

**Name & email supervisor(s):**

Professor CA Chew-Graham  
Dr Tom Kingstone  
Dr Tamsin Fisher

**Length and dates of internship:**

July / August 2024

**Host department:**

School of Medicine, Keele University

**How will the internship be conducted:**

- In person at the university
- Virtual/ from home
- Both are possible, depending on preference of student

**Title internship project:**

**Supporting Fire and Rescue Service personnel to identify anxiety and depression in older adults.**

**Summary of the internship project:** *(max 250 words, can include hyperlinks to further information)*

Older adults (60+ years) are an under-served population in mental health care. Several risk factors for common mental health problems (anxiety and depression) are associated with ageing, including bereavement, social isolation and loneliness. Fewer than one-in-six older adults that experience symptoms of a mental health problem will consult a healthcare professional. Perceived stigma, lack of mental health awareness, prioritising physical health, and a reluctance to be seen to burden the NHS prevent older adults from seeking help. Early detection of mental health problems remains a key NHS priority; innovative solutions are needed to better enable engagement with NHS services by older adults.

The supervisors have recently completed an NIHR RFPB-funded multi-method study which aimed to examine whether and how Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) Safe & Well (S&W) visits can be optimized to include detection and sign-posting for mental health problems (anxiety and depression) in older adults. We conducted observations of S&W visits focus groups with FRS staff, interviews with older people and health and social care stakeholders to explore barriers and facilitators to identifying anxiety and depression by FRA personnel. Finally, we held a consensus workshop with a range of stakeholders to agree core components of an extended S&W visit.

Primary analysis has been conducted and key messages published (<https://bigpopen.org/content/7/4/BJGPO.2023.0059>).

The intern will conduct secondary analysis on the qualitative datasets with a focus on identifying training needs for FRS staff and produce a framework for training. Training and guidance will be provided.

See website for further study information:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/research/ourresearch/medicine/primarycareresearchthemes/mentalhealth/fireside/>

**Learning objectives:**

**Undertaking this project will enable the candidate to:**

- Increase their knowledge and understanding about anxiety and depression in older adults
- Increase their knowledge and understanding about applied health research methods
- Develop skills in secondary analysis of qualitative data
- Improve their presentation skills (presenting the study findings to the Mental Health and Wellbeing Faculty Research Theme (FReT) at the end of the internship)
- Improve their writing skills (with the aim of writing up their project for submission to a primary care scientific conference and/or peer-reviewed journal)
- Attend wider academic training events and meetings within the School of Medicine, Keele University, and within the SPCR network
- Have increased understanding about possible career trajectories for clinical academics in primary care

**Any further information:**

An approximate timetable for the project will be as follows:

Week 1: Meet the team, background reading, finalise the study protocol, research training in qualitative data analysis.

Week 2-3: Undertake the secondary analysis and interpret the results.

Week 4: Draw conclusions, present findings to the MH&WB FReT, plan study outputs.