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| Host department: Oxford |
| Project Title: |
| BUILDING THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR AN EXPANDED AND SUSTAINABLE PRIMARY CARE WORKFORCE THROUGH RESEARCH, LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE. |
| Proposed supervisory team: |
| Primary supervisors: Professor Sophie Park and Professor Kamal Mahtani (Oxford)  Secondary supervisors: Professor Karen Mattick (Exeter)  Other members of the supervisory team: Members of the NIHR SPCR Evidence Synthesis Working Group (ESWG) |
| Potential for cross consortium networking and educational opportunities: |
| Park and Mahtani lead the pan-SPCR Evidence Synthesis Working Group (ESWG), a network that fosters expertise exchange in evidence synthesis for primary care research. The PhD awardee will be encouraged to participate in this network through seminars and research opportunities.  Park co-leads the NIHR Incubator in Clinical Education Research, offering educational seminars and doctoral networking events. A new PPI network aims to involve PPI in education and workforce projects, enhancing the postholder’s connections with SPCR PPI colleagues. Park has expertise in evidence synthesis and qualitative methods and strong ties with the RCGP, where she is involved in developing a research strategy. These connections offer the awardee opportunities to engage in relevant primary care research.  Mahtani has extensive experience in capacity building through teaching and training. He has hosted multiple DPhil students including three NIHR doctoral fellowship students, with one becoming an NIHR Clinical Lecturer and another a Consultant Clinical Academic Paramedic. Mahtani leads a research group focused on evaluating and improving primary care innovations and established the Oxford Social Prescribing Research Network. The awardee will benefit from this network and gain skills in translational sciences.  Park and Mahtani, long-time collaborators, have hosted SPCR interns and supervised various fellowships and post-doctoral work. This community will support the postholder’s project engagement and integration into the research community.  Mattick is Professor of Medical Education at Exeter, where she leads the Health Professions Education and Wellbeing (HPEW) research group, which hosts around 12 doctoral students (many of which she supervises). Karen is President of the Association for the Study of Medical Education, Deputy Editor of the Medical Education journal and member of NIHR HSDR funding committee, all of which will provide insights and networking opportunities for the awardee. |
| Project description: |
| The Primary Care Workforce is fast evolving (e.g. NHS Long-term Workforce Plan). This has created opportunities and challenges for general practitioners, extended roles, accommodation of learners for placements, wellbeing and retention of staff, and importantly who and how patients access care.  The awardee will have the opportunity to collaborate with a number of groups, including the pan-SPCR Evidence Synthesis Working Group (ESWG), the ‘Workforce and Learning’ Research group, Social Prescribing Research Network, the HPEW research group, and relevant PPI and stakeholders to devise and refine a project about primary care workforce. There are currently multiple challenges facing the general practice and primary care workforce. There are increasing concerns about the equity of patient care, given rapid changes in the organisation of appointments and access (e.g. extended workforce roles, technology). Park and Mahtani have experience in this field, including working with patients, the public and wider stakeholders to ensure their research takes a critical and balanced view of both opportunities and challenges facing staff and patients, with crucial attention to equity across the workforce and patient experiences. This work will likely become more relevant at the start of a new term for the UK government. The awardee will also have the opportunity to learn from current ongoing/ recently funded programmes by the primary supervisors. At Oxford this includes: 1) Collaborative and Integrated Working between General Practice and Community Pharmacies (the ‘Companion Study’) - a realist review (SPCR); 2) Social Prescribing Link Worker Retention. A mixed-methods evaluation (SPCR); 3) GP workforce sustainability. A realist review (SPCR); 4) Compound Pressures in General Practice (HSDR). An appreciative inquiry (with PPI and stakeholder input), realist review, and SWAR (a methodological element of the review to explore the use of artificial intelligence to support realist reviews). Funded by the HSDR; 5) ARAPAHO study. A mixed methods study – SP was the qualitative lead exploring how research activity in general practices can enhance the quality of general practice care. NIHR (PI Pete Bower – recently completed); 6) Post-doc (ongoing) Kelly Birtwell – SP is first supervisor for this realist review about provision of mindfulness for socially deprived patient populations. NIHR SPCR Funding Round 9-IV (Carrieri, Smith, Mattick, Wong, Campbell). At Exeter (Mattick) project include: Primary Care Under Pressure: mapping the provision of staff wellbeing interventions for the primary care workforce in England (SPCR); How do shared social spaces impact the wellness and learning of junior doctors? A realist evaluation (ASME); Care Under Pressure 3: A realist evaluation to optimise the delivery and impacts of interventions to reduce doctors’ mental ill-health in the NHS (HSDR); Care Under Pressure 2: Caring for the Carers – a realist review of interventions to minimise the incidence of mental ill-health in nurses, midwives and paramedics (HSDR).  The postholder can choose (depending on start date and interests) if they would like to be directly part of one of the projects above (e.g. extending an element of the analysis) or be supported in devising a separate project about primary care workforce and learning. Park and Mahtani have expertise in supporting GPs and allied healthcare professionals. |
| Indicative project costs: |
| PPI and stakeholder costs: £10k.  Website for project dissemination (£10k set up and £5k annual costs) £20k.  Laptop: £650  Eppi-reviewer software £2k to register review and monthly subscription  MSc-level training: £5000 |
| Training and development provision by host: |
| Formal training: include 1) access to MSc-level modules in Evidence Based Healthcare, 2) NIHR SPCR ESWG workshops, 3) participation in internal training programmes like the ‘Leadership Learning Pathway’ and ‘Teaching and Educational Development Pathway,’ and 4) seminars from the NIHR Incubator in Clinical Education Research. |
| Informal training: will include: 1) regular mentorship from the supervision team, 2) integration into networks like the Oxford Social Prescribing Research Network, ASME seminars and conferences, RCGP collaborations, and HPEW research group and APEx at Exeter 3) collaborative learning through peer interactions and journal clubs, and 4) opportunities to present at conferences, fostering professional relationships and enhancing research skills. |
| *PPIE*:  The NDPCHS and Exeter (Patient Involvement in Medical Education) have strong and well-established PPIE groups. The postholder will work with these groups in the first instance, alongside additional PPI recruitment if relevant, where needed. PPI training to enable meaningful participation will be provided (costed above) where needed, and costs for preparation as well as meeting attendance during the project and dissemination stages is included. |