Primary Care In-Practice Research Apprenticeships 2025-26

The **Primary Care Research Centre** at the University of Southampton, in collaboration with **Hampshire and IOW NHS Trust,** is delighted to offer a Primary Care in-Practice Research Apprenticeship Scheme.

Who is this aimed at?

Are you a GP, Practice Nurse, Pharmacist or other Primary or Secondary Care Health Professional in Wessex interested in Primary Care research? Are you working in a research practice and would like to learn more about research design or other aspects of the research process?

What is involved?

You would be invited to join a piece of funded research, to shadow the team and get involved in aspects of the research, e.g. looking at data, conducting interviews, analysing interview data, developing study materials and outputs.

You will also have access to mentoring in primary care research to help you develop and pursue research ideas.

What time and funding is available?

Each project will vary and working arrangements will be organised with the project team and according to your availability and the project tasks. There are 5 apprenticeships of £1000-£2000 each, depending on time available, which will run until 31 March 2026.

Where will it lead?

If you enjoy primary care research and would like to pursue this further, we would support you in seeking funding for a subsequent fellowship.

Can I reapply in subsequent years?

Participants who have previously taken part in the apprenticeship scheme can reapply in subsequent years – please outline in your covering letter what you have gained so far and what you anticipate will be the benefits of further funding.

How do I apply?

Apply by Friday 12th September providing the following to Professor Kay Wang kay.wang@soton.ac.uk and Jo Kelly (Research Operations Manager) j.kelly@soton.ac.uk (please copy both into the email).

Short CV and covering letter (max 350 words) explaining:

- why you want to apply
- how you think the Primary Care In-Practice Research Apprenticeships will benefit you
- which research area you are most interested in (see below)
- If you plan to do the apprenticeship in work hours please include a covering letter from your line manager.

Please take a look at the **Primary Care website** to learn more about our research and who to contact. Examples of projects apprentices could be involved in:

Chief Investigator	Project title	Project description and involvement
Mark Lown m.lown@soton.ac.uk	**Afloat**	An NIHR funded RCT of doxycycline vs placebo for older adults with uncomplicated LRTI
Merlin Willcox M.L.Willcox@soton.ac.uk	**UPPEUS-Q**	Understanding Patient/ Practitioner Experience in having Ureteric Stents – Qualitative Study – involvement in collection and analysis of qualitative data.
Merlin Willcox M.L.Willcox@soton.ac.uk	**OPTIMAP**	The project aims to improve reporting, review and response to deaths of mothers and babies in Ethiopia, Ghana and Uganda, and to evaluate the effect of doing this on death rates of babies.
Miriam Santer M.Santer@soton.ac.uk	**Recurrent UTI**	Scoping of available online resource materials for patients
Kay Wang kay.wang@soton.ac.uk	**DEFINE**	This is a programme of research to develop and evaluate an online FeNO-guided asthma management intervention in primary care. We have almost finished follow-up data collection recently finished recruitment for a large randomised controlled trial comparing our intervention with usual care. There will be opportunities to assist with follow-up data collection and interpretation, and learn about statistical analysis, data interpretation and reporting of trial findings.
Kay Wang kay.wang@soton.ac.uk	**IMPACT**	Scoping review to explore the impact of multimorbidity on people with asthma.
Hajira Dambha-Miller h.dambha-miller@soton.ac.uk	**Cluster-AIM**	NIHR funded project using artificial intelligence and big data to identify clusters of disease in people with multimorbidity.
Leanne Morrison L.Morrison@soton.ac.uk	**Health and social care need in multimorbidity**	This project aims to develop and test a brief intervention enabling practitioners to use a multimorbidity social care need profile and address trajectories toward increasing social care need. This will involve a behavioural analysis to map psychosocial and behavioural factors likely to influence use of the intervention, and qualitative interviews/community engagement to examine engagement with prototype intervention components.
Kate Greenwell K.Greenwell@soton.ac.uk	**Couples' experiences of low back pain**	This study will involve: (1) scoping review of couples-focused interventions for low back pain; and (2) a qualitative interview study with people with low back pain and their partners. You will have the opportunity to help with conducting the scoping review.
Kate Greenwell K.Greenwell@soton.ac.uk	**Supporting carers in primary care**	Systematic review of Primary Care interventions to support carers. You will have the opportunity to help with database searches, screening, and data extraction.
Kate Greenwell K.Greenwell@soton.ac.uk	**INDIGO**	Development of carer and health professional training interventions to support carers to administer intranasal pain/agitation medication to people at end-of-life at home. There will be opportunities to be involved in the recruitment of health professionals and to carry out qualitative interviews with this group.

