

Job Description

Job title	Principal Research Officer
Directorate	PEOPLE : Children and Adults
Division	Public Health
Range	MPR 6
Reports to	Senior Research Manager

Main purpose of the job:

Responsible for enabling the NIHR Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) Medway to implement its strategic objectives by supporting the development of research capacity and capability in the council. To synthesis existing research evidence, develop research projects, seek research funding and develop viable research proposals. This is essential to the prevention of ill health, health improvement and reducing health inequalities.

Responsible for providing expert advice and guidance on research methodologies, including the design, development, and administration of research studies and funding applications. To ensure research aligns with the priorities of the HDRC and Medway Council.

Liaise with stakeholders in a way that promotes the [One Medway Council Plan](#) and embeds our [values and behaviours](#).

Accountabilities and outcomes:

To deliver high quality research products including evidence syntheses, research skills training and development programmes and projects that align with research priorities and support the delivery of business objectives.

To develop and manage council led or co-led research studies and funding opportunities, ensuring the consent process is followed properly and identifying and reporting research-related risks so that research products are robust and of value to the business objectives of the council.

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Keep up to date with emerging developments in relation to public health research, gathering relevant information on national and local initiatives and legislation to enable good practice to be shared with senior officers, elected members and with partners agencies that could contribute to future project opportunities.

Build and maintain positive relationships at all levels, including with the public to promote the work of the HRDC and ensure the delivery of high-quality products and outcomes that align with council business objectives.

Lead and coordinate project proposals, and assisting with the development of the work, providing advice and support to ensure the successful implementation and completion within the given timescales.

Participate in council-wide staff education and development, designing and maintaining learning programmes and sessions and act as a mentor and resource for junior members of the team to meet individual and organisational learning needs with available resources and within specified timescales so that work activities benefit the council.

Keep abreast of relevant changes in legislation, good practice and policy, initiating changes to working practices as required to ensure that services can be effectively delivered.

At the discretion of the Senior Public Health Research Manager (HDRC), such other activities as may from time to time be agreed consistent with the nature of the job described above.

Key Corporate Accountabilities:

To work with colleagues to achieve service plan objectives and targets.

To understand and actively keep up to date with GDPR responsibilities, including completing regular refresher training.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: all employees are required to act in such a way that safeguards the health and well-being of children and vulnerable adults.

As a corporate parent, all council employees are responsible for ensuring the well-being and positive outcomes of Medway's care-experienced children and young people.

To participate in the Performance Appraisal process and contribute to the identification of own and team development needs utilizing the Career Progression Framework.

Work in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Promoting equality of opportunity, fostering good relations and improving the quality of life and opportunities for everyone living and working in Medway.

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To ensure full compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Council's Health and Safety Policy and all locally agreed safe methods of work.

To fully understand and be aware of the commitment to the duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to prevent crime and disorder.

Promote the Medway Carbon Neutral by 2050 commitment; supporting the Council action plan to ensure we play our part in addressing the climate emergency.

Medway Council is a Category One responder in relation to the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) and as a result all staff working for the Authority may be asked to carry out Category One response duties or stand into the role of another member of staff who is responding to a Major Civil Incident.

Organisation:

This role reports to the Senior Research Manager.

The post holder may have line management responsibility.

The post holder will be required to liaise with all stakeholders both internal and external to the organisation.

Working Style:

HYBRID - a flexible working arrangement whereby an employee can undertake their work either in the office and/or partially or mainly from home on a temporary or permanent basis.

Person specification

All criteria at level A are considered essential unless stated otherwise.

Qualifications

Level A

Professional Qualification:
Postgraduate qualification,

or

Professional Experience:
Five years relevant experience, reflecting strong research skills, ideally in a discipline relevant to health or public health

Minimum of 5 GCSEs at Level 4-9 including in English and Maths or equivalent Level 2 qualification

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

Continuous professional development relating to the role requirements.

Knowledge

Level A

Knowledge of quantitative and/or qualitative research methods.

Knowledge of the determinants of health and of health inequalities and inequities.

Knowledge of public health/health improvement drivers, principles and practices and an understanding of the complexity and breadth of Public Health, NHS, and local government operations.

Knowledge of research ethics.

Knowledge of legislation, policies and procedures in relation to GDPR and data protection, equalities and safeguarding.

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

Comprehensive knowledge of funding opportunities and processes both locally, nationally and internationally that HDRCs and local authorities are eligible to apply for.

