

Northumberland County Council  
**JOB DESCRIPTION**

<b>Post Title:</b> Local Authority Research Practitioner (LARP)		<b>Director/Service/Sector:</b> Public Health, Stronger Communities and Inequalities		<b>Office Use</b>
<b>Band:</b> 8		<b>Workplace:</b> County Hall		JE ref: 4609
<b>Responsible to:</b> Senior Public Health Manager		<b>Date:</b> November 2025	<b>Manager Level:</b>	HRMS ref:
<b>Job Purpose:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Local Authority Research Practitioner (LARP) will contribute to the development, implementation and evaluation of specialist local health research programmes across the whole of the county. They have a key specialist role in building capacity in other professionals to foster a research and evaluation culture.</li><li>The post holder will work autonomously within their health research spheres of specialism but will work alongside other key public health and wider council staff to develop and deliver the overall Health Research Strategy within the county.</li></ul>				
<b>Resources</b>	Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provides information, advice and training on health research and practice and selected specialist topics to individuals, staff and multi-agency groups.</li><li>Ensures data and information both qualitative and quantitative are processed and stored in line with LA policies Facilitates Public Health Research and Evaluation Training</li><li>Create and support a network of Research Champions across key service areas of the local authority</li></ul>		
	Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Authorise payments for goods and services required to support research initiatives.</li><li>Handles small amounts of cash and store vouchers to incentivise research purchase small resources for sessions.</li><li>.</li></ul>		
	Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identifies appropriate levels of resource to deliver health research programmes.</li><li>Monitors project budgets when appropriate and reports to manager.</li><li>Carries out risk assessment of equipment and activities</li></ul>		
	Clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provides specialist research and evaluation advice and guidance which supports the education of officers and wider partners</li><li>Promotes and embeds a research and evidence-based approach by engaging with stakeholders including universities, wider council workforce and the NHS</li><li>.</li></ul>		
<b>Duties and key result areas:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Engage with internal and external partners to promote and embed a research and evidence-based culture across the council, ensuring alignments with organisational priorities</li><li>Assist in establishing a working group to design and implement a research strategy including a research governance framework within the council, ensuring ethical and regulatory compliance</li><li>Manages Public Health Research Programmes of work and staff working in the service, where required</li><li>Develops and maintains public health research information</li><li>Actively promote, support and contribute to the activity of the Specialist Centre for Public Health.</li><li>Contribute to the sharing of best practice across Local Authorities as part of a LARP network.</li><li>Link with Public Health Engagement Leads (PHELs).</li><li>Undertake regular reporting to the SCPH (Newcastle University and partners) to support the evaluation of the LARP roles and demonstrate impact on research capacity and capability in Local Authorities.</li></ul>				

- Guide and support council staff in planning, conducting, and applying primary and secondary research, including co-developing research priority areas and identifying funding opportunities
- Promote collaborative working across the council, joining up research across different service areas eg. Housing and health
- Ensuring research is embedded into practice, supporting and developing the skills required across the council to ensure research informs policy and decision making

### **Communication and Relationships**

- Persuades and influences internal and external agencies (e.g. Voluntary & Community Sector, Private Business, Local Authority, Primary Care) to encourage a research approach in their plans and service delivery
- Provides training and presentations, on a range of public health research issues, some of which may be complex or contentious, to a range of agencies and professionals
- Provides specialised advice to external agencies, in respect of public health research activities and evidence based practice on specialist areas
- Provide and receive complex, sensitive information. Uses persuasive, motivational, negotiating and training skills. Presents complex, sensitive or contentious information to large groups
- Liaises with external agencies, persuades and influences agencies to capture evidence in relation to tackling health inequalities, has skills for training in own specialist area/ presentations on range of issues to large groups.

### **Analytical Skills**

- To be able to interpret different types of health and wider determinants data that gives an indication on priority areas of work related to work programme
- Able to contribute to analyse data to support the development and submission of research funding bids, assist in the design of research projects, and manage ongoing research activities.
- Creates a range of publications e.g. reports, graphs, power point presentations, newsletters, fliers and press statements using various software, requiring adjustment and manipulation of information.
- Ensures that any database or client related data are correctly stored, processed and secured in line with NCC policies.

### **Planning and Organisational Skills**

- Plans and coordinates in relation to own workplan to ensure delivery in Northumberland
- Co-ordinates and organises multi-agency groups, including public, user and carer involvement
- Project manages research programmes within their spheres of specialism, in line with expectations outlined in the Northumberland Corporate Plan and local strategies
- Plans and co-ordinates work that identifies opportunities for income generation
- To plan own work to ensure that individual and team targets are being met
- Plans and coordinates all aspects of staff management, including appraisals and supervisions, where appropriate
- Plan and organise complex activities, training or programmes, requiring formulation, adjustment. Co-ordinates and organises multi agency groups, project manages public health programmes and research initiatives.

