

Supporting applied health and social
care research training and development
across **Greater Manchester**



BUILDING CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY IN HEALTH RESEARCH

Through our Research Internships and Pre-doctoral Fellowships, we invest in people to support and develop research skills, ideas, and initiatives within the Greater Manchester workforce.

We work with local partner organisations, other parts of the NIHR infrastructure and academic institutions to build capacity and capability in applied health and social care research and evaluation.

We do this by:

- Funding, supporting and developing health and social care professionals
- Supporting and developing research
- Developing and sustaining capacity building partnerships across the Greater Manchester NIHR infrastructure, the health and care sector.
- Providing health research and implementation learning opportunities

What is capacity building?
Capacity building refers to the process of developing and strengthening the skills, processes and resources that organisations and individuals need to adapt and thrive in our fast-changing world.

We have supported **35** Internships **25** Pre-doctoral Fellowships

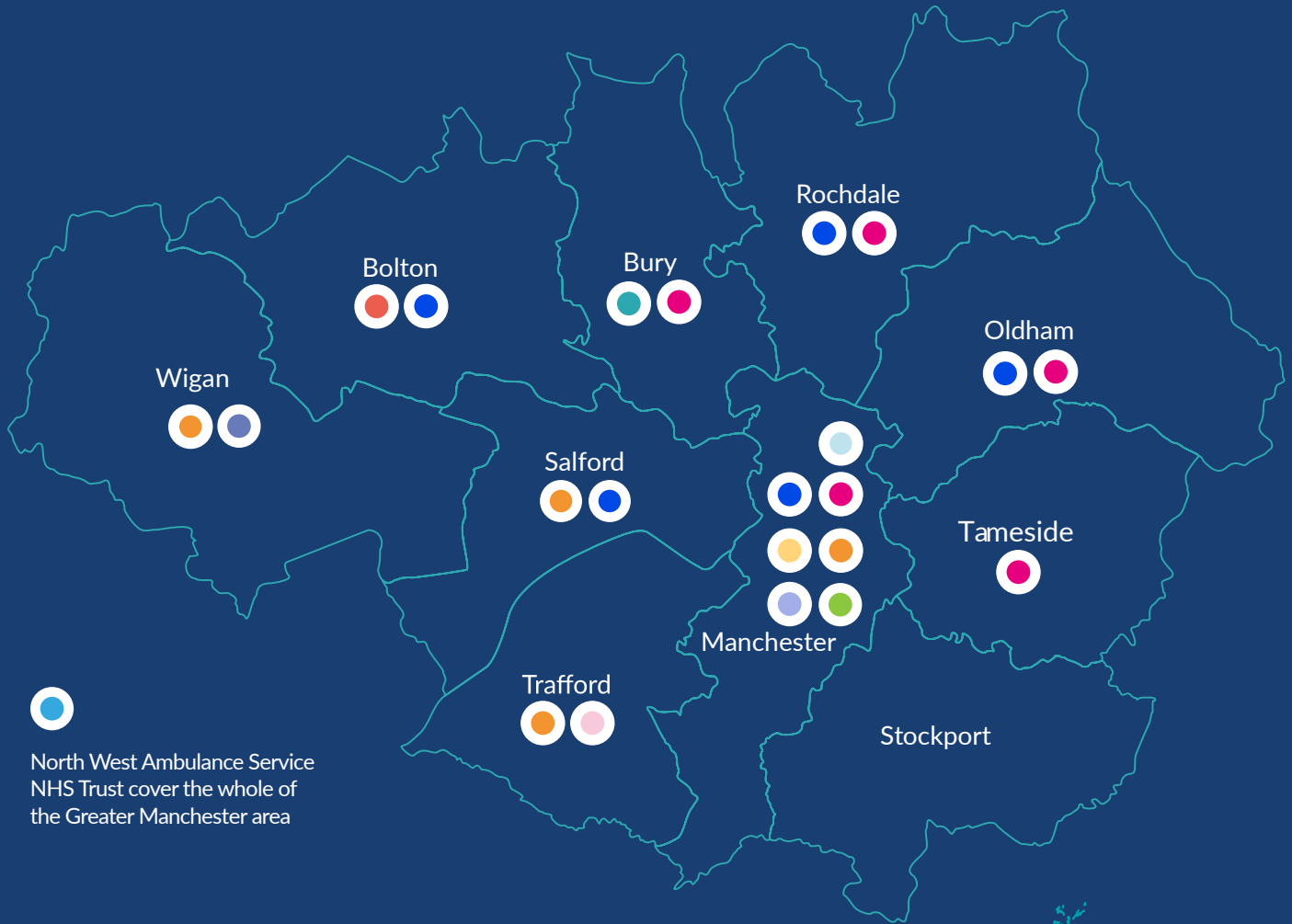
Professionals we support come from across the health and social care system



