AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CDP) studentship

The Bethlem Royal Hospital during the First World War

Start date: 1st October 2023

Application deadline: 29th May 2023

The University of Liverpool and Imperial War Museums (IWM) are pleased to announce the availability of a fully funded Collaborative doctoral studentship from October 2023 under the AHRC’s Collaborative Doctoral Partnership Scheme.

This project examines life at the Bethlem Royal Hospital between 1914 and 1918, in the building which housed the Imperial War Museum from 1936 to the present. It will be jointly supervised by Professor Alison Fell and Dr Stephen Kenny from the University of Liverpool, and Sarah Paterson and Laura Clouting from IWM. The student will be expected to spend time at both institutions, and to become part of the wider cohort of CDP funded students across the UK. The studentship can be taken up either full or part-time. Students should have an excellent academic record at undergraduate level. A master’s degree in a relevant subject would be welcome, but is not a requirement. Those able to demonstrate equivalent experience in a professional setting will also be considered.

Project Overview

The link between insanity and war has been frequently commented on, yet we know very little about what actually happened at the Bethlem Royal Hospital during the First World War. This project will link the nation’s most famous mental health facility and the world-renowned museum set up to document and record the Great War and the impact it had on British society. Much of the recent scholarship on the care, treatment and experiences of the mentally ill during the First World War has focused on ‘shellshock’ amongst military personnel. As Claire Hilton’s 2020 book Civilian Lunatic Asylums During the First World War demonstrates, however, this has meant that the care of the civilian mentally ill during the war has been neglected. Hilton’s book examines four London hospitals – Colney Hatch, Claybury, Napsbury and Hanwell – to demonstrate how the economic austerity of the war years placed pressure on both staff and patients. This project will place the staff and patients of the Bethlem Royal Hospital building within this broader context. It will investigate a range of archival sources to explore how the war shaped the experiences of both patients and staff between 1914 and 1930, and will consider three key themes relating
to the impacts and legacies of the war on the hospital: care in a wartime economy; civilian trauma; and place and the senses.

Firstly, BRH patient admission records show that the economic consequences of the war were frequently mentioned as a cause or an exacerbating factor in patients’ conditions on entry. For instance, in 1916-17 reference was made to male patients complaining of ‘business worries owing to the war’, being ‘worried by war, high prices and a fear of Call to the Army’, or being ‘overworked – doing two men’s jobs because of the war’. Another economic impact of the war was the difficulty in recruiting trained medical staff given the enormous staffing demands of military hospitals. Secondly, official policy during and after the war was to minimize state responsibility for civilian psychiatric conditions that may be attributable to the war, partly due to fears about potential claims for financial compensation by civilians. Historians have argued, however, that this underestimates the toll of the war on the population’s mental health, and BRH patient records give a fascinating insight into the impact of the experience of war on civilian mental health. Finally, the project will draw on recent innovative research on place and the senses in the history of medicine, to focus on how hospitals ‘have felt rather than how they have looked’. Drawing on archival records and written and oral history accounts by hospital staff which describe the various wards, offices, and communal spaces of the building, and working with IWM staff to recreate some of those spaces, the project will explore how it felt to live and work in the BRH. The Museum is mounting an exhibition notionally titled ‘War and the Mind’ in 2024-25, and the student will be expected to contribute any relevant findings from their early research to the project as directed by the lead curator.

**Research questions**

Key research questions to be addressed might include:

- How did the circumstances of the First World War impact the life of staff and patients at BRH?
- What was the impact of the First World War on civilian mental health?
- How did staff and patients experience the buildings of BRH?

**Details of Award**

CDP doctoral training grants fund full-time studentships for 45 months (3.75 years) or part-time equivalent. The studentship has the possibility of being extended for an additional 3 months to provide professional development opportunities, or up to 3 months of funding may be used to pay for the costs the student might incur in taking up professional development opportunities.

The AHRC award pays tuition fees up to the value of the full-time home UKRI rate for PhD degrees and full maintenance for all students. International students will not be charged fees on top of the full-time home UKRI rate. National Minimum Doctoral Stipend for 2023/24 is £17,668 (rising in alignment with UKRI) plus a CDP maintenance payment of £600/year.

Further details can be found on the UKRI website:
The student is eligible to receive an additional travel and related expenses grant during the course of the project from the IWM worth up to £1000 per year for 3.75 years (45 months).

The project can be undertaken on a full-time or part-time basis.

Eligibility

- This studentship is open to both Home and International applicants.

- To be classed as a home student, candidates must meet the following criteria:
  - Be a UK National (meeting residency requirements), or
  - Have settled status, or
  - Have pre-settled status (meeting residency requirements), or
  - Have indefinite leave to remain or enter

Further guidance can be found [here](https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/grant-terms-and-conditions/).

- We want to encourage the widest range of potential students to study for a CDP studentship and are committed to welcoming applications from students from all backgrounds. We particularly welcome applications from Black, Asian, minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds as they are currently underrepresented at this level in this area.

- If you have a disability you may be entitled to a Disabled Students’ Allowance (DSA) on top of your studentship. DSA helps to cover the cost of any additional support that a person studying for a doctorate might need as a result of a disability, mental health problem or specific learning difficulty. You can read more about DSA [here](https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/grant-terms-and-conditions/).

- Applicants should have an excellent academic record at undergraduate level. They should have or expect to receive a relevant Master’s-level qualification, or be able to demonstrate equivalent experience in a professional setting.

- Applicants must be able to demonstrate an interest in the museum sector and potential and enthusiasm for developing skills more widely in related areas.

- As a collaborative award, students will be expected to spend time at both University of Liverpool and IWM.

NB. All applicants must meet UKRI terms and conditions for funding. See:

[https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/grant-terms-and-conditions/](https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/grant-terms-and-conditions/)
How to apply

Applicants will be assessed on their academic record and research potential. The successful applicant will be invited to formally apply for the PhD in History (https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-research/degrees/history/).

Applicants should provide the following documents:

- Copies of degree certificates and transcripts (officially translated into English where necessary)*
- 1,000 word research proposal
- Acceptable English language certificate (only required for applicants who are not from a majority English speaking country, please see here: https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/study/international/apply/english-language/ for further information)
- Contact details for two academic referees
- Personal statement outlining their research interests and suitability
- Completed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion form

Please submit all documents to hlc-pgr@liverpool.ac.uk

Please note it is the responsibility of applicants to request references from their referees and ensure that they have been received by this deadline. All documents should be submitted in either a MS Word or PDF format.

Interviews will be held in June 2023.

The successful candidate will be encouraged to participate in CDP Cohort Development events.