Comprehensive knowledge of emerging developments in public health research that could contribute to future project opportunities.

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Comprehensive knowledge of Medway Council's priorities (e.g., the One Medway Council Plan, strategic health and wellbeing plans for example) and how the HDRC contributes to these.

Knowledge of public involvement in the design and development of research projects.

An understanding of the local data protection (DPIA) and Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) processes.

Comprehensive knowledge of how local research contributes to the regional and national landscapes (e.g. KSS ARC, other HDRCs) as appropriate.

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

Comprehensive knowledge of local research ethics, governance and management.

Comprehensive knowledge of research skills training and development programmes to support delivery of HDRC priorities.

Comprehensive knowledge of current public health policy both at the local and national level.

Experience

Level A

A minimum of 3 years' experience in a research role

Experience of quantitative and/or qualitative research methods.

Experience of being able to write clearly, concisely, and accurately about complex issues for various audiences.

Experience of conducting evaluations and/or research projects.

Experience in critically appraising and synthesising evidence including peer-reviewed papers.

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

18 months of satisfactory performance and attendance at Level 6A

Experience of leading the development and delivery of research projects, funding applications and research protocols that align with HDRC and council research priorities.

Experience of contributing to the development and implementation of HDRC programme activities designed to increase research capacity and capability within Medway Council.

Experience of working in research in public health in a local authority setting, keeping abreast of developments within the field.

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Experience of building and maintaining positive relationships at all levels, including with the public, to promote the work of the HDRC and ensure delivery of high-quality products and outcomes.

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

18 months of satisfactory performance and attendance at Level 6B

Experience of leading the development and management of council led or co-led research funding applications in collaboration with council staff, academic, third sector and/or local communities.

Experience of developing, delivering and evaluating research skills training to non-specialist audiences.

Experience of managing complex projects, assessing and taking account of risks and demonstrating the ability to adapt to changes and problems along the way.

Experience of acting as a mentor and supervisor to more junior members of the team to meet HDRC and organisational learning and development requirements.

Skills

Level A

Ability to plan projects/activities, carry out risk assessments and tasks in a structured way, monitor progress against plans and embed these into working practice.

Able to develop and deliver research projects with robust methods.

Ability to analyse quantitative and/or qualitative data using data analysis software packages.

Demonstrate effective knowledge management skills with the ability to collate and critically appraise evidence.

Able to organise and have an eye for detail, with the ability to handle competing deadlines.

Able to act as a role model to promote equality and manage diversity in the workplace and service provision, ensuring everyone has appropriate and fair access and support.

Proficient in the use of Microsoft packages including Word, Excel, Outlook and Teams.

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

Ability to develop research funding applications.

Ability to identify opportunities to undertake or use research and evidence to impact on council decision-making, efficiency and the effective delivery of services.

Ability to critically assess possible research projects and partnerships that align with the priorities of HDRC Medway and the council.

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Ability to rapidly appraise, summarise and clearly present complex and sensitive public health information and other literature to a range of audiences in written and oral form, i.e., reports and presentations.

Proactive in keeping up to date with emerging developments in relation to public health research, gathering relevant information on national and local initiatives and legislation and sharing best practice and learning with senior officers, elected members and partner agencies that could contribute to future project opportunities.

Ability to think laterally and critically and handle issues and problem-solve, often in a political environment, with minimal supervision and sound judgement.

Excellent communication, negotiation, consultation and influencing skills tailored to meet the needs of a wide range of audiences and stakeholders with an ability to inspire, motivate and support others at all levels to action.

Able to challenge and enquire with diplomacy and tact whilst maintaining supportive and constructive relationships, securing people's support and commitment to a course of action or different way of thinking by presenting ideas convincingly and persuasively, and to lead major negotiations.

Ability to work with a high degree of autonomy, managing complex or conflicting priorities, often in a political environment.

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

Able to plan and/or manage complex projects, assessing and taking account of known risks and able to adapt to changes and problems along the way.

Able to develop, deliver and appraise research training programmes in group/1-1 settings to internal and external organisations ensuring they are audience appropriate.

Evidence of commitment to, and ability to provide, a culture of continuous improvement and proven track record in the successful development and implementation of fundamental improvement/change programmes, ensuring business plans are focused and meet service requirements.

Ability to lead, develop and motivate others including directly supervising more junior members of the team on work activities or projects.