### **Policy and Service Development**

- Implements national and local health improvement policies on specialist areas of work which impact across a large number of settings and community groups.
- Contributes to the development of overall public health service in their specialist area of expertise.
- Identifies ways in which the service may be improved and gaps in service delivery and takes a leading role in implementing any changes.
- Conduct audits of current research practices and recommend changes to improve the use of tools, processes, and software to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.
- Attend and contribute to research and team meetings to ensure that research is a routine feature of council agendas and is integrated into strategic planning.
- Works with other health, school and local authority teams to support policy and service development in relation to research practice.

**Information Resources**

- Records data related to work programme
- Creates a range of publications e.g. reports, graphs, power point presentations, newsletters, fliers and press statements using various software, requiring adjustment and manipulation of information
- Ensures that any database or client related data are correctly stored, processed and secured in line with NCC policies

**Research and Development**

- Maintains and shares with others information on current research and practice.
- Undertakes public health audits and trials and public involvement surveys as and when required.

**Freedom to Act**

- Able to work independently within role boundaries and under the management of the Public Health Manager

The duties and responsibilities highlighted in this Job Description are indicative and may vary over time. Post holders are expected to undertake other duties and responsibilities relevant to the nature, level and extent of the post and the grade has been established on this basis.

**Work Arrangements**

Transport requirements:	Travel to work sites, area offices, meetings or other venues throughout the County and region and further afield on occasion.
Working patterns:	May include weekends and evenings. Mainly office/home based but some travel required.
Working conditions:	Mainly indoors. Occasional exposure to working outdoors.

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**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

Post Title: Local Authority Research Practitioner (LARP)		Director/Service/Sector:		Ref: 4609
Essential		Desirable		Assess by
Qualifications and Knowledge				
Research degree (Graduate level or equivalent) OR equivalent experience of conducting research (ideally in public health, social sciences or the wider determinants of health)		•		
Experience				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Proven experience in conducting and managing both primary and secondary research projects. Experience working in a research role within public sector, academic, or healthcare settings.</li><li>• Experience in developing or contributing to research governance structures, with an understanding of information governance, confidentiality, and ethics as applied to data sharing and to research.</li><li>• Experience in co-producing research with non-researcher professionals, particularly within multidisciplinary teams</li><li>• Experience in working with local authorities or similar governmental bodies</li><li>• Experience in capacity building and training delivery within a research context</li><li>• Experience in grant writing and identifying funding opportunities.</li></ul>		•		
Skills and competencies				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In-depth understanding of research methods, including qualitative and quantitative approaches and those used in prevention and population studies.</li><li>• Knowledge of research governance, including ethical considerations and data protection (e.g., GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018).</li><li>• Awareness of the key public health issues and current priorities for local authorities</li><li>• Strong ability to design, conduct, and critically appraise research studies, including survey design, data analysis, and report writing.</li><li>• Ability to communicate complex research findings to diverse stakeholders, both in writing and verbally, including non-research professionals.</li><li>• Proven ability to work collaboratively with multidisciplinary teams, coproduce research with stakeholders, and foster a research culture within an organisation.</li><li>• Ability to plan, prioritise, and manage multiple work streams to agreed deadlines.</li><li>• Ability to identify challenges and develop solutions.</li><li>• Ability to deliver training and development.</li><li>• Proficiency in using research software (e.g., NVivo, SPSS, or other data analysis tools).</li></ul>		•		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of public sector research funding streams and opportunities.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>		
<b>Physical, mental, emotional and environmental demands</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a frequent requirement for sitting and standing in a restricted position for a substantial proportion of working time and frequent requirement to move and transport public health equipment i.e. display boards, resources, laptop, projector etc.</li> <li>• There is occasional requirement for prolonged concentration in order to undertake administration duties i.e. writing progress reports.</li> <li>• Plan and organise complex activities, training or programmes, requiring formulation, adjustment. Co-ordinates and organises multi agency groups, project manages public health programmes, initiatives.</li> <li>• Occasional distressing or emotional circumstances. Limited exposure to distressing or emotional circumstances within the workplace/exposure to distressed staff or members of the public.</li> <li>• Frequent requirement to drive and use VDU screens most days.</li> <li>• Occasional considerable physical effort for short periods Combination of sitting, standing and walking, may lift health improvement materials, training equipment and resources</li> </ul>		
<b>Motivation</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivated</li> <li>• Team worker</li> <li>• Good communicator</li> <li>• Flexibility to adapt to changing priorities</li> </ul>		
<b>Other</b>		
Must hold current full driving licence and be able to meet the transport needs of the post		

Key to assessment methods; (a) application form, (i) interview, (r) references, (t) ability tests (q) personality questionnaire (g) assessed group work, (p) presentation, (o) others e.g. case studies/visits