

**Department Name:**

Institute for Health and Human Development, University of East London

**Supervisors names and email addresses:**

1) Professor Angela Harden [a.harden@uel.ac.uk](mailto:a.harden@uel.ac.uk)

2) Professor Gail Findlay [g.findlay@uel.ac.uk](mailto:g.findlay@uel.ac.uk)

**Funding Status:**

Directly Funded Project (UK and EU Students Only)

Stipend: £17,803

**Application Deadline:** 10 April 2020

**Interview date:** 1 May 2020

**Duration:**

3 years, full time

**Project Description;**

Improving health and reducing health inequalities remain major global public health challenges. Increasing levels of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), mental health problems, rising levels of obesity and high rates of physical inactivity, unhealthy diets, smoking, and harmful alcohol consumption are placing increasing pressure on health services. These problems are compounded by the clustering of NCDs, mental health problems and health risk behaviours in the most disadvantaged groups. The social and geographical health inequities that exist in the UK have proved highly resistant to conventional top-down individual

behaviour change interventions. There is an urgent need to find effective approaches to prevention, particularly upstream interventions impacting on the wider determinants of health which can be embedded within local systems.

The 'Well Communities' programme provides a community focussed, co-produced approach to health improvement, for communities and local organisations (public, private and third sector) to work together to improve health and wellbeing, build resilience and reduce inequalities. The framework comprises a suite of capacity building and co-produced projects that realise and develop community assets and build individual and community trust, skills, knowledge, confidence, empowerment and connectedness. Research is required to optimise the programme and examine how to embed the approach within local systems.

The programme of work for this PhD studentship will review existing evidence and relevant theories, and analyse primary data to refine the programme. There will then be an opportunity to pilot embedding the refined programme within a local system to assess fidelity and acceptability to a range of different stakeholders. The student will have an opportunity to work within a larger team of researchers and have access to the data collected within other relevant ongoing projects (e.g. the Tower Hamlets Communities Driving Change programme and the Newham Improvement Academy)

### **Project-specific skills and experience required:**

Applicants should have a qualification in or experience gained within public health or community development research.

Applicants should have qualifications or experience in mixed-method research ideally within the design and evaluation of interventions.

All candidates should hold a Master's qualification (or complete their Master's by September 2020) in an appropriate discipline and have a minimum of a 2:1 or equivalent in their first degree. Applicants should preferably have knowledge of the UK health and care system. All applicants are required to have excellent written and verbal communication skills. They should also be willing to work collaboratively in multi-disciplinary and multi-professional teams.

Enquiries email name and address:

Professor Angela Harden - [a.harden@uel.ac.uk](mailto:a.harden@uel.ac.uk)

### **Training opportunities**

PhD students will be entitled to the full range of PhD training opportunities at their host institution. In addition, all PhD students will benefit from the training provided by the NIHR ARC North Thames Academy (The Academy). The Academy brings together PhD students from across ARC North Thames, to create a community of students training in applied health research. The Academy works alongside each host institution's graduate training programme to equip students with the skills needed to work at the interface of academia and health services.

Our doctoral programme focuses on practical aspects of applied health research, such as the skills required to undertake research in health care and public health settings, to engage patients and the public in research, and to navigate relevant ethical and research governance approval systems. In addition, we aim to provide students with an understanding of how their work fits into current NHS structures and applied public health research environments. PhD students will be expected to attend and present at scientific meetings aimed at disseminating the findings of ARC research.

### **Publication and wider dissemination:**

It is expected that results of the PhD research will be publishable in good quality, peer-reviewed academic journals and communicated at conferences. The research would also be expected to generate outputs tailored to applied health research, public health practitioner, and policy-making audiences.

### **Eligibility**

Candidates should hold a Master's qualification in a relevant discipline and have a minimum of a 2:1 or equivalent in their first degree. Applicants should preferably have knowledge of the UK health and care system. All applicants require excellent written and verbal communication skills and should be willing to work collaboratively in multi-disciplinary and multi-professional teams.

Due to funding restrictions, applicants must be UK/EU nationals. Please refer to [UK Council for International Student Affairs](#) (UKCISA) for the criteria.

### **How to apply**

If you have queries about potential projects or would like to discuss these in more detail, please contact the appropriate supervisors by email. In case of any difficulties in making contact, please email [ARC.academy@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ARC.academy@ucl.ac.uk)

Your application should consist of:

- A CV (to include qualifications, work experience, publications, presentations and prizes) plus contact details of two academic referees (references will be taken up for all shortlisted candidates).
- A personal statement (300 words) describing your suitability for the proposed project including how your research experience, skills and interests relate to the topic.
- A 1-page proposal of how you would develop the PhD project that you are applying for.

Please send your application to [ARC.academy@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:ARC.academy@ucl.ac.uk)