



Strategy Unit Overview & Job Description

Job Title	Research Assistant (Evaluation Team)
Range	Salary £25,147 (Band 4)
Team	Strategy Unit
Accountable to	Evaluation Team Leadership

About us

The Strategy Unit is an autonomous specialist NHS team, based in Midlands and Lancashire Commissioning Support Unit (MLCSU). We focus on the application of high-quality, multi-disciplinary analytical work. Our basic proposition is simple: better evidence, better decisions, better outcomes.

We work with NHS and social care organisations, universities, charities, government organisations and selected partners. The Strategy Unit works with others to deliver clear thinking and applied analysis that improves decision-making, implementation, and results.

For more information about our work including recent and current projects, please visit our website: <https://www.strategyunitwm.nhs.uk>

Our Values

We are NHS employees who put NHS values at the heart of our approach. We believe in:

Adding public value <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We are committed to making a difference in health and social care. We only seek work that we believe can add value, either directly or indirectly, and improve care for the people we serve.	Acting with objectivity and integrity <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We use our skills to provide impartial and independent analysis, advice, and support.	Working in partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We work in partnership with our clients, understanding the pressures they face, respecting their judgement and working collaboratively with them to improve outcomes.
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Our ways of working

Our Unit is increasingly diverse and geographically widespread. We value and seek to foster this, recognising that different people bring different perspectives, lived experience, ideas, and culture to the Strategy Unit. We also know that everyone has a life and commitments outside work, and many of us benefit from our use of flexible working arrangements.

The Evaluation team has a voluntary compressed hours nine-day fortnight, with a common non-working day.

We are based in central Birmingham but work on projects from across the UK and have a hybrid model of working for team members. This means that there is no minimum requirement for working from the office - it is a resource for collaboration and mutual support and not a duty. But coming together to collaborate still matters to us very much, particularly for project teams whose work is generally more participative and with a higher degree of client engagement. Some projects also require us to travel to locations across the country occasionally.

As a member of the Strategy Unit, we will welcome and enable your involvement in all aspects of our life including the ongoing development of our services, our ways of working, our strategy, and our reputation. You will be encouraged and supported to identify and pursue opportunities to continually develop your skills and build your career, both through training and hands-on experience. We are passionate about continual learning to improve what we do and are committed to creating space where colleagues feel psychologically safe to do this.

How we are organised

The **Evaluation team** sits within our wider organisational structure that also includes:

- Analytics and modelling
- Business management
- Data science
- Evidence and knowledge mobilisation
- Research and policy
- Strategy and change.

These teams have independent leadership but often collaborate in delivering projects for our clients. This means there are plenty of opportunities to experience a variety of project-types, and to develop new areas of work, depending on your interests.

The role

The Strategy Unit is expanding our Evaluation team to support existing clients and continue to build our offer. We are seeking **Research Assistants** who can take responsibility for the day-to-day delivery of project outputs, working within our project teams.

As part of the Evaluation team you will be working on a wide range of evaluations from small, local interventions to large, national complex and high-profile programmes. We use a range of qualitative and quantitative methods and work with stakeholders at all levels from the most senior strategic positions to patients and service users. You will work across multiple project teams, sometimes in partnerships with other organisations, across a diverse range of topics. Current evaluations include: a large national cancer programme; digital innovations to address health inequalities; virtual wards; new models of managing demand for emergency care; and 2 hour urgent community response.

You will be a valued member of the Strategy Unit team, supporting the development of our services, systems, strategy, and reputation for excellence.

You will be provided with all the opportunities you require to develop your skills and build your career, both through formal training and hands-on experience.

Key responsibilities

- Deliver specific tasks within complex project assignments, working under the direction of the project manager/director. Demonstrating high quality interpersonal skills, alongside an analytical mindset.
- Manage multiple tasks across a range of projects, be calm under pressure and juggle competing priorities and tight deadlines.
- Take responsibility for ensuring your work is completed as directed by the project manager/director, ensuring that assignments are delivered within the available resources, on time and of the required quality.
- Understand risks and interdependencies and the impact of their work on other aspects of project delivery.
- Take the initiative in developing your understanding of the broader health and care policy / institutional environment.
- You will be required to build and maintain good working relationships with a broad range of internal and external stakeholders.



Policies and Procedures

You will be an employee of MLCSU and as such will be required to uphold and abide by all policies on, for example, Information Governance, Data Protection and Confidentiality, Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding Children and Adults, and Health & Safety (this is not an exhaustive list).

For an informal conversation about this role, please contact the recruiting manager at David.callaghan@nhs.net

Person specification

Please note that responses to the person specification included in applications should address each of the following eight criteria in turn, beginning with the relevant criteria number. Multiple examples can be cited to demonstrate breadth as well as depth of relevant experience.

The total length in response to the person specification must not exceed 1200 words (+10%), and applications that do not comply will not be considered.

Longlisting and shortlisting decisions will be made on the basis of the evidence against these criteria in each candidate's response to the person specification.

Factors	Description	Essential	Assessment*
Education / Qualifications	1. Undergraduate degree, with element of applied qualitative research methods, or equivalent qualification/experience.	✓	A-C
Experience	2. Experience of undertaking qualitative research in an academic or professional setting, including document review.	✓	A-I
	3. Some experience of collecting and analysing data.	✓	A-I
Knowledge	4. Knowledge of the NHS and Strategy Unit services.	✓	A-I
Skills	5. Evidence of strong written and oral communication skills.	✓	A-I-T
	6. Ability to complete tasks under direction to specified time and quality requirements.	✓	A-I

	7. Ability to manage your own time effectively to meet project deadlines.	✓	A-I
	8. Ability to work as part of a team, supporting colleagues and asking for help when required.	✓	A-I
*Assessment will take place with reference to the following information: A=Application form; IV=Interview; T=Test; C=Certificate			