Key: Intern (orange circle) Pre-doc (teal circle)

*Six ARC-GM Interns were also successful in securing a place on the ARC-GM Pre-doctoral Fellowship

Supporting the development of health and care professionals across Greater Manchester



-  BHA for Equality in Health and Social Care
-  Bolton NHS Foundation Trust
-  Bury Council
-  Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust
-  Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust
-  Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust
-  North West Genomic Medicine Service Alliance
-  North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust
-  Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust
-  Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust
-  The Christie NHS Foundation Trust
-  Trafford Council



OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO HEALTH AND CARE PROFESSIONALS IN GREATER MANCHESTER

We are particularly interested in supporting professional backgrounds where there is a greater need for research infrastructure, including Nursing, Midwifery, Allied Health Professions, Social Care and Public Health.

[Health and Care Professional Internships](#)

Our Internships, supported by The University of Manchester, are entry-level opportunities for professionals from a variety of backgrounds to explore applied health and care research. They are designed to be flexible to suit each Research Intern's needs, whilst also including elements of structured training and the opportunity to contribute to research activity.

"Monthly Intern meetings with peers were very supportive, and fantastic webinars by the NIHR ARC-GM team all contributed to my learning and provided me with a great foundation for research opportunities for the future."

Research Internships - What's involved?

- Aimed at health and care professionals who have an interest in exploring a research career combined with their current professional role and who may benefit from undertaking postgraduate research study.
- 30 days (or 225 hours), to be used flexibly over 12 months to suit the needs of the Intern's current role and work life balance.
- Interns are matched with an academic supervisor within NIHR ARC-GM and the topic for each Internship is aligned to at least one of our research themes.

Why do it?

- Enhance research knowledge and skills through first-hand, supervised experience of applied health research.
- Offers a training budget and the potential to undertake a fully-funded Masters level research module.
- Explore opportunities for postgraduate study in research.

[Pre-doctoral Fellowships](#)

Our Pre-doctoral Fellowship Programme, also supported by The University of Manchester, provides research training awards for health and social care professionals working in Greater Manchester who wish to develop their career by combining health and social care practice and development with applied research and research leadership. These awards are intended to provide those wishing to apply for a PhD in the future dedicated time to develop their doctoral application.

Pre-doctoral Fellowships – What's involved?

- Aimed at those who aspire to undertake PhD level study.
- The programme is tailored to suit the commitments and timescales of applicants, normally over at least 12 months.
- Funded research time, academic supervision and excellent training opportunities to prepare an application for submission to an NIHR or similar doctoral fellowship opportunity.

Why do it?

- Provides dedicated time to develop a PhD proposal.
- Undertake training and get research experience that will help you to lead your own projects in future.

Fellowships and Internships are available to those from Nursing, Midwifery, Allied Health Professions, Social Care, Public Health, Commissioning and Policy backgrounds.

We welcome applications from all sections of the community and are committed to creating an environment where diversity is celebrated and everyone is treated fairly, regardless of sex, gender identity, disability, ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital or transgender status, age, or nationality.

"In order to progress as a senior nursing clinician, more research focus was essential. Having spent time with many medics who are researchers, I really was unsure whether research was for me. I was made aware of the NIHR ARC-GM Internship, and it seemed to be the perfect way to get some exposure and insight into the world of research."