Helen Atherton h.atherton@soton.ac.uk	**GP-SUS**	This study is a large qualitative investigation of access to General Practice. The study has completed but we have interview data from patients that we wish to do further analysis on, so there would be the opportunity to learn about qualitative analysis and take part in some analysis.
Sara McKelvie s.mckelvie@soton.ac.uk	**709 - Community Alternatives to aCute Hospitalisation for Older People who have Fallen | University of Southampton**	An NIHR SPCR study investigating the difference in community assessments for older people after a non-injurious fall. There is a literature review and qualitative interview study. For this project you will be involved in the study project steering group to provide clinical context. You will be involved in the literature review analysing context-mechanism-outcomes from existing research studies. There is also an opportunity to gain experience in thematic analysis of qualitative data.
Cathy Price c.m.price@soton.ac.uk	Widening Access to Pain Care	Pain is very much an under-served speciality in clinical research. This is despite the opioid crisis and numerous bodies calling for its prioritisation. Part of this is its complexity and methodologies are under-developed to research chronic pain. Chronic pain is also however, sadly stigmatised and it is hard for people to raise their voices and demand better care. I have two scoping reviews centred around inequalities and access to pain care, a mapping exercise of community-based interventions to address these and a realist review of the community -based interventions. I would orientate your involvement according to your skills and how you wish to further develop

The Southampton Primary Care Research Centre (PCRC)

PCRC is one of the world's leading primary care centres of research excellence, offering a spectrum of expertise in methodologies and a broad range of topic areas. In the 2021 REF we achieved the highest rating in our unit of assessment for outputs with a Grade Point Average of 3.71 and 94% considered as 'internationally excellent' or 'world leading'.

PCRC is part of the School of Primary Care, Population Sciences and Medical Education in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Southampton, giving us close links with Public Health, Health Psychology, Southampton NIHR Biomedical Research Centre in Nutrition and Respiratory Medicine, the Faculty of Health Sciences, Southampton Statistical Sciences Research Institute, and Computing Sciences within the University.

Our research provides new evidence to inform key challenges in primary care. We have five broad themes that reflect key areas of interest:

Diagnosis and prognosis

Work in this theme includes prospective observational studies, routine data studies, qualitative studies, diagnostic studies and randomised controlled trials that aim to improve the management of infections, asthma and COPD, mental health problems, atrial fibrillation and cancer.

Healthcare communication

Research in this theme aims to improve patient outcomes by optimising healthcare access and interactions. For interactions this includes developing tools to enhance empathy and positive messages, evaluating agenda-setting within consultations and detailed conversation analysis of video- and audio-recorded consultations to improve communication. For access, this includes evaluating digital routes of access to general practice and alternatives to the face-to-face consultation.

Improving use of medicines

Research in this area includes providing evidence on the safe and effective use of conventional and alternative medicines for common conditions managed in primary care. Research methods employed include database and observational studies describing medicine use and associated outcomes, qualitative studies of patient and prescriber perspectives, and trials evaluating effectiveness of medicines and optimal use including deprescribing where appropriate.

A key focus has been tackling the major public health threat of antibiotic resistance by providing evidence to support the better use of antibiotics and alternative treatments for infections.

Supporting self-management

Research in this theme addresses the NHS Long Term Plan's commitment to improving supported self-management. Studies in this area cover a range of content areas, developing and testing interventions addressing: lifestyle, mental health, emotional distress, cancer-related distress and cancer survivorship, low back pain, dizziness, asthma, COPD, respiratory infection, IBS, eczema, acne, hypertension, and weight management. It builds on our close links with Psychology and international reputation for developing and evaluating digital interventions.

Big data in Health Group

Our groups research uses large volumes of complex, heterogeneous, multi-dimensional and often unstructured dataset from different sources. They aim to understand patterns, trends, and associations of diseases to inform preventive action.