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| Details  |  |
| Job Title:  | **Research and Engagement Officer** |
| Department:  |  |
| Job Reports To:  |  |
| Location:  |  |
| Post Number: |  |
| Full time/ Part time: |  |
| Pay Point: |  |  | to |  |
| **Context** |
| This project is based within the Substance Misuse and Ageing Research Team (SMART) in the Institute of Applied Social Research. SMART is the only research group in the United Kingdom specialising in substance misuse in later life. We aim to reduce harm from later life substance use through high quality research. We are in the process of widening our programme of work to include people of any age. SMART is a collaborative working group consisting of researchers from a variety of disciplines including public health, social work and social care and Public and Expert by Experience Researchers (PEER’s). PEERs are people who have experienced alcohol or drug problems and play a vital role in ensuring that our research addresses the interests of our target population.This role will involve co-producing and leading research projects as well as strengthening the team’s public engagement work. The role-holder will be expected to work alongside research colleagues under the supervision of the Director of SMART. The post holder will be self-disciplined, an excellent communicator, and have a demonstrable ability to work as part of a team. |
| Key Elements (please tick as appropriate) |  |
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| 1. | This post has MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY | YES |  | NO | **X** |  |
| 2. | This job requires SAFEGUARDING | YES |  | NO | **X** |  |
| 3. | This is a KEY POST (i.e. must have nominated deputy) | YES |  | NO | **X** |  |

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| **Principal Accountabilities**1. Using expert knowledge of addictions acquired through a combination of lived and research experience, generate new ideas for research and contribute to the planning of SMART’s strategy for future years.
2. Use initiative, creativity and expert knowledge to develop ideas for generating income, identify sources of funding and contribute to the process of securing funds.
3. Identify and implement creative and flexible approaches to engaging people with addictions in research, including strategies to convey complex information in simplified form and develop solutions to overcome common challenges such as literacy problems and mistrust of researchers.
4. Act as a mentor, coach and role model to Public and Expert-by-Experience Researchers (PEERs) including giving supportive advice and guidance, co-delivering training, providing pastoral care, co-ordinating work and ensuring their contributions are maximised.
5. Create opportunities for knowledge exchange, maintain effective working relationships with internal and external stakeholders/cross-disciplinary communities and develop an external network of recovery organisations to build relationships for future activities.
6. Carry out literature reviews and collate and analyse a range of data from different sources accurately and methodically.
7. Carry out high quality quantitative and qualitative research into complex and sensitive issues, identifying and using the most appropriate techniques and managing day-to-day fieldwork.
8. Complying with research ethics/legal obligations, make autonomous decisions in relation to issues which commonly occur in the field (e.g. deciding when intoxication might be affecting prospective participant’s capacity to consent) and use initiative to prevent harm to participants (e.g. warning participants that they may be straying into topics such as a previously undetected offence which may require disclosure to the relevant authorities).
9. Lead small research projects and parts of larger research projects, taking responsibility for operational planning including independently planning, prioritising, organising and coordinating the work of self, Research Fellows and PEERs, organising and managing physical and financial resources, organising regular project advisory group meetings and monitoring progress against the plan,
10. Create systems to track progress and follow project recruitment rates and solve problems with recruitment/retention in light of experience to avoid major repercussions such as decreased study power or early termination.
11. Contribute to, and where appropriate, lead publications and other outputs including those targeted at the public, policy-makers and practitioners.
12. Present work to collaborators or others external to the University including communicating complex information such as conceptualisation of alcohol dependence as a disability.
13. Lead SMART’s Inclusion and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, taking responsibility for ensuring that SMART research takes account of age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, race and religion in design, undertaking and reporting, by providing advice and guidance to researchers and putting forward recommendations.
14. Carry out situational risk assessment and take independent decisions in relation to safety issues as they arise particularly when conducting research interviews in private dwellings where there may be increased risk either from participants or others who may be present, or environmental risks such as drug paraphernalia.
15. Use specialist/professional knowledge of situational risk assessment to improve the institute’s fieldworker safety and act as a lead/point of reference to other researchers and the University’s Health and Safety Team.
16. Using sound knowledge of factors which may reduce concentration and limit understanding during the informed consent process (e.g. chronic brain changes resulting from long-term drug or alcohol use), use skilled oral communication such as careful explanation of information and checking that this information has been taken in through clarification and repetition, and adapt information sheets to ensure prospective participants are not overwhelmed by unnecessarily lengthy, complex and inaccessible information.
17. Contribute to policy-focused activity relating to addictions.
18. Contribute to relevant teaching on undergraduate or postgraduate courses as a guest lecturer and act as joint supervisor for postgraduate students researching addictions or related issues (where possible and required).
19. Engage in Continuous Professional Development activities in order to keep knowledge base and skills up to date and develop further.
20. Show a flexible and efficient approach to the delivery of work within the team. The post holder may therefore be required to perform duties not specifically identified in the job profile that are in line with the general responsibilities of the post and relevant duties.