IN THEIR WORDS: RESEARCH INTERNS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES

Kieran Potts

Community Specialist Paramedic
End of Life Care Lead
North West Ambulance Service NHS Trust



I had been in discussions with colleagues about furthering my research career and had been encouraged to consider Pre-doctoral level support. Having applied for the Pre-doctoral Fellowship, I recognised that I needed to refine my future doctoral submission and I was pleased to have been offered the opportunity to undertake a Research Internship to focus on this.

The Research Internship helped me consider the next steps for my research career, which has in turn aided the development of my relationship with the internal Research and Development Team within my Trust.

I had great support from my line manager and those around me which allowed me to immerse myself in the Research Internship and to explore my doctoral aspirations. I would encourage others to consider an Internship as it provides exposure and development opportunities to further their research careers. It's a safe space to develop and grow, with fantastic support which can be tailored to your experiences and aspirations.

"I personally believe that if we are to ever truly understand and improve the care we deliver, we need to commit to undertaking research within the healthcare sector; research provides an important opportunity for us all as Clinical Academics to really understand our past, present, and future."

Kieran's key benefits

- Development of knowledge
- Networking
- Relationship building



"Research is the cornerstone of developing and improving future healthcare. It enables us to pursue better outcomes but also improves the patient experience and journey."

Loraine Gillespie

Head of Nutrition & Dietetics
The Christie NHS Foundation Trust

Prior to the Research Internship I had some experience as a research dietitian on a number of studies. This gave me an insight into the research process and a good understanding of the Good Clinical Practice through training and experience. The final catalyst for starting my research journey was following a pilot service improvement and evaluation on an ambulatory enteral feeding care model for head and neck patients. Seeing the positive impact on clinical outcomes and patient experience has given me the drive and passion to embed more research into my role and into the dietetic service.

Since the Research Internship I have gained a thirst for knowledge and develop research skills by completing the Critical Appraisal and Evidence Synthesis MRes module and I am now completing another module on qualitative analysis. This has given me more confidence to put my skills into practice by creating research skills sessions for my team. I am looking forward to developing and leading my own research projects. I would encourage anyone thinking about applying for a Research Internship to do it! It is a fabulous opportunity to gain insight into the world of research. At the start of your Research Internship, you meet with your supervisor and develop a plan of what you want to achieve over the 12 months. We are all at different stages of the research journey and so being able to have a Research Internship specific to your learning needs is invaluable.

Loraine's key benefits

- Exposure to a wider perspective and experience in the research community with a range of opportunities
- Attending the Rapid Evidence Synthesis meetings (part of the NIHR ARC-GM Evaluation Theme) and supporting systematic reviews being undertaken by Pre-doctoral Fellows and PhD students
- Networking with other Interns

Harry Wallace
Commissioning Manager
Trafford Council



I already had a keen interest in research having previously worked in that area before moving into a commissioning role. I wanted to connect with researchers in the region, improve and expand on my research skills and gain a better understanding of potential career opportunities in research and/or further opportunities to pursue research alongside my career.

I went into the programme with very broad ideas around potential research and career opportunities. To get the best out of the Research Internship I think you need to make some decisions on what you want to do, which can be challenging to define.

Since completing the Research Internship I have begun the Public Health Registrar training programme. The Internship was a great introductory step to starting this. My first year has consisted mainly of completing a Masters in Public Health, so having previous access to public health modules of research meant I already had an idea of how to critically analyse papers and understand research methods. In addition, the training programme presents further opportunities to work with researchers at academic institutions and the NIHR, so having an initial knowledge of how that world works is useful.

“If you work in healthcare, the Research Internship provides a great insight into how research is conducted and how it informs practice, which is really valuable. Whether you want to collaborate with researchers, or become one yourself, the Internship provides a great first step towards that.”

Harry's key benefits

- Encourages you to refine and develop ideas for research and how to conduct research
- Connecting with a wide range of experts in different fields
- Provides training opportunities, access to research modules, links to Cochrane online training
- Opportunities to learn from experts and those undertaking a PhD in their research methods

“Research is vital in improving guidelines, treatment outcomes, reducing hospitalisation, mortality and improving the care system in various ways.”

Rose's key benefits

- The one-to-one supervision
- The research design module

Rose Inyama
Senior Clinical Pharmacist
Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust



My passion to become a clinical academic practitioner is what initially sparked my interest in being involved in research and applying for the Research Internship with NIHR ARC-GM.

