



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.

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 research focuses on management of waiting list initiatives as there is currently 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. Once I've completed my internship, I plan to apply for the PCAF. 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. 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.

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.