

Job Description
NIHR Academic Clinical Fellow in Response Mode:
Paediatrics
University of Bristol

1. Job title & entry level(s):

Academic Clinical Fellow

Paediatrics: ST1, ST2, ST3, ST4

2. Duration of post:

3 years (FTE)

Candidates working Less Than Full Time (LTFT) or would like should notify the relevant Local Office at point of offer of your intention to work LTFT and this will be considered against the national eligibility criteria.

3. Hospitals in which training will take place:

Clinical training will take place in district general hospitals and also in Bristol. See below (section 7) for a more detailed outline of the ST1-4 programme.

District general hospitals in the region are based in Royal United Hospital, Bath, Gloucester Royal Hospital, Great Western Hospital, Swindon and Somerset Foundation Trust Hospitals in Taunton & Yeovil. Resident doctors will usually have a base district general hospital which they go to in ST1 and 3, and then may move in ST4 depending on choice.

Bristol NHS Foundation Trust, comprises Bristol Royal Hospital for Children (BRHC), St Michael's and Southmead neonatal intensive care units. These are the tertiary referral centres for the South-West of England. BRHC is a dedicated children's hospital that was opened in 2001.

4. Research institutions in which training will take place:

University of Bristol - <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/medical-school/study/clinical/>

Centre for Academic Child Health: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-child-health/>

Bristol Neonatal Neurology group: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/clinical-sciences/research/neurosciences/research/neurology/>

5. Timetabling of clinical and research time:

75% clinical 25% research in a flexible way during the working week or months in accordance with pre-agreed arrangements between the clinical and academic supervisors.

6. Description of research component of programme

Child health

Bristol has a diverse research portfolio in Child health, ranging from perinatal and newborn health to childhood physical, mental health, and development. Perinatal and newborn health

research includes world-leading research on newborn brain health, neonatal resuscitation, lung health, the national neonatal mortality database, and the Southwest maternity-neonatal database. Childhood physical health research involves groundbreaking translational work, including preclinical research in Renal medicine, clinical trials in Rheumatology and Neurology, an NIHR Biomedical Research Center in endocrinology, and cohort studies in infectious disease. Through the Center for Academic Child Health, we have strong links to population health research, particularly the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC) database, addressing childhood nutrition, continence, and mental health. Further, the community child health offers a broad range of research opportunities into child development, neurodisability, and developmental disorders, including autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Our research is internationally acclaimed for originality, significance, and rigor, as supported by the REF 2021. The breadth of research opportunities and the transformational training environment at the University of Bristol will enable the candidate to secure a PhD fellowship by the end of the 3-year program. The research component will be protected for 25% of the time and can be organised in a way that suits the research undertaken, either as regular protected days or blocks of research time allocation. The successful candidate will have an academic and clinical supervisor to support optimal career progression.

The successful appointee will also be a member of the Severn School for Clinical Academic Training. They will be able to access support and training on research methods (<https://www.bristol.ac.uk/medical-school/short-courses-and-cpd/short-courses/>) and through the Bristol Doctoral College at the University of Bristol (<https://www.bristol.ac.uk/doctoral-college/>)

Neonatal Medicine:

This post will be based at the Center for Academic Child Health (CACH) and the Bristol Neonatal Neurology group. The successful appointee will be supervised by the Director of CACH, Associate Professor Ela Chakkarapani.

CACH is a joint venture between the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England, Bristol (UWE). CACH has a long tradition of collaborative multidisciplinary research to improve the health of children and young people in the UK and overseas. We are one of the four academic centres within the University of Bristol that deliver the University's vision. We conduct high-quality, high-impact research to improve various facets of child health. We attract and inspire students through our flagship intercalated BSc programs in Global Health and Child Health Research, enabling them to gain future skills needed to thrive in a changing world. We foster a nurturing environment, prioritising the well-being of staff and students.

CACH comprises multidisciplinary researchers with diverse strengths and interests targeted at improving the health and wellbeing of infants, children, and adolescents. Our research interests include sudden infant deaths, perinatal adverse exposures, birth asphyxia, neuroprotection, brain development, injury prevention, infant health, mental health, continence problems, nutrition, visual disorders, infection, population health and mortality. We employ a range of research methodologies, including epidemiological methods (observational studies, randomized controlled trials, and novel methods to improve causal inference), translational health research to develop interventions that improve outcomes after brain injury, and qualitative methods. We use datasets of national importance that are hosted locally, including the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC) and the National Child Mortality Database (NCMD) with linkage to national administrative datasets such as NHS Digital and the UK Department for Education.

Bristol neonatal neurology group within CACH led the development of brain-protective interventions such as cooling therapy, DRIFT for post-hemorrhagic hydrocephalus in preterm infants, CoolCuddle to improve parent-infant bonding for infants undergoing cooling therapy, and brain recovery after birth asphyxia characterized using advanced neuroimaging.

