

OPPORTUNITY

Research Associate (Qualitative)

Reference: 0087-24

Grade: 8

Salary: £39,347 per annum

Contract Type: Fixed term (until 31/01/2026)

Basis: Full time

Job description

Job Purpose:

You will join an interdisciplinary team conducting groundbreaking research with young people, on the role of social media influencers' narratives in youth mental health. You will be based at the prestigious Institute for Health and Neurodevelopment at Aston University. You will carry out participant recruitment, qualitative data collection (interviews), qualitative data analysis (phenomenologically focused), group facilitation work (consensus-development), and you will also help to facilitate a co-production process.

You will work under the supervision of Dr Michael Larkin (Aston University), Dr Ruth Page (University of Birmingham) and Prof Paul Crawford (Nottingham University), and collaborate with a wide range of people, including other research team members, colleagues at the McPin Foundation, young people, other researchers, professionals, and practitioners.

A satisfactory enhanced DBS clearance is required for this post.

About you:

The successful candidate will be able to demonstrate: good knowledge of, and experience with, qualitative research methods and psychological research; excellent communication skills; proven competency with academic publication and dissemination; an interest in other people's experiences; an ability to apply the principles of best practice for coproduction and PPI (public and patient involvement in research), good knowledge of social media platforms; good knowledge of mental health literacy and related concepts; and a commitment to improving mental healthcare provision for young people.

About the project:

In this ESRC-funded project, we will conduct a series of studies to explore the role played by social media influencers' accounts of mental health, in contributing to the mental health literacy of young people. We will work with young people and other stakeholders to develop guidance and tools to support young people in navigating and evaluating these accounts.

About us:

We are a group of researchers working from the perspectives of linguistics, lived experience, psychology, and the humanities. Our team includes youth involvement leadership from the McPin Foundation, and the young members of an advisory group (YPAG) who are advising and guiding the research throughout via online/in-person meetings and other ad hoc work such as written feedback/updates. McPin is an organisation aiming to help young people to get actively involved in shaping mental health research.

Main duties and responsibilities

Research

- ▶ To liaise with and between the research team and the young person's advisory group, attending and participating in regular online meetings, and occasional 'in person' events in Birmingham and London.
- ▶ To contribute to the development and progression of the project plan.

- ▶ To recruit and speak to young people in individual and group interviews.
- ▶ To liaise with external transcription services and to implement the Data Management Plan.
- ▶ To conduct and document analytic work using experiential (e.g., Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis) approaches, with the involvement of the study team.
- ▶ To organise, co-facilitate, record, and document the co-production process which will generate resources for young people, parents, and educators.
- ▶ To write up and publish the outcomes of research in good quality publications.
- ▶ To present the outcomes of the work at events and conferences.
- ▶ Where appropriate to School/University strategy and subject discipline, to participate in and develop external networks.

External engagement

- ▶ To represent the interests of the project, team, and Department, via activities to raise the regional, national, and international profile of the research, particularly with relevant professions, schools, and other stakeholders.

Citizenship

- ▶ To participate in events at the Institute for Health and Neurodevelopment, and to support junior colleagues in research.
- ▶ To demonstrate the University's leadership values through own actions and behaviour.
- ▶ To undertake such other duties as may be requested and that are commensurate with the nature and grade of the post.

Additional responsibilities

- ▶ Engage in continuous personal and professional development in line with the demands of the role, including undertaking relevant training and development activities to develop themselves and support the development of others.
- ▶ Ensure and promote the personal health, safety and wellbeing of staff and students.
- ▶ Perform duties in a way which promotes fairness in all matters, and which engenders trust.
- ▶ Promote equality of opportunity and support diversity and inclusion as well as working to support the University's environmental sustainability agenda and practices.

