

Royal College of Psychiatrists

Job description



Job title:	Presidential Lead for Early Life Health
Term of office:	Co-terminus with President (September 2026 – July 2029)
Responsible to:	President
Working with:	
Governance	President and other College Officers
Management	Chief Executive, Head of Public Mental Health Implementation Centre and other College staff as required
Responsible for:	Presidential Scholar for Early Life Health
Elected/appointed:	Appointed
Scope:	UK-wide
Time commitment:	1 PA per week
Salary:	Unpaid/Voluntary

Job purpose

To support the President and College Officers in developing and delivering a strategic Early Life Health workstream, the President's priorities on prevention, public mental health, implementation, and neighbourhood health, and the College's commitment to improving outcomes across the life course.

The postholder will support the President and College Officers in driving implementation of the recommendations set out in Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health: The Case for Action (CR238), with a focus on addressing the implementation gap between evidence and practice.

The role will provide strategic leadership in bringing together psychiatry, perinatal mental health, infant development, child and adolescent mental health, family mental health, public health, primary care, paediatrics, education, community services and neighbourhood systems to promote a coherent, prevention-focused approach to Early Life Health.

Key responsibilities

- Advise the President and College Officers on the development and delivery of the Early Life Health agenda.
- Lead the development of a strategic programme of action to support implementation of CR238 recommendations.
- Work with staff and members of the College across the four nations of the UK to tailor activities to the specific national contexts the College works in across the UK
- Lead the development of an Early Life Health Toolkit that supports integrated working across local systems, neighbourhood teams, commissioners and clinicians.
- Work collaboratively with relevant Faculties, including Perinatal, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Public Mental Health, Liaison Psychiatry, General Adult Psychiatry and others as appropriate.
- Engage external stakeholders, including health bodies, RCGP, RCPCH, RCOG, Faculty of Public Health, health visiting, education, voluntary sector organisations, and parent/carer representatives across the four nations.
- Identify, synthesise and promote existing evidence, innovation and examples of good practice from the UK and internationally.
- Support implementation through pilot sites, measurable outcomes, quality improvement approaches and implementation science methodologies.
- Promote integration of physical health, mental health, family wellbeing and developmental outcomes within Early Life Health.
- Contribute to the development of meaningful population-level and service-level outcome measures relevant to Early Life Health.
- Managing the work of a Presidential Scholar

Person specification

Essential

- Must be a Member, Fellow or Specialist Associate of RCPsych
- Strong understanding of Early Life Health, public mental health, prevention, child development and relational practice.
- Experience of working across organisational and professional boundaries.

- Ability to engage diverse stakeholders and build collaborative partnerships.
- Understanding of implementation, evaluation, quality improvement and measurable outcomes.
- Ability to translate evidence and policy into practical, scalable approaches.
- Commitment to integration of physical health, mental health and family wellbeing.
- Commitment to equity, inclusion and culturally responsive practice.
- Ability to lead a collaborative, action-focused programme with clear deliverables and measurable impact.

Scope

Some member roles have a global or UK-wide remit, whereas others are nation or region specific. If your role has a UK-wide remit, please be aware that health and social care, education and training, local government and some taxation are all devolved areas in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Justice and policing are devolved powers for Scotland and Northern Ireland. To reflect this, the RCPsych has Devolved Councils and structures in each nation which lead the College's engagement on these matters, and devolved policy can often vary to meet national requirements.

If you have any questions or need any guidance about the situation in any of the four nations, please speak to your College staff contact.

The College Values

Courage

- Champion the specialty of psychiatry and its benefits to patients
- Take every opportunity to promote and influence the mental health agenda
- Take pride in our organisation and demonstrate self-belief
- Promote parity of esteem
- Uphold the dignity of those affected by mental illness, intellectual disabilities and developmental disorders

Innovation

- Embrace innovation and improve ways to deliver services
- Challenge ourselves and be open to new ideas
- Seek out and lead on new, evidence-based, ways of working
- Have the confidence to take considered risks
- Embrace the methodology of Quality Improvement to improve mental health services and the work of the College.

Respect

- Promote diversity and challenge inequalities

- Behave respectfully – and with courtesy – towards everyone
- Challenge bullying and inappropriate behaviour
- Value everyone's input and ideas equally
- Consider how own behaviour might affect others
- Respect the environment and promote sustainability.

Collaboration

- Work together as One College – incorporating all members, employees, patients and carers
- Work professionally and constructively with partner organisations
- Consult all relevant audiences to achieve effective outcomes for the College
- Work together with patients and carers as equal partners
- Be transparent, wherever possible and appropriate.

Learning

- Learn from all experiences
- Share our learning and empower others to do the same
- Value and encourage personal feedback
- Use feedback to make continuous improvements
- Create an enabling environment where everyone is listened to, regardless of seniority
- Positively embrace new ways of working.

Excellence

- Deliver outstanding service to members, patients, carers and other stakeholders
- Promote excellent membership and employee experience
- Always seek to improve on own performance
- Promote professionalism by acting with integrity and behaving responsibly
- Demonstrate accountability in all that we do
- Uphold the College's 'Core Values for Psychiatrists'.

INTERNAL COLLEGE CONTACT:

- Department: National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health (NCCMH)
- Name of Contact and Email: Tom Ayers, Tom.Ayers@rcpsych.ac.uk
- Job Title: Director of NCCMH