While my experience so far hasn't directly impacted my day job, I am confident it will bring many benefits once I complete the Research Internship and start working towards a Pre-doctoral Fellowship.

I would encourage others considering applying for future Research Intern opportunities with NIHR ARC-GM to make the most of the expertise and guidance of the supervisors. They will help you work towards addressing your learning needs and developing your research experience.

If I could go back to the start of the Research Internship and give myself one piece of advice for the challenge ahead, it would be to prioritise one thing that I would like to get out of the Research Internship, rather than trying to achieve several unrealistic goals.



IN THEIR WORDS: PRE-DOCTORAL FELLOWS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES

Susy Pramod

Lead Nurse Tissue Viability
The Christie NHS Foundation Trust



I applied for the Pre-doctoral Fellowship programme as I wanted to develop my methodological skills in applied health research, with application to areas of decision uncertainty in wound care. The programme has given me an opportunity to look at evidence critically while implementing it in practice. My thought process has shifted from wanting to do something immediately to needing proof to change practice.

During my Fellowship, I conducted a survey of UK nurses' experiences caring for people with malignant fungating wounds - which is an extremely challenging wound.

I also undertook a scoping review to map the evidence of care and management of these types of wounds, the experience of patients living with it, and the experience of nurses providing care. This has provided me with evidence-based knowledge to utilise in my profession, which I am enthusiastic about. Abstracts from my survey were accepted by conferences locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. NIHR ARC-GM's Pre-doctoral Fellowship is an excellent programme if you enjoy research, want to pursue a doctorate, or want to adopt evidence-based practice in the workplace.

"This type of Fellowship programme is vital because it allows you to investigate a problem in your field of practice, which will be extremely beneficial to the care we deliver to the Greater Manchester community and beyond."

Susy's key benefits

- Opportunity to understand research in-depth
- Research modules enhance your knowledge in research designs and other research elements

"I could not see how research in practice would come about without these types of opportunities, especially for those who, like me, are coming at it from a more senior clinical perspective. The possibility of doing it in spare time is not feasible for me, nor dropping my paid time."

Andrew Sharpe

Advanced Podiatrist
Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust



The NIHR ARC-GM Pre-doctoral Fellowship appealed to me as it offered a combination of the protection of time coupled with the right organisation and people to help me further progress my research interest.

There have been challenges around getting a balance between clinical, academic and personal time but catching up with other Fellows and staying in communication with direct supervisors in both academic and clinical settings help to time manage.

The skills I've gained from the Fellowship have had a positive impact within my job. I've found that having time to look at the evidence that underpins clinical practice is really quite empowering. It also has you questioning clinical practice too and I have started to be more critical again in my approach to treatment modalities. Also, being able to develop our teams' research capabilities is exciting.

I would tell anyone considering a Pre-doctoral Fellowship to do it. There is a Chinese Proverb I once heard that has stayed in my mind throughout this process: "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second-best time is now." I wish I had started this process five years ago, I'm just glad I have now.

It can feel daunting but I take each aspect as a challenge. Before I knew it, I was successful in the Fellowship award and moving toward my goal of PhD!

Andrew's key benefits

- The release of time to be able to focus on research
- The support from my academic supervisors and the NIHR ARC-GM team

Laura McGarrigle
Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist
Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust



Prior to being accepted as a Pre-doctoral Fellow, I had wonderful support from NIHR ARC-GM during my Research Internship and was therefore keen to continue my research learning journey within this supportive environment.

Since starting the programme, my confidence has increased in my current role and I feel like I can take on new challenges such as chairing groups, applying to be on special interest group boards and also supporting others to write up their work. I have felt better able to support others within my team and within my Trust to apply for fellowships or write and submit their work to conferences too.

Balancing multiple projects at once has been tricky at times, but having a supportive supervision team around me has helped to plan and prioritise work. They have also given me the confidence to believe I can do it!

My advice to others thinking about the Pre-doctoral Fellowship is to consider how to use your training budget. It's important to access good quality formal training but also consider the benefits of opportunities like attending conferences. The reflection and discussions that can come from events like these have taught me a lot, helped me make new contacts and network alongside showing me how research can be led.