Person specification

	Essential	Method of assessment
Education and qualifications	<p>A good first degree in Psychology, Linguistics, or related Social Science.</p> <p>A PhD in a relevant subject either completed or near completion.</p>	Application form
Experience	<p>Experience and evidence of competence (e.g., peer reviewed publication or a doctoral thesis) with experiential qualitative methods (e.g., Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis)</p> <p>Experience of initiating and conducting research up to doctoral level.</p> <p>Experience of contributing to the write up of research for high quality publications.</p> <p>Experience of collaborative team working in research.</p>	Application form and interview
Aptitude and skills	<p>Ability to collaborate and maintain communication within and between teams.</p> <p>Ability to be respectful and sensitive to other people's experiences.</p> <p>Ability to present data in both a clear and concise manner that is visually appealing.</p> <p>Ability to prepare written communications to a high standard.</p> <p>Ability to apply good working knowledge of principles of good practice for patient and public involvement in research (PPI) and/or coproduction in research.</p>	Application form and interview

	Essential	Method of assessment
	<p>Ability to apply good working knowledge of health or mental literacy theories (or similar).</p> <p>Ability to manage a complex project.</p>	

	Desirable	Method of assessment
Experience	<p>Experience of seeking support for mental health (we encourage applications from people with lived experience of mental health services).</p> <p>Experience of co-production / co-design work.</p> <p>Experience of patient and public involvement (PPI) work.</p> <p>Experience of interdisciplinary work.</p> <p>Experience of social media research.</p> <p>Experience of working with young people.</p> <p>Experience of mental health research.</p>	Application form and interview
Aptitude and Skills	Using social media (e.g., Tik Tok) to communicate research outputs.	Interview