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| HERA Competencies |
| COMMUNICATION |
| The role holder receives, understands and conveys straightforward information in a clear and accurate manner both orally and in written communications. In addition, the role holder receives, understands and conveys information which needs careful explanation or interpretation to help others understand, taking into account what to communicate and how best to convey information to others. Also, the role holder receives, understands and conveys complex conceptual ideas or complex information which may be highly detailed, technical or specialist. |
| TEAM WORK AND MOTIVATION |
| The role holder is required to clarify the requirements; agree clear task objectives; organise and delegate work fairly according to individual abilities; help the team focus their efforts on the task in hand and motivate individual team members. In addition, the role holder is required to form and communicate a clear vision of what is to be achieved overall by a team; encourage individuals to contribute to this common goal to the best of their ability; create a sense of unity and common purpose. |
| LIAISON AND NETWORKING  |
| The role holder is required to carry out standard day to day liaison using existing procedures in order to ensure dissemination of information in the right format to the right people at the right time; build relationships and contacts to facilitate future exchange of information. The role holder is required to participate in networks within the institution or externally in order to influence events or decisions; undertake active collaboration to pursue a shared interest. The role holder is required to initiate, build or lead internal networks; maintain relationships over time; establish communication channels for self or others to use in order to influence events or decisions; undertake active collaboration to pursue a shared interest. The role holder is required to initiate, develop or lead networks which are external to the institution in order to ensure dissemination of information in the right format to the right people at the right time; build relationships and contacts to facilitate future exchange of information. |
| SERVICE DELIVERY |
| The role holder is required to deal with internal or external contacts who ask for service or require information; create a positive image of the institution by being responsive and prompt in responding to requests and referring the user to the right person if necessary. Contact is usually initiated by the customer and typically involves routine tasks with set standards or procedures. In addition, the role holder is required to deal with internal or external contacts where the service is usually initiated by the role holder, working within the institution's overall procedures or policies; AND OR understand and explore customer's needs; adapt the service accordingly to ensure the usefulness or appropriateness and quality of service (content, time, accuracy, level of information, cost). |
| DECISION MAKING PROCESSES |
| The role holder is required to take independent decisions which have a significant impact. The role holder is required to be party to some collaborative decisions; work with others to reach an optimal conclusion which have a significant impact. The role holder is required to provide advice or input to contribute to the decision making of others which have a significant impact. |
| PLANNING AND ORGANISING RESOURCES |
| The role holder is required to take responsibility for the operational planning and organisation of larger projects or an area of work; co-ordinate a number of teams or projects on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis; set performance standards and establish monitoring procedures to keep track of progress across these different aspects of work; provide input to longer term planning. |
| INITIATIVE AND PROBLEM SOLVING |
| The role holder is required to use initiative and creativity to resolve problems where the optimal solution may not be immediately apparent but has to be assessed by a process of reasoning, weighing up the pros and cons of different approaches; identify and assess practical options; break the problem down into component parts. The role holder is also required to resolve problems where there is a mass of information or diverse, partial and conflicting data, with a range of potential options available; apply creativity to devise varied solutions, approaching the problem from different perspectives. |
| ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH |
| The role holder is required to identify an appropriate existing method of analysis or investigation according to the data and objectives; recognise and interpret trends or patterns in data; identify or source additional information which could potentially help the investigation as the analysis progresses. The role holder is also required to analyse or research complex ideas, concepts or extensive data from different perspectives; work out how best to apply existing methodologies according to the overall context, objectives and expectations; identify the relationship between complex, interdependent factors. |
| SENSORY AND PHYSICAL DEMANDS |
| The role holder is required to carry out tasks at a level which would require either learning certain methods or routines or involve moderate physical effort. |
| WORK ENVIRONMENT |
| The Role Holder is required to work in an environment which is relatively stable and has little impact on the role holder or the way in which work is completed. For example, a stable office environment. |
| PASTORAL CARE AND WELFARE |
| The role holder is required to give advice on commonly occurring welfare issues or queries; follow standard welfare procedures for the institution; recognise when an individual should be referred elsewhere for professional help; respect confidentiality. In addition, the role holder is required to give support, guidance or pastoral care where standard procedures do not always exist; maintain confidentiality and build trust; judge when to listen, when to give advice or guidance and when to refer the individual for professional help; be fully aware of support networks for both themself and the individual. Also, the role holder is required to show sensitivity to those who may need help or, in extreme cases, are showing signs of obvious distress; initiate appropriate action by involving relevant people. |
| TEAM DEVELOPMENT |
| The role holder is required to advise or guide new starters working in the same role or unit on standard information or procedures. The role holder is required to train or guide others on specific tasks, issues or activities; give advice, guidance and feedback on the basis of their own knowledge or experience; deliver training. The role holder is required to carry out training or development activity according to the needs of the individual or group; identify current capabilities and future needs; define the performance standards required; identify appropriate developmental activity; assess the application of learning; give feedback and guidance on overall performance. |
