Reciprocal Mentoring Scheme 2026-27

Are you a mid-career researcher looking to develop your leadership skills, expand your network, and help shape a more inclusive research culture?

NIHR Biomedical Research Centre (BRC): Oxford Health (BRC: OH), in partnership with the Mental Health Platform (MHP), is inviting applications for our Reciprocal Mentoring Scheme.

Building on the success of our pilot scheme last year, this unique programme brings together mid-career researchers and senior research leaders in a mutually beneficial mentoring partnership. Participants gain valuable career insights, broaden their networks and develop a greater understanding of different experiences and perspectives across the research community.

A new feature of this year's scheme is our partnership with MHP. By bringing participants together from across both infrastructures, the scheme will broaden networks, spark new perspectives and support open, constructive conversations in a different context from researchers' day-to-day working environment.

Participating mid-career researchers will receive an **£800 personal development grant** to support an opportunity of their choice. Senior leaders will also be able to request funds to enable an in-person meeting or collaborative activity in their pair.

Please see participating Senior Leaders here.

Who can apply?

We are seeking applications from **mid-career researchers** (minimum three years post-PhD submission, or equivalent) who also identify with one or more of the following groups:

- Are from a minoritised ethnic background
- Have caring responsibilities, or may have caring responsibilities in the future
- Have a disability or long-term health condition

This focus reflects local findings that mid-career researchers, especially those from the above groups, continue to experience additional barriers to career progression. Through this programme, we aim to support talented researchers, while helping senior leaders better understand the factors that can influence progression and retention.

Applicants are not requested to disclose anything they do not wish and all applications are kept confidential.

What's involved?

Participants will:

- Attend the Opening Session on Thursday 19th November, 11am-12pm
  Please hold this time in your diary as successful applicants will be invited to attend.
- Commit to approximately one hour per month for mentoring conversations
- Engage openly in a reciprocal learning relationship over a six-month period
- Contribute to programme evaluation activities.

Timeline:

Activity	Timeline
Applications close	9am, Monday 9th November 2026
Participant selection outcome	By Monday 16th November 2026
Opening Session and matching process	November 2026
Mentoring	December 2026 – June 2027
Evaluation	July to September 2027

How to apply:

Applications can be submitted using the short online application form below and must be submitted no later than **9am on Monday 9th November.**

NIHR BRC: OH and MHP Reciprocal Mentoring Scheme Application Form

If you have any questions about the scheme, please email either:

- Angharad de Cates, EDI Academic Lead: a.n.decates@bham.ac.uk
- Lizzie Carline, EDI Project Manager: lizzie.carline@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

Participating Senior Leaders:



Professor Rachel Upthegrove, University of Oxford (NIHR BRC: OH)

Director of the NIHR BRC: Oxford Health and a Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Oxford and the University of Birmingham. Her research focuses on improving treatments and outcomes for people experiencing severe mental illness, particularly psychosis.

Bio page: https://www.psych.ox.ac.uk/team/rachel-upthegrove



Professor Andrew McIntosh, University of Edinburgh (MHP)

Chair of Biological Psychiatry at the University of Edinburgh and Director of the UKRI Mental Health Platform. He is internationally recognised for research into the causes and consequences of depression using genetic and neurocognitive analysis and NHS data linkage.

Bio page: https://edwebprofiles.ed.ac.uk/profile/professor-andrew-mcintosh



Professor Ed Bullmore, King's College London (MHP)

Regius Professor of Psychiatry and Head of the School of Academic Psychiatry, at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience at King's College London. His research explores the complex network organisation of the human brain, and how schizophrenia and other major mental health disorders arise from atypical development of brain networks.

Bio page: https://www.kcl.ac.uk/people/ed-bullmore



Professor Daniel Smith, University of Edinburgh (MHP)

Chair of Psychiatry and Head of the Division of Psychiatry at the University of Edinburgh, and Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist with NHS Lothian. His research focuses on bipolar disorder, circadian mental health, and the links between severe mental illness and cardiometabolic disease.

Bio page: https://edwebprofiles.ed.ac.uk/profile/professor-daniel-j-smith



Professor Belinda Lennox, University of Oxford (NIHR BRC: OH)

Head of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Oxford, and an Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist. Her research focuses on early psychosis and neuroimmunology, aiming to improve understanding and treatment of severe mental illness.

Bio page: https://www.psych.ox.ac.uk/team/belinda-lennox



Professor Jeremy Hall, University of Oxford (NIHR BRC: OH)

Professor of Translational Psychiatry at the University of Oxford and Deputy Director of the NIHR BRC: Oxford Health. His research seeks to translate advances in neuroscience and genetics into improved treatments for severe mental illness.

Bio page: https://www.psych.ox.ac.uk/team/jeremy-hall



Professor Richard Byng, University of Plymouth (MHP)

Professor in Primary Care Research and Deputy Director of ARC South West at the University of Plymouth. His work focuses on community and primary care mental health, complex mental health needs, multi-morbidity, and health service delivery.

Bio page: https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/staff/richard-byng



Professor Steven Marwaha, University of Birmingham (NIHR BRC: OH)

Clinical Professorial Fellow at the University of Birmingham and Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist. His research focuses on early intervention, bipolar disorder and depression, with a particular interest in improving outcomes for people with mood disorders.

Bio page: https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/profiles/psychology/marwaha-steven



Professor David Osborn, University College London (MHP)

Professor of Psychiatric Epidemiology at UCL and Consultant Psychiatrist at North London NHS FT. His research examines the interface between mental and physical health, particularly improving outcomes for people with severe mental illness.

Bio page: https://profiles.ucl.ac.uk/11452-david-osborn