

WHERE  
CAREERS  
THRIVE

When potential  
is unlocked,  
talent *thrives*



West  
Northamptonshire  
Council

## Local Authority Research Practitioner

Public Health, People Directorate

Thank you for your interest in this role. Our vision at West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is: 'to make West Northants a great place to live, work, visit and thrive'.

We truly stand by this and work hard every day to make this a reality, and at WNC it's about our people. People who thrive with ambition, bring new ideas, demand better ways of working, care about every detail, and who never shy away from a challenge.

Our culture is a gateway for new experiences. A place to forge new opportunities. To empower you in your career and unite you with like-minded people. When potential is unlocked, talent thrives.



West  
Northamptonshire  
Council

## **Purpose and impact:**

This role is part funded by the National Institute for Health Research's Research Support Service (NIHR RSS) Specialist Centre for Public Health and will contribute actively to their work. The post-holder will be a member of West Northants Council's Public Health and Regulatory Services Department, establishing and shaping the research and evaluation practice of the Council. You will embed research skills and methodologies into our work, including evidence reviews, needs assessments and evaluations, to inform policy and practice and lead to better decision-making. This will include providing leadership, advice, training and support on activities such as primary data collection, evaluation design, qualitative analysis, co-production and engagement, literature review, mixed methods approaches and evidence synthesis. You will develop training and guidance on best practice and support the colleagues in developing and incorporating research evidence and insights in their work. The post-holder will also work as a wider research and evaluation Community of Practice. This is a key role needed to support the development of evidence-based approaches to policy and practice, and create a culture of continuous learning, to improve the health and wellbeing of residents and reduce health inequalities in West Northants.

## **Accountable to:**

This role is accountable to the Consultant in Public Health for Health Improvement and Communities. The role sits within Public Health and Regulatory Services, part of the People Directorate in West Northamptonshire Council.

## **Responsibilities:**

1. Working with council colleagues, you will promote a culture of research across the council, improving the robustness of methods to influence decision-making, and the dissemination of learning from local initiatives (for example through evaluations, workshops, conferences and publications). To work with other leads across the council to co-ordinate planning and action on cross-cutting work.
2. You will contribute to research networks, within the council and local integrated care system, as well as:
  - regional and national networks of similar local authority research practitioners (LARPs), Actively promote, support and contribute to the activity of the SCPH.
  - Contribute to the sharing of best practice across Local Authorities as part of a LARP network.
3. Act as an expert research and academic resource, providing guidance and support for those thinking about undertaking research and evaluation, sharing research skills and experience and knowledge of best practice and guidance.
4. Identify learning needs and lead the development of research skills of staff through training, seminars and workshops.
5. Develop relevant policies, including policies on governance, ethics, practice, and methods.
6. Lead engagement with potential partner organisations to identify eligible public health or population-based studies for adoption on to the NIHR portfolio and adopt ongoing studies and identify new studies to be included in the Clinical Research Network portfolio.
7. Deliver awareness raising activities including engaging and influencing senior leaders and elected members on the value of being a research active organisation.
8. Work closely with other colleagues to ensure that service design, commissioning and evaluation are informed by the available evidence-base in relation to the needs of the population.
9. The post holder will work with the council's engagement leads to ensure that communities are involved in the prioritisation, objective setting and delivery of research, and the promote and develop our network of research champions.

10. Lead and support the development and submission of strategically significant research proposals to external funders, such as the NIHR, working collaboratively across Local Authorities, the Clinical Research Network, and Higher Education Institutions
11. You will undertake regular reporting of activity, challenges, progress and achievements to the NIHR RSS Specialist Centre for Public Health (Newcastle University and partners) to support the evaluation of the LARP roles and demonstrate impact on research capacity and capability in Local Authorities.
12. To maximise personal productivity, minimise duplication and errors; and manage our information efficiently and securely to reduce risk, through effective use of Office 365 and our internal IT systems and applications.
13. Actively challenge and seek to eliminate any directly or indirectly discriminatory practice or behaviours.
14. Demonstrate awareness and understanding of other people's behavioural, physical, social and welfare needs and ensure that reasonable care is taken at all times for the health, safety and welfare of yourself and other persons.

This job description reflects the major tasks to be carried out by the post holder and identifies a level of responsibility at which they will be required to work. In the interests of effective working, the major tasks may be reviewed from time to time to reflect changing needs and circumstances. Such reviews and any consequential changes will be carried out in consultation with the post holder.

## Person specification:

The requirements for the role are outlined below and will be part of the selection process. Each of the criteria listed below will be measured by:

(**A**) Application Form, (**T**) Test, (**I**) Interview, (**P**) Presentation, (**D**) Documentation.

Minimum levels of knowledge, skills experience and qualifications required for this job.

