

## Open call for research theme leads at the Advanced Wellbeing Research Centre.



Transforming lives through innovations that help people  
move.

July 2019

## Introduction to the call from the Director of the Advanced Wellbeing Research Centre

The Advanced Wellbeing Research Centre (AWRC) is pleased to welcome expressions of interest from experienced researchers from across the University to provide leadership for the Centres three core research themes.

1. A healthy and active 100
2. Living well with chronic disease
3. Technological and Digital Innovations to promote independent lives

The call is open to all staff at Sheffield Hallam University irrespective of Department or Faculty. Therefore, if your work or research interest supports one of the key themes then please do consider applying.



This document briefly provides some background to the AWRC, the research themes and how to apply. Should you wish to discuss the opportunity in more detail then please email [hwb-awrc-mb@exchange.shu.ac.uk](mailto:hwb-awrc-mb@exchange.shu.ac.uk) to arrange a call back.

Many thanks

Professor Robert Copeland, PhD., C.Psychol  
Director of the Advanced Wellbeing Research Centre &  
National Centre for Sport and Exercise Medicine in Sheffield  
Sheffield Hallam University

### **The ambition for the AWRC**

The AWRC is a state-of-the-art research and innovation Centre at Sheffield Hallam University, dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of the population through physical activity. The vision is to transform lives through innovations that help people move. The mission is to help prevent and treat non-communicable disease (NCDs) through co-designed research into physical activity. To achieve this, the AWRC will:

- Lead in research and innovation that increases people's physical activity to prevent disease and helps people prepare for and recover from treatment quickly.
- Develop collaborative community, academic and industry partnerships that co-design products, interventions and services that assist people in initiating and maintaining physical activity.
- Test the effectiveness and usefulness of existing products.
- Educate and train the next generation of researchers who can work across academia and industry.

Located on the Olympic Legacy Park (OLP) in Sheffield and part of the Global Innovation Corridor for the Sheffield City Region the AWRC also has a key role to play in improving the health and wellbeing of the local community. Situated alongside the Oasis Academy and University Technical College on the OLP, the AWRC is part of Darnall, one of the most economically disadvantaged areas of the City. The physical activity of the Darnall community is half that of the most affluent parts of the city and childhood obesity rates substantially higher than the Sheffield average (51% of children age 10-11 are overweight/obese compared to 36% for Sheffield). The AWRC must therefore become a community asset, contributing to increasing movement and improving health and wellbeing for local residents through our research, our staff and our facility.

### **The purpose of the AWRC**

A special edition of the Lancet<sup>1</sup> published prior to the London 2012 Olympic Games set out the compelling and indisputable evidence that physical activity performed on a regular basis is good for our physical and mental health, for a connected and vibrant society, for the environment and the economy. Described as the 'best buy' in public health and as important a modifiable risk factor for chronic disease as obesity and smoking<sup>2</sup>, physical activity enhances and sustains our health as we age, supports us to work well for longer and helps prevent and treat non-communicable chronic disease (NCDs). For example, increased physical activity reduces the risk of coronary heart disease and stroke by 20-35%, type II diabetes by 35-50% and depression by 20-30%<sup>1</sup>.

The problem is that we've engineered physical activity out of daily life, resulting in the majority of society and particularly the least affluent experiencing negative physical, mental and emotional health with huge medical, psycho-social and economic consequences. NCDs account for 60% of all deaths and 44% of premature deaths: these diseases include cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, arthritis, cancer and depression. All of which are modifiable through physical activity. NCDs also costs the UK economy £15billion per annum and 2% of the global gross domestic product. For the city of Sheffield, simple changes in physical activity leading to a 2% reduction in the risk factors associated with cardiovascular disease could lead to 600 fewer deaths, 2,000 less hospital bed nights and achieve £11.2million of savings in the NHS. It is unsurprising then that local, regional and national policy and strategy, including the Industrial Strategy<sup>3</sup> and NHS Long Term Plan point to a radical need to re-think disease prevention and public health, and increase the populations physical activity.

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<sup>1</sup> Kohl 3rd, HW, Craig CL, Lambert EV, et al., (2012). The pandemic of physical inactivity: global action for public health. Lancet. 380 : 294-305

<sup>2</sup> Lee IM, Shiroma EJ, Lobelo F, et al., (2012). Effect of physical inactivity on major non-communicable diseases worldwide: an analysis of burden of disease and life expectancy. Lancet. 380 : 219-229

<sup>3</sup> The government's Industrial Strategy sets out four high level challenges (themes) for academics, industry and public entities: Ageing, Mobility, Robotics/AI, and Clean Growth.

