

Job Description

Title	Details
Job title	Postdoctoral Research Assistant
Department/Unit	PCLS
Job Type	Fixed Term for 3 years, Full-time x 1.0 FTE
Grade	6
Accountable to	Line Manager
Accountable for	any members of staff this person line manages
Vacancy reference	SRF54547
Additional Information	This role is subject to Safer Recruitment processes and requires a DBS

Purpose

We are looking for a Research Assistant to contribute to and develop research work investigating a dietary intervention to support sensory hyperreactivity and anxiety in autistic children. The project is funded by the Eagles Autism Foundation, and research will take place at the Centre for Autism in the School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences, University of Reading.

Team Structure

The postholder will be part of a research group with early career and senior researchers, led by Dr. Teresa Tavassoli, Dr. David Field, Prof Julie Lovegrove, and Prof. Bhismadev Chakrabarti. The empirical work will be carried out at the University of Reading.

Main duties and responsibilities

Research:

1. Undertake research under the supervision of the Principal Investigator

- Working with autistic children and their families
- 2. Collecting data in-person
- 3. Collecting observational data
- 4. Collect MRI/MRS measures
- 5. Data analysis, including MRI/MRS
- 6. Lead the writing of papers for publication in leading academic journals and other relevant media
- 7. Disseminate research findings and establish a national reputation through participation in national conferences, exhibitions etc

Supervision received

Dr Tavassoli will provide primary research supervision. The postholder will also receive regular input from senior investigators in the team named above.

Supervision given

As required – the postholder will be required to provide supervision to junior team members on specific aspects of data collection/preprocessing.

Contact

PCLS

Terms and conditions

This post is available as full time, fixed term up to 3 years.

There are no specific hours of work, but the appointee will be required to work such hours as would reasonably be expected to carry out the duties associated with the post.

This document outlines the duties required for the time being of the post to indicate the level of responsibility. It is not a comprehensive or exhaustive list and the line manager may vary duties from time to time which do not change the general character of the job or the level of responsibility entailed.

Date assessed: 14/10/2026

Person Specification

Job Title	School/Department
Postdoctoral Research Assistant	PCLS

Which stage these Criteria be assessed

A = Application

I = Interview

P = Presentation/Pre task/Other

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Skills Required	• Experience with MRI/MRS (A, I) • Good organisational skills (I) • Good interpersonal skills (I) • Ability to analyse data using a suitable statistical software (A,I) • Excellent computer skills in Microsoft Office and SPSS or R (A) • Excellent analytical and problem-solving skills (A)	• Some experience of psychological or other relevant research with young and/or autistic children (A,I) • Ability to program or alter existing programmes(A,I) • Ability to work with R and relevant packages (A,I) • Research and project-related administrative skills (A,I) • Experience with MRI/MRS with autistic children (A,I) • Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing • Ability to work to deadlines
Attainment	• PhD in Psychology, or relevant discipline (completed or close to completion) (A)	• Appropriate publication record for career level (A,I)
Knowledge	• Basic knowledge and an interest in sensory perception (I) • Knowledge and interest in autism and relevant literature (I) • Knowledge of MRS principles (A,I) • Knowledge of statistical analysis (A,I)	• Knowledge of MRS analysis (A,I)

	• Knowledge of developmental testing and experimental methods (A,I)	
Relevant Experience	• Experience of working with children with/without autism either as part of research or clinical work (A,I) • Experience with conducting research including MRI/MRS (A,I) • Experience of managing a project (A,I)	• Experience of recruiting research participants, in particular children and families (A,I)
Other	• Friendly and approachable (I) • Strong organisational and project management skills (A,I) • Interest about the project and research, especially sensory reactivity in autism and working with autistic children (I)	• Good attention to detail (A,I) • Fast learner – open to learning new skills and taking initiative (A,I)

Completed By Teresa Tavassoli, PhD

Date 14/10/2026