Our programme of work has attracted £49m in research funding in the last 5 years from a wide range of national and international funders. We are committed to training the next generation of child health clinicians. We contributed two impact case studies to the Research Excellence Framework exercise in 2021 (REF [2021](#) [REF2021b](#)). Eleven CACH staff were awarded 13 fellowships in the last 5 years. Awards were made from a range of funders, including 8 awards from the NIHR. Awards supported staff at different stages of their careers, including doctoral, career re-entry, and senior/advanced awards.

The successful candidate will be encouraged to explore and discuss a range of research opportunities and to determine their own research direction, supported by the available resources and expertise. We have a strong collaboration between the neonatal units in Southwest England and South Wales to undertake discovery science research on a large cohort of newborn infants (comparable to New Zealand's newborn population). Suggested areas for the ACF projects include (but are not limited to)

Neuromonitoring: We have a strong collaboration with computational mathematics and neurophysiology to support neuromonitoring in infants at risk of developing brain injuries. We use near-infrared spectroscopy and EEG to identify infants at risk of brain injury. The projects may involve characterising brain maturity and brain age to identify infants at risk of having developmental difficulties including those born with congenital heart disease, moderate preterm and nano preterm infants. These neuromonitoring techniques can also be deployed to investigate the impact of acute intensive care measures on brain development. The approaches used will involve discovery science and qualitative methodologies.

Sleep: There are opportunities to leverage our collaboration with industry (e.g. Huru) and sleep science researchers at the University of Finland, Helsinki, to study the evolution of sleep after discharge from the neonatal unit and its impact on brain development. We are exploring music therapy to influence sleep development in infants at risk of adverse developmental outcomes. The successful candidate will have opportunities to develop and study interventions that can be deployed in the home environment to promote healthy sleep and enhance brain development.

Development following brain injury: These projects will harness our collaboration with the world-leading neuroimaging group at Cardiff University's Brain Research Imaging Center (CUBRIC) and the Developmental Psychology group at the University of Leicester. We will deploy novel portable imaging technologies to characterise the brain development of preterm infants with adverse exposures. There are opportunities to study the development of children exposed to perinatal asphyxia as they grow to quantify their difficulties.

Intensive care monitoring: There are opportunities to capitalise on the collaboration with the Department of Engineering at Bristol and Bath, and on Microdialysis and automated sampling at Bristol, to undertake device studies to characterise hormonal responses in preterm infants and optimise glucose monitoring in infants at risk of brain injury.

Other areas of research include population-based studies using PeMCOD datasets that includes routinely collected maternity and neonatal data.

7. Description of clinical training component of programme

8.

This training post is based in Sout West (North) region.

The training will take place in hospitals throughout the South West deanery (North) region – with a base District General Hospital DGH– likely to be where the Resident Doctor was based for ST1 if already within the programme, or where they choose for ST1 if new to the programme. Our DGHs are based in Bath, Gloucester, Swindon and Taunton & Yeovil.

Resident doctors spend ST1 in their DGH developing core paediatric skills. They spend ST2 in Bristol with 6 months in tertiary NICU and 6 months in a specialty. ST3 is spent with 6 months in a further specialty in Bristol (can be NICU or a different specialty) and 6 months stepping up to being a registrar (tier 2 rota) in their DGH. This can be in either order. ST4 is spent in a DGH as a registrar. This may not be the same one as their base one depending on preference and also availability of posts.

Resident doctors are able to express a preference about which specialties they would like to gain experience in during their ST2 and 3 years, though all posts are designed to ensure that they will deliver the training needed to develop the core competencies required for this level of training.

As a junior resident, the ACF will be well supported in developing the competencies needed to become a skilled senior resident through the ARCP process.

During the 3-year ACF placement, there will be 25% protected research time, enabling the resident to develop and secure the doctoral fellowship (e.g., NIHR, UKRI).

In the unlikely event of not securing a doctoral fellowship, at the end of ACF, the resident will return to the standard training route and complete their core training as part of the South West regional training programme.

Should you wish to explore this in more detail, please get in touch with the Core Training Programme Director. Emma Bradley emma.bradley12@nhs.net

9. Academic Supervisor / Academic Programme Director:

Integrated Academic Training Lead(s):

- Professor Shelley Potter (shelley.potter@bristol.ac.uk)
- Dr Helen Winter (helen.winter@uhbw.nhs.uk)

Academic Lead:

- Paediatrics: Dr Ela Chakkarapani (Ela.Chakkarapani@bristol.ac.uk)

10. Clinical Training Programme Director:

- Core: Dr Emma Bradley (emma.bradley12@nhs.net)
- Specialty: Dr Edward Coxson (Edward.coxson@nhs.net)

11. Deanery contact for further information:

Recruitment Hotline: 01454 252 610

Recruitment Inbox: England.acfreruitment.sw@nhs.net

12. Useful websites for further information:

NIHR Integrated Academic Training Website: <http://www.nihr.ac.uk/IAT>

BMA Junior Doctor Pay Scales (link to latest pay Circular): <https://www.bma.org.uk/pay-and-contracts/pay/junior-doctors-pay-scales/pay-scales-for-junior-doctors-in-england>

University Clinical Academic Training website: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/medical-school/study/clinical/>

This job description was prepared September 2026

