per week for 6 months or 2 days per week for 12 months)

- **salary costs** (time undertaking the Fellowship)
- up to £400 for **formal courses**
- up to £500 for **conference/ meeting** fees and associated travel and subsistence
- Up to £500 **PI&E** costs and **travel to supervision**

Launches annually in January/February

Case Study – Pre-doctoral Local Authority Academic Fellowship (PLAF) Awardee



Charlotte Ashworth, is a social worker in child protection at Manchester City Council

“I’ve often found myself asking questions, trying to find research-informed answers and struggling to find them. There is so much practical knowledge on the frontline, but the pressures of child protection work, turnover of staff and the lack of a clear career pathway meant that there have not previously been opportunities to capitalise on this knowledge.”

“One of the benefits of the award for me is flexibility. Being able to stay in my current job whilst continuing with further study and research has taken away all the barriers that previously stopped me returning to academia after completing an MA in Social Work 10 years ago.”

Doctoral Local Authority Fellowship (DLAF)

Funds aspiring practitioner academics from local authority settings to undertake a PhD by research and, concurrently, to undertake professional development and retain a practice role

Fellows must:

- be based at an English local authority or LA supporting service, or at an English HEI
- have the support of excellent academic supervision and practice supervision

Funding and support

- 3 years FT (with part-time options)
- funds salary (for academic time and practice time), research costs, academic training costs (inc. PhD fees), professional training & development costs, and the costs of research visits and conference attendance

Practice Time: Approximately 20% of award time **must** be dedicated to development of the awardee's service or practice role, which will be funded through the fellowship

Launches annually in September

Advanced Local Authority Fellowship (ALAF)

Will support post-doctoral researchers developing Practitioner Academic Careers. Applicants may:

- have recently completed, or will soon be awarded, a doctorate but haven't yet established themselves as an independent researcher;
- have started to establish themselves as an independent researcher, or be already established as an independent researcher but not yet recognised as an international leader in their field;
- be seeking to re-establish their research career following a significant career break;
- be seeking to re-establish their research career following time back in professional practice

Funding and support

- 2-5 years (and can be taken at between 50 and 100% WTE)
- funding for salary, research assistance (eg doctoral researcher), research costs and training and development costs, including £2000 per year conference related costs
- can apply for two sequential Fellowships up to a total of 8 years

Practice Time: between 20% and 40% of the award time **must** be dedicated to development of the awardee's practice or policy role, which will be funded through the fellowship

Launches annually in March/April

Any Questions?



Application and Assessment Process



Assessment Process



Hints and tips for applicants



A strong application (Person, Project, Place/Training, PPIE)

- Is made by a candidate with the requisite experience and aspirations as 'Practitioner-academic' to lead and undertake the project, and to benefit from the opportunities it will provide
- Is developed from conception with the support of suitably experienced academic supervisors and advisors
- Is informed by appropriate patient/service user and public involvement and engagement
- Proposes a project that:
 - serves as an excellent vehicle for the personal development of the candidate
 - has good potential to make a positive impact on care and/or health
- Includes a bespoke training and development plan that is tailored to the needs of the candidate and the project
- Articulates strong support for the candidate, their career development, and the project by the hosting organisation(s), which must be well placed to provide it.

Doctoral Supervision

- Core supervision to be based at your host/partner HEI.
- Members of the supervisor team can be based at other HEIs.
- Ensure appropriate expertise across field and methodologies you will be training in. Especially supervision in methodological, qualitative, and statistical support.
- How many is too many?
 - Needs to be clear why you need the range and number of supervisors proposed.
 - Who will really be supervising you?
 - How much organising will you need to do if you have a large/disparate group of supervisors?

Pre-application advice

- **Know the process and the remit:**

- ✓ Look at the website
- ✓ Read the guidance notes, NIHR Chairs reports and NIHR blogs
- ✓ Contact the NIHR Academy with any queries
- ✓ Talk to the NIHR Research Support Service (RSS)
- ✓ Don't add PPIE as an afterthought!

- **Know your audience:**

- ✓ Look up previous award holders, selection committee members, methodology experts

- **Talk, talk, talk before you submit:**

- ✓ Supervisors, current awards holders, senior academics, methodological experts, collaborators, mentors, finance office, colleagues etc.

Don't Panic! - Where to seek support and advice

For detailed advice on which opportunity best supports your background and future career aspirations contact the NIHR:

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/support/academy.htm>



For advice on the research you want to undertake, contact the NIHR Research Service Support (RSS):

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/support/research-design-service.htm>



For wider LA based peer support, join our online network

<https://future.nhs.uk/LocalAuthorityHealthCareResearch>



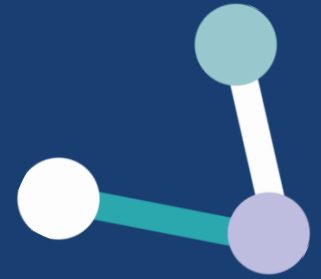
A screenshot of a web page titled "Developing Local Authority Researchers". The page features a header with a dropdown menu, a main image of an older woman and a younger woman, and a sidebar with navigation links: "Members' Directory", "Discussion Forum", "NIHR", and "Useful Documents - Additions Welcome!". The main content area includes a description of the workspace, an email address, and a disclaimer. A "News" section at the bottom shows a "NOW OPEN" announcement for a post-doc scheme.

Additional Resources

- **learn more about the programmes and opportunities available on the NIHR website** https://www.nihr.ac.uk/academy_or_e-mail_academy-awards@nihr.ac.uk
- **learn more about the LAAF Programme and LA SPARC via** <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/funding-programmes/nihr-local-authority-academic-fellowship-programme-and-associated-opportunities.htm>
- **NIHR LA SPARC awardee Case Study – Hannah Cann** <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/case-studies/undertaking-a-career-development-short-placement-as-a-social-care-professional/31537>
- **NIHR PLAF awardee Case Study – Charlotte Ashworth** <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/about-us/our-impact/making-a-difference-stories.htm?postid=29631>
- **NIHR PLAF Chairs Report -** <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/nihr-plaf-chairs-report-round-2/32314>
- **NIHR webinars** https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIa1oeIW_zJ_yJGZI7djq7-OOTWPGY_O4

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Any Questions?

