



# Testimonial

**Grace Chugg, Speech and Language therapist, LYPFT.**



My name is Grace Chugg, and I am an Advanced Speech and Language therapist who has been working for the Leeds York Partnership Foundation Trust for 1.5 years. I qualified as a Speech and Language Therapist from Plymouth Marjon University in 2019.

Prior to joining LYPFT, I was working across acute, outpatient and community services in Wales. I had successfully secured £6,000 of funding in this role to complete a PG Cert focussed on improving my clinical skills; however, opportunities for research funding were limited. When I attended my LYPFT interview, I advised the panel that I want to do research as part of my post and was supported by my manager and the research team at LYPFT to apply for a research internship. From this I have secured £7,500 worth of funding from the NIHR internship programme. I am working in a clinical setting as an Advanced Speech and Language Therapist at Leeds Gender Identity Service. My internship allows 2 days per week of research, 38 days in total from February to October 2023, to complete a piece of research to address a problem or gap in my service area.

My research focuses on management of waiting list initiatives, as currently there are over 4,000 people waiting for an appointment at the gender service and over 300 waiting for SLT alone equating to up to a 4/5 year wait for support with gender affirming voice therapy. The goal of my research is to support people on the waiting list to feel empowered to support their own voice in a safe way, and in turn support attendance and engagement at SLT appointments.

The internship requires a 3000-word essay and a poster presentation. I am aiming to develop my essay into a scoping review which I will publish. I have recently been successful in bidding for a grant through Leeds Arts and Minds to enable delivery of an education forum to gather ideas and feedback from those on the wait list to see how best to support them -



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– the forum is an opportunity to develop some resources and then I am considering going on to develop a website of resources to help those on the waiting list. The Arts and Minds project has allowed the research to be routed in co-production and is supporting the wellbeing of those on our waiting list.

Once I've completed my internship, I plan to apply for the PCAF. As part of this, I am applying for pump priming funding through my trust to allow time to advance my application and publish my research. I have bid for just under £9,000 to support this. A PCAF is Master's level equivalent and funded by NIHR. I am also looking at applying for a funded place in the UCL public health master's through the IMPACT scholarship and considering the HARP pre doctoral funding. Both equate to over £50,000 of funding. After that, there is the opportunity to apply for the DCAF which is PhD level and requires a strong bank of publications. A key part of research is starting small, such as publishing in your colleges clinical magazine and finding routes to co-author where possible.

Research is important because it can help manage health inequalities in the NHS. I am passionate about research as I see the small changes that can be made day to day having a significant impact on our patients and want to ensure we aim to make big changes to ensure the greatest care is delivered to the Trans and Non-binary community.

I am driven to do research to ensure the care I deliver to patients is to a high standard, an essential part this is delivering co-produced research. I hope that by engaging in research I am able to support the voices of Trans and Non-Binary people to be heard and advocated for in healthcare. Having received support to being to deliver my research idea in practice has been invaluable as it helps me see the positive impact patient education can have.



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The continued support and funding enabled me to drive my research further, engaging stakeholders and improving healthcare outcomes for an underserved population. The funding opportunities provided by LYPFT and NIHR to support clinical academic work has been essential in supporting my career goals.