| TEACHING AND LEARNING SUPPORT |
| The role holder is required to provide standard information or deliver teaching or training to introduce students or others who are new to the area to standard information or procedures. The role holder is required to provide standard information or deliver teaching or training to teach, train or facilitate development activities for individuals or groups on certain aspects or subjects within a particular academic discipline or specialism; monitor performance giving feedback and guidance; act as a catalyst for further development or learning. |
| KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE |
| The role holder is required to apply a breadth or depth of experience showing full working knowledge and proficiency of their own area of expertise; act as a point of reference to others; demonstrate continuous specialist development, acquiring and refining skills and expertise in new or related areas through undertaking and encouraging internal or external development activity. |

**Person Specification**

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|  | **Essential Criteria** | **Desirable Criteria** | **Evidence****(**Indicate were evidence will be assessed from ) |
| **Qualifications**  | * Masters degree in a relevant subject or at least 4 years’ experience of research in the addictions field
 |  | * *Application Form*
* *Interview*
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| **Knowledge**  | * Expert knowledge of addictions and addictions stigma acquired through a combination of lived and research experience
* Experience-based knowledge of barriers and facilitators to engaging people with addictions in research
* Knowledge of addiction-specific ethical issues
* Knowledge of how to minimise legal risks to participants
* Experience-based knowledge of co-producing research with people with addictions
 | * Knowledge of issues relating to substance use and ageing
* Knowledge of trauma-informed approaches
* Knowledge of sampling methods for recruiting hidden populations of people (e.g. mothers who use drugs)
 | * *Application Form*
* *Interview*
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| **Experience** | * Lived experience of alcohol or other drug dependence
* At least 4 years of experience of conducting qualitative research with people with addictions
* Experience of maximising the contribution of the lived experience voice to research
* Experience of mentoring, providing pastoral support and delivering training
 | * Experience of engaging the general public in debates about addictions policy
* Experience of using research to influence policymaking
* Experience of managing research projects
 | * *Application Form*
* *Interview*
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| **Skills/abilities/competencies** | * Ability to tailor the consent process to the individual
* Ability to convey information through written means and oral communication to people with communication barriers such as literacy issues or alcohol/drug-related brain changes
* Ability to carry out research in line with a situated ethics approach, engaging in constant reflection of positioning and actions in the field
* Ability to manage ‘difficult’ interviews (e.g. when people are under the influence of alcohol/drugs)
* Ability to initiate appropriate responsive action to issues that may arise in interviews such as psychological distress and disclosures of illegal activity
* Ability to remain calm in stressful situations
* Ability to travel nationally, involving overnight stays
 | * Ability to conduct interviews that do not use any set questions (unstructured interviews)
* Ability to identify signs of intoxication outside of the more expected and common alcohol intoxication
 | * *Application Form*
* *Interview*
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| **Personal Attributes** | * Curious and open-minded
* Sensitive and compassionate
* Non-judgmental
* Collegial and collaborative
 |  | * *Interview*
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| Equality Statement |
| The University of Bedfordshire is fully committed to the principles of equality in all its actions. Members of the University’s community are expected to respect and value individuality, differences and diversity; and work with others in an inclusive and consultative manner. A commitment to equality of opportunity for all individuals irrespective of their age, belief, disability, gender, race, religion or sexual orientation is at the core of what we do and members of the community must actively promote a positive non-discriminatory work and learning environment for fellow staff and students. Employees should demonstrate an understanding of the University’s commitments to equality and diversity as an integral part of the university’s core values and be able to identify and challenge discrimination, harassment, prejudice and inappropriate behaviour.  |
| Health & Safety Statement |
| All employees are required to ensure that all duties and responsibilities are discharged in accordance with the University’s Health and Safety (H & S) at Work Policy. They should take reasonable care for their own H & S and that of others who may be affected by what they do or do not do. Staff should correctly use work items provided by the University, including personal protective equipment in accordance with training or instructions. |
| Environmental Statement |
| Employees must make proper use of any equipment and systems of work provided and take all reasonable steps to ensure that control measures are properly used. Employees must work with their Line Managers to ensure that an inventory is retained of all hazardous substances in the office that could be released into the environment. Employees are expected to identify operations that use significant amounts of energy, with a view to reducing consumption. This includes identifying operations that use resources, such as paper, and review the need for the current level of consumption, identifying savings where possible. Employees are expected to identify waste streams with a view to recycling and reuse, minimising office energy use in heating and lighting.  |
| Briefing |
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| **Nominated Deputies** (*if applicable)* |
| As a KEY POST at least one nominated deputy must be identified. The Job Holder must confirm that the Nominated Deputy (ies) receives a copy of, and is briefed on this Job Description.Name of Nominated Deputy: Signature: Date: (As the Nominated Deputy for this post, I confirm I have been briefed on the requirements of this Job)*If there are more nominated deputies, they should sign further copies of this Job Description.* |
| Amended by: |  | Dated: |  | Version: |  |
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