SPCR internship projects 2026

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Length and dates of internship: 4 weeks from mid-June
Host department: Institute of Population Health, University of Manchester
How will the internship be conducted: ☐ In person at the university ☒ Virtual/ from home ☐ Both are possible, depending on preference of student
Title internship project: Using Qualitative Insights to Improve the Volitional Help Sheet (VHS) Mobile App for Adolescent Self-Harm Prevention
Summary of the internship project: *(max 250 words, can include hyperlinks to further information)* This internship will support analysis for the *Volitional Help Sheet (VHS)* project, a digital intervention designed to reduce self-harm among adolescent, by focusing on coping strategies. The project aims to understand how young people perceive, experience, and accept the mobile app version of VHS. The intern will work with existing qualitative datasets ('Think Aloud' interviews) to explore young people's views on usability, acceptability, engagement, and perceived impact of the app. Working closely with the research team, the intern will assist in organising, coding, and thematically analysing the data using established qualitative methods. They will help identify key themes relating to digital mental health support, barriers and facilitators to app use, and recommendations for refinement of the VHS. The project provides an excellent opportunity to gain hands-on experience with qualitative analysis in a real-world mental health study,

contribute to ongoing research on adolescent self-harm prevention, and develop insight into the design and evaluation of digital health interventions.

The internship will suit students interested in mental health, digital innovation, or applied qualitative research. There will be 15-20 interview transcripts to analyse which will be feasible within the 4 week timeline. There will be opportunities to contribute to academic papers and/or conference presentations after the internship if the student would like to.

Learning objectives:

- Develop practical skills in qualitative research, including data familiarisation, coding, and thematic analysis.
- Gain experience working with secondary data in a mental health context, learning how to extract meaningful insights from existing datasets.
- Build understanding of digital mental health interventions, specifically how young people engage with and evaluate mobile apps designed to reduce self-harm.
- Learn about core issues in adolescent self-harm research, including ethics, safeguarding, and trauma-informed approaches.
- Strengthen transferable skills such as critical thinking, synthesising qualitative evidence, working collaboratively with a research team, and communicating findings clearly.

Any further information:

Sensitivity to working with self-harm–related material must be considered, while we expect most of the data will focus on the usability and content of the digital intervention, working with data on this sensitive topic may cause distress.