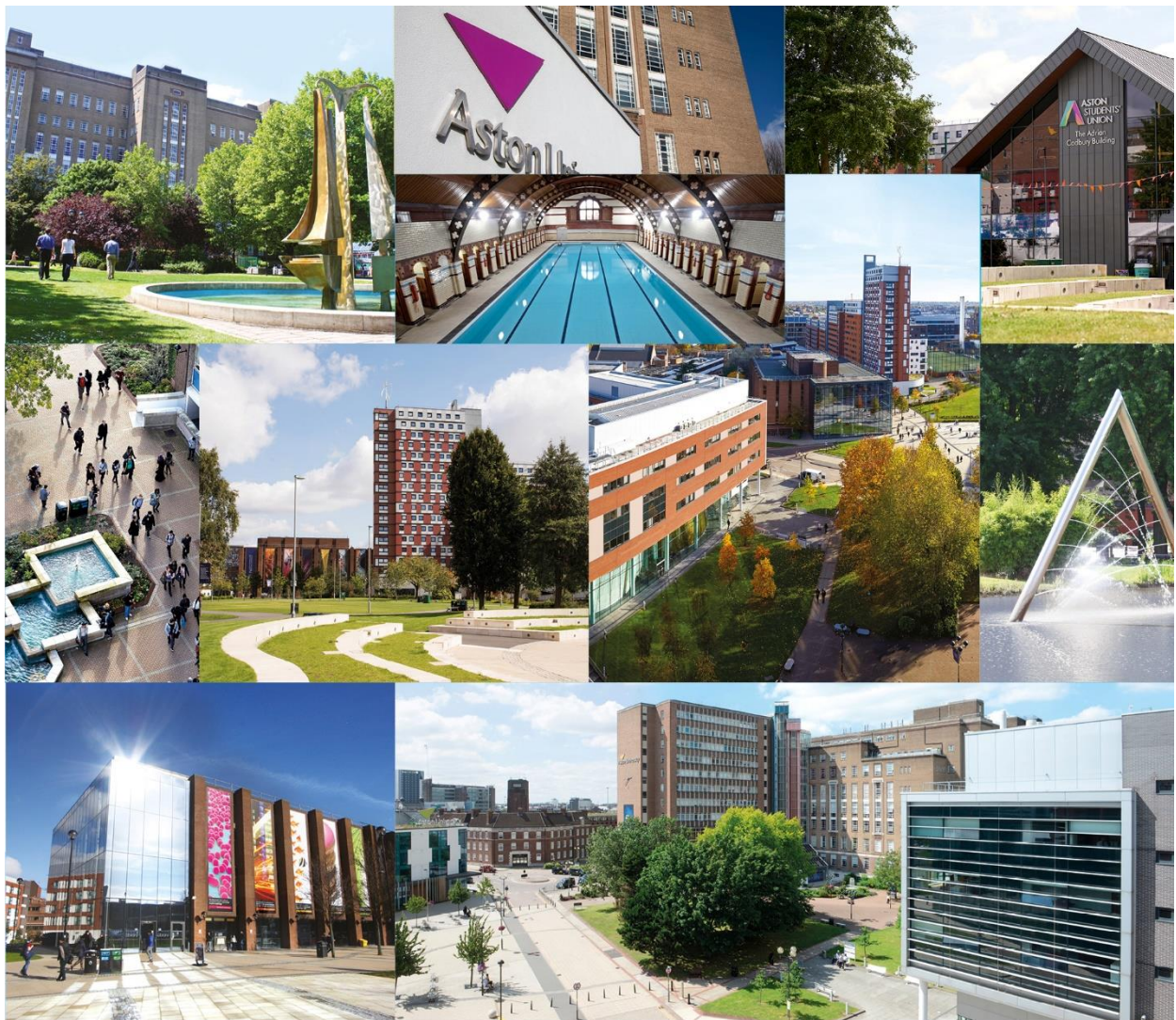
How to apply

You can apply for this role online via our website <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/jobs>.

Applications should be submitted by 23.59 on the advertised closing date.
All applicants must complete an application form, along with your CV.

Any CV sent direct to the Recruitment Team and Recruiting Manager will not be accepted.

If you require a manual application form, then please contact the Recruitment Team via recruitment@aston.ac.uk



Contact information

Enquiries about the vacancy:

Name: Dr Michael Larkin
Job Title: Reader in Psychology
Email: m.larkin@aston.ac.uk

Enquiries about the application process, shortlisting, or interviews:

Recruitment Team via recruitment@aston.ac.uk

Additional information

Visit our website <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr> for full details of our salary scales and benefits Aston University staff enjoy

Salary scales: <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/payroll-and-pensions/salary-scales/index>

Benefits: <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/Benefits-and-Rewards/index>

Working in Birmingham: <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/birmingham>

Employment of Ex-Offenders: Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, a person with a criminal record is not required to disclose any spent convictions unless the positions they are applying for is listed an exception under the act.

Eligibility to work in the UK:

Non-British/Irish citizens moving to the UK to work will need to apply for a visa in advance. You can find more information about visas for work on the gov.uk website [here](#). Before applying for this role, you should ensure that you meet the requirements, including meeting the English Language requirements. If you do not meet the eligibility criteria, any application for a work visa would be unsuccessful.

The most common types of visas to work in the UK are:

Skilled Worker Visa

<https://www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa>

Global Talent Visa

If you are a leader or potential leader in one of the following fields, you may be eligible to apply for a Global Talent Visa:

- Academia or Research
- Arts and Culture
- Digital Technology

You can find information about the Global Talent Visa on the gov.uk website [here](#), and on the Royal Society website [here](#).

You can also find further information about work visa options on our website [here](#).

Equal Opportunities: Aston University promotes equality and diversity in all aspects of its work. We aim to ensure, through our admissions policies for students, and our staff recruitment and selection processes that we encourage applications from all groups represented in the wider community at a local, national, and international level.

The University will endeavour not to discriminate unfairly or illegally, directly, or indirectly, against student or potential students, staff, or potential staff. This commitment applies to all functions of the University and to any stage of an individual's career.

An Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form is included within the application form. Data you provide on the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form will be included in a general database, for statistical monitoring purposes, enabling the University to monitor the effectiveness of its Policy, Codes of Practice and Guidelines on Equal Opportunities in Employment. Individuals will not be identified by name.

Data Protection: Your personal data will be processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679) ("GDPR"). The University's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices, including the Job Applicant Privacy Notice can be found at <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/data-protection>. Your application will only be used to inform the selection process, unless you are successful, in which case it will form the basis of your personal record with the University which will be stored in manual and/or electronic files. Information in statistical form on present and former employees is given to appropriate outside bodies.

Full details of our terms and conditions of service and associated policies and procedures are available online at <https://www2.aston.ac.uk/staff-public/hr/policies>

Aston University
Birmingham
B4 7ET, UK.
+44 (0)121 204 3000
aston.ac.uk



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gets real.**