

<b>Role Profile:</b>	
<b>Role description:</b>	Lived Experience Research Involvement Role
<b>Department:</b>	Mental Health Policy Research Unit, UCL
<b>Non-staff role:</b>	Non-salaried; involvement reimbursement arrangements; not paid employment
<b>Responsible to:</b>	Dr Andrew Grundy (LER Lead) and Mr Patrick Nyikavaranda (LER Co-lead).

20/02/2024

### Role context:

We involve people with lived experience within our mental health research team, to bring a lived experience perspective of mental distress and of using mental health services, or of supporting a family member/friend, to the **Mental Health Policy Research Unit (MHPRU)**.

A new MHPRU is being established in January 2024 and will run until December 2028. It is funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) and is commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Care to conduct research to inform mental health policy in England.

These *lived experience research involvement roles* are part of the Lived Experience Research team within the MHPRU. We typically refer to all members of this team as lived experience researchers (LERs). We recognise that active and meaningful ‘involvement’ in the research process requires working alongside other researchers to plan projects, conducting research activities, and being part of the research team.

These are ‘involvement’ roles, which means people are recruited because of their personal experiences of mental health challenges and mental health services, and their ability to make use of those insights in the research process, and not for their ‘capacity to work’/employability.

Participation in involvement with us is not employment. All activities are by choice, and the amount and type of involvement members undertake can be flexible to meet individuals’ available time, current wellbeing, other commitments, and interest in the project. People can withdraw their involvement at any time.

The whole Lived Experience Research team consists of 12 non-staff lived experience research involvement roles, two salaried lived experience researcher roles, and two LER co-leads. All LERs are part of the wider team of researchers at the MHPRU.

Roles will be offered for the full programme, subject to a mutual annual review, and all the roles will be disbanded at the end of this MHPRU. Again, people can choose to withdraw their involvement at any point during the programme.

### Role purpose:

The main purpose of the lived experience research involvement role is to ensure that a lived experience perspective is central to all the research projects that the MHPRU is commissioned to run. The role provides opportunities for involvement on a range of working groups for the different research projects.

### **Main responsibilities:**

- Bringing a lived experience perspective - of mental distress and of using mental health services or supporting a family member/friend - to the MHPRU's programme of research, with appropriate training and support from the LER team co-leads.
- Regular engagement with monthly discussions of the LER team (via attendance at the monthly meeting (online) or keeping up with minutes and contributing feedback where this is not possible). These meetings provide opportunities to discuss upcoming projects, specific issues arising from ongoing project working groups, and LER involvement in the MHPRU more widely.
- Involvement in one or more project working groups at any one time, collaborating with researchers, academics, clinicians, and policymakers from a range of backgrounds. Involvement is based on people's relevant lived experience, time, current wellbeing, and interests. These project working groups provide opportunities to be involved in designing and doing research studies from an experiential perspective, in collaboration with other members of the team, such as:
  - Developing study protocols
  - Producing study materials
  - Reviewing the published literature (including screening and data extraction)
  - Analysing data
  - Synthesising research findings
  - Contributing to research publications
  - Disseminating research (i.e. at conferences/events)

There is potentially also opportunity for involvement in:

- Participant recruitment
  - Collecting data (e.g., interviewing participants)
  - Co-facilitating stakeholder workshops
  - Evaluating the impact of lived experience research contributions
- Opportunities to co-write Lived Experience Commentaries of approximately 300 words, reflecting on the MHPRU's publications/reports from an experiential perspective.

### **Training and Support:**

These are training and development roles that aim to take people beyond research advisory roles and to develop study design and research skills from an experiential perspective. They also provide opportunities to progress towards being an independent lived experience researcher, should people wish to do so.

All LERs will be offered the opportunity to take part in the MHPRU's new rolling research methods and skills training programme, specifically tailored to the needs of people engaging with research from experiential perspectives. LERs will also receive training with the wider team.

Those in LER involvement roles will be offered regular one-to-one support and mentorship discussions, to discuss any issues with the role.

**Reimbursement:**

These *lived experience involvement research roles* allow people to claim reimbursement for their time, and related expenses. Reimbursements are offered at NIHR recommended rates: [Payment guidance for researchers and professionals | NIHR](#). If you are offered a role and you are in receipt of benefits, we will provide you with the details of the NIHR’s Central Commissioning Facility’s free, confidential benefits advice service which you can consult before deciding whether to take up this involvement opportunity.

**Person specification:**

Criteria:	Essential (E) or Desirable (D)
<b>Experience, Knowledge, Expertise</b>	
Personal experiences of mental health challenges, or of supporting a family member/close friend	E
Knowledge and experience of NHS mental health services, other than primary care (GP)	E
Experience of using lived experience insights in conducting research (e.g., in doing literature reviews, or data collection, and/or data analysis)	D
Knowledge of different kinds of research methods from an experiential perspective.	D
Experience of involvement in a Lived Experience Advisory Panel, or similar, for a research study.	D
<b>Personal Skills</b>	
Ability to work effectively as part of a team with people from diverse backgrounds and experiences	E
Ability to listen and be respectful and civil towards the views of others	E
Ability to recognise the limits of one’s experience, and the need to reflect upon and learn from other people’s experiences	E
Ability to complete tasks in a timely way, reply to emails, and to attend agreed meetings on time, or communicate difficulties	E
Ability to communicate views clearly, constructively and respecting a group’s Terms of Reference/ground-rules.	E
<b>Skills and capabilities</b>	
Able to use email	E
Able to use the main features of online video-conferencing platforms (e.g., Zoom/Teams)	E
A willingness to learn new IT skills, with training and support	D

**Contact:** If you have any questions about these roles, please email [andrew.grundy@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:andrew.grundy@ucl.ac.uk)