The AWRC is at the vanguard of this global challenge, providing leadership on how best to encourage the population to move more. System-wide change will require innovation in the way we live, work, manage and monitor our health, treat disease, and travel around our towns and cities. By bringing together expertise across a range of academic disciplines (e.g. health, engineering, robotics, psychology, design, and the arts) and creating meaningful partnerships with industry, communities, local authorities, and the health and technology sector, the AWRC will make a significant contribution to tackling the burden of NCDs and thereby transform lives. Acting as the research hub for the National Centre for Sport and Exercise Medicine, the AWRC will also support the ambition of local stakeholders to transform Sheffield into the most active City in the UK.

### Research at the AWRC

The research of the AWRC will be organised across three core themes that reflect national challenges in health. These are set out in Table 1.0 below.

Theme name	Description of core activity
<b>Healthy and active 100</b>	This preventative theme focuses on research that supports people into 100 years of healthy and active life. This is irrespective of where they are born in terms of socio-economic status. Activity in this theme will address system-wide challenges across the life course from providing every child with a healthy and active start in life, to community physical activity, through to promoting healthy active ageing.
<b>Living well with chronic disease</b>	Research in this theme will focus on the management and treatment of chronic disease. With a strong focus on the role of physical activity as a therapy, researchers will work with industry and the NHS to tackle some of the key challenges in major non-communicable disease such as cancer, musculoskeletal disorders and diabetes as well as serious mental illness and depression.
<b>Technological and Digital Innovations to promote independent lives.</b>	The NHS 10-year plan clearly sets out the role of technology in the future of health care and its potential to support people to self-manage and stay connected to others to enhance their health and wellbeing. The application and generation of new technologies presents unique opportunities to transform the way health care products and services are delivered to patients as well as creating the conditions for economic growth. Working with partners across the City Region, research activity in this theme will focus on the development and application of new and emerging technologies to improve physical activity, health and wellbeing across the population.

*Table 1.0 Research, consultancy and knowledge transfer themes of the AWRC*

To deliver its research agenda, the AWRC will draw on expertise from across Faculties and Departments. Alongside a core group of staff permanently located on-site, the AWRC will be permeable and accessible to academics located elsewhere in the University who will come together to work on projects aligned to the core research themes. To create dedicated capacity and drive activity, each core theme will be supported by the establishment of theme lead (Senior academic) and co-lead (Early Career Researcher) roles. These roles will be responsible for bringing together academics across Sheffield Hallam, engaging external partners and providing methodological input into bids to address commissioned research and open calls across the UKRI portfolio, charity and foundation funding.

The call here is to seek experienced researchers to lead a research theme at the AWRC on a fractional and honorary basis. Once the theme leads are in post, they will work with the AWRC Director to identify early career researchers to co-lead themes.

### Details of the theme lead positions

The research theme lead positions are only open to Sheffield Hallam University staff. The theme lead positions are honorary and fractional (0.4FTE), for a period of 3 years with an annual review. The AWRC will fund 0.2FTE with 0.2FTE to be matched by the Department from within which the academic is based. The funding for successful research grants (and the researchers allocated to them) would go directly to the Departments/Faculties of those staff but with the AWRC retaining a small percentage of the Full Economic Cost to cover the core functions of the centre, which has added value in the process of securing the grant. The percentage retained by the AWRC is as follows:

- 8.5% for projects that attract 100% FEC
- 4.3% for projects that attract 80% FEC
- 0% for projects that only cover salary and on-costs

For clarity, Faculties/Departments will always receive 100% of salary and on-costs, even where a % of FEC is retained.

Applicants must have the permission of their Department/Faculty and an agreement from their line manager to spend 0.4FTE at the AWRC per week. There are no set days for this, and arrangements can be negotiated with the successful candidates on a case by case basis.

Staff leading a theme at the AWRC will carry a designation in addition to their department title and job role. For example:

Dr John Johnson  
Senior lecturer – Faculty/Department ABC  
Theme Lead and Associate Fellow AWRC

Application is via CV and covering letter, outlining the theme you would like to lead and why.

The call closes 31st August 2019.

Should you wish to discuss the opportunity in more detail then please email: [hwb-awrc-mb@exchange.shu.ac.uk](mailto:hwb-awrc-mb@exchange.shu.ac.uk) to arrange a call back.