Skills and abilities:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
Ability to develop and deliver training and education on research skills.	E	A, I
An ability to advise colleagues with less experience in research	E	A, I
Skilled in navigating different organisational settings, conditions, and audience needs	E	A, I
Good time management and prioritisation skills, able to work simultaneously on a number of complex and challenging projects. Planning, organising, and prioritising the workload of oneself and others to meet project deadlines, and deliver to a high quality with attention to detail	E	A, I
Ability to develop processes for the design and delivery of research and evaluation projects.	E	A, I
High standard of communication skills, demonstrated by the ability to present complex oral and written information, in a variety of formats to a variety of audiences.	E	A, I
Ability to produce high quality reports which are accurate and easy to understand by all stakeholders	E	A, I
Ability to use statistical software such as NVivo, R, Excel, SPSS	D	A, I
<b>This is applicable to all roles in WNC that are required to use IT equipment:</b> Demonstrate effective use of Office 365 (incl. Teams, OneDrive, etc.) or willingness to undertake training during the probation period.	E	A, I

Knowledge:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
Good understanding of research ethics processes and considerations, and information governance.	E	A, I
Knowledge of different types of epidemiological study design, and appropriate methods for answering different public health questions.	E	A, I
A good understanding of local government, the health system environment, and the UK health research landscape, including the NIHR	D	A, I
Understanding of health inequalities, wider Public Health agenda and knowledge of working with diverse communities and in areas of deprivation.	D	A, I

<b>Relevant experience:</b>	<b>Essential / Desirable</b>	<b>Measured by</b>
Experience in leading research projects and employing research and evaluation skills, including primary data collection (e.g., through surveys, interviews, focus groups, workshops, and participatory approaches), analysing and interpreting qualitative and quantitative data, literature review, critical appraisal, evidence synthesis, and process and impact evaluation (e.g. theory of change and/or logic models).	E	A, I
Proven experience of using project management skills and knowledge of research and evaluation methods to develop, implement and assess policies, programmes and strategies to improve health and wellbeing and/or address health inequalities	E	A, I
Experience of working collaboratively across organisations and partners, including higher educational institutions, health services, the voluntary sector and patients and the public	E	A, I
Experience of influencing and negotiating with senior stakeholders, including championing the role of research and evaluation throughout the decision-making lifecycle	E	A, I
Experience of presenting and disseminating research findings at conferences and writing for peer reviewed journals.	D	A, I
Experience of developing successful research grant funding applications	D	A, I

<b>Education, training and work qualifications:</b>	<b>Essential / Desirable</b>	<b>Measured by</b>
Postgraduate qualification in a discipline relevant to applied research on wider determinants of health (e.g. epidemiology, health services research, psychology, sociology, statistics, economics, urban planning, environmental science, etc) OR equivalent relevant experience	E	A, I

All appointments are subject to standard pre-employment screening. This will include identity, references, proof of right to work in the UK, medical clearance and verification of certificates.

## Day-to-day in the role:

<b>Hours:</b>	30	<b>Primary work base:</b>	One Angel Square
<b>Job family band:</b>	Professional Support Band 08	<b>Worker type:</b>	Flexible
<b>Salary range:</b>	£41,816 - £45,175	<b>Budget responsibility:</b>	N/A
<b>People management responsibility:</b>	None		

### Working conditions & how we work:

This role has been identified as a flexible worker type, this means that you will be able to work from other work locations (including from home) but will have access to an office base if required.

## Our organisational values and behaviours

Everything we want to achieve for West Northants depends on having the right people in place and doing the right things and we want all colleagues to THRIVE, both personally and professionally. Our values and our behaviours framework underpin how we work and what partners and customers can expect from us. We want to do our very best for our residents, service users and businesses and for our staff – we want everyone to THRIVE.

<b>T</b> Trust	We are honest, fair, transparent and accountable. We can be trusted to do what we say we will.
<b>H</b> High Performing	we get the basics right and what we do, we do well. We manage our business efficiently.
<b>R</b> Respect	we respect each other and our customers in a diverse, professional and supportive environment.
<b>I</b> Innovate	we encourage curiosity, we are creative and seize opportunities to grow individually as an organisation and as an area.
<b>V</b> Value	We continually strive for best practice and ways of improving existing procedures, practices and systems and thereby promoting efficiency and cost effectiveness
<b>E</b> Empower	we believe in people, will listen, learn and trust them to make decisions. We help people to realise their ambitions.

**“Valuing colleagues as individuals and encompassing our different perspectives to deliver our collective ambitions. One West inclusive culture.”**

Should you require this document in another format or language, please contact: [Careers@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:Careers@westnorthants.gov.uk)



# When potential is unlocked, talent *thrives*

Choose a career that offers you a true sense of achievement, fills you with pride and challenges you in a positive way, everyday.

## The benefits of a career at WNC include:

- **People** are at the centre of everything we do. Without our people, we wouldn't be able to deliver services to the people in our community.
  - **Ambition** runs through everything we do at West Northants Council, we nurture and develop our people's ambition and willingness to succeed, to continually improve the service we provide to the community.
  - **Care** is at the heart of West Northants Council, we care in so many ways; seen and unseen, helping our colleagues and community to thrive.
  - **Flexibility** is key, we know work-life balance is critical to wellbeing, so we work hard to make sure our benefits package promotes and improves wellbeing; from annual leave, sick pay, family leave and flexible working, financial security offered by a local government pension scheme and life assurance, and discount schemes which make a difference to your day-to-day life, through to employee helplines offering free legal, health, financial and wellbeing advice and support.
- We want you to have balance and be happy.