"Pre-doctoral Fellowships bring together the established researchers of the present and the potential researchers of the future - this is so valuable in helping people "see what they can be". They also support a greater connection between clinicians and researchers - this works both ways in feeding clinical thoughts into a research environment but also supporting the clinicians with the knowledge around research practices."

Laura's key benefits

- Dedicated time to spend away from clinical demands to focus on your ideas and participating in training/research
- Support from within NIHR ARC-GM for whatever challenges I have faced

"Fellowships provide clinicians with an interest in research to develop their skills and research ideas. This provides clinicians with the support, expertise and time to be research engaged. We know this has associations with improved healthcare pathways, patient experience of care, job satisfaction, and staff retention - all of which I have experienced in being a holder of an NIHR ARC-GM Pre-doctoral Fellowship."

Sophie's key benefits

- Opportunity to network outside of your usual circles
- Peer supervision with other Fellows which allows a sense of community and shared endeavour in our early research careers
- Provides time alongside clinical practice to develop a personalised research development plan

Sophie Chalmers
Respiratory Speech and Language Therapist
Manchester Airways Service, Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust



There have been many benefits to taking part in the Pre-doctoral Fellowship programme. Crucially, it provides time, alongside clinical practice, to develop a personalised research development plan specific to your needs. This could be public and community involvement and engagement experience, early evaluation, literature reviews, formal research training, shadowing research teams, or a combination to develop research exposure and skill.

Having time to explore research in a way that suits me as an individual has allowed me to become more confident talking about research and the literature in its application to practice. I am more confident discussing the existing evidence with patients to inform their treatment options and decisions. When we have an in-depth knowledge in one area, we can also acknowledge areas which are not our expertise or where 'we don't have all the answers', and this ability is critical in clinical practice.

As a clinician, it is always difficult making the transition into research where the pace is different; it requires a different 'headspace' and critical approach to robustly develop an important question of focus. To overcome and learn from these challenges, supervision from experienced researchers who have perhaps had a similar journey or experience is invaluable. I learnt to lean into these experiences and understand this is also a part of research skill development.

My advice to anyone considering a Fellowship is to think about your end goal after the Pre-doc, how it may propel you to the next stage in your clinical and research career, and what skills and development needs will facilitate this.

Laura Kinsey

Lead Dietitian Manchester Adult Cystic Fibrosis Centre
Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust



The NIHR ARC-GM Pre-doctoral Fellowship has been immensely advantageous in enhancing my research skills and boosting my confidence. The protected time allowed me to complete Masters level training, conduct research, present at an international conference, and carry out applied research. I have written a protocol for a systematic review published on PROSPERO and I am now carrying out this systematic review. My biggest achievement has been writing an application for a PhD fellowship and I was successful in getting through to the final ten applicants.

The regular meetings with the NIHR ARC-GM peers, supervisors and the Capacity Building team provided an opportunity to discuss any queries in a supportive environment with peers and mentors. I have accomplished things that would have been impossible within my usual job role. I have been able to attend research meetings regularly which has allowed me to connect with other research-active individuals within my Trust and beyond. Furthermore, I've applied for a PhD Fellowship. I have been overwhelmed by the support that everyone within the NIHR ARC-GM programme has offered.

The training I have completed as part of my Fellowship has helped me to appraise evidence more critically before I apply it to clinical practice. The knowledge I have gained about public and community involvement and engagement in research applies to clinical service development. I now have a patient group established to support my research and advise on service development. As a team leader I was keen to promote research and this Fellowship has offered me the knowledge and confidence to support students and members of the team to carry out research.

"I would strongly encourage individuals with a passion for research to apply for these Fellowships. In my personal experience, it has been one of the best decisions I have made in my career so far. Despite my long-standing interest in research and having worked in the NHS for almost two decades, this was the first time I had the opportunity to dedicate protected time to enhance my research skills."

Laura's key benefits

- Enhancing research skills
- Boosting confidence
- Supportive peers and supervisors
- Protected time to complete training and conduct research and apply for a PhD

NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration
Greater Manchester

Get in touch to find out more



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June 2024.

