

# Jonah Walter, Staff Nurse, CAMHS over 12s Day Programme

## First Steps into Research Gateway Award



### Tell us a bit about yourself and your career to date

I qualified as a Mental Health Nurse in September 2022, having previously undertaken the Edinburgh College Access Course to gain entry to this. Prior to qualifying I worked as a Clinical Support Worker in a range of settings. These included supporting people with dementia, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, and mental health issues.

### What is the focus of your Gateway Award?

For my Gateway Award I will be working on the MORE RESPECT study at Edinburgh Napier University with Professor Liz Hughes. This is a randomised controlled trial of a sexual health promotion intervention for people with severe mental illness delivered in community mental health setting.

As I am very newly qualified I will be starting this placement later in 2023, after I have had a period to settle into my new role.

### What motivated to apply for this Gateway Award?

The idea of being involved in research has always been a dream for me. When I first started working in care I was interested in learning why we do things in the way we do, and what impact our actions have on the people we support.

Research seemed to be the best way of finding this out.

### What are you hoping to get out of the award you have received?

I hope to gain a greater understanding of the ethics application process, recruitment, and data analysis. As the study includes an 8 month pilot I hope to leave with an overview of different stages of the study, including assessing cost effectiveness and process evaluation.

I would also hope to learn more about how to offer safe and effective interventions promoting sexual health through involvement with the study, and to bring this knowledge forward to use in practice.

Alongside the gateway opportunity I plan to take part in a Good Clinical Practice course.

**What difference do you think having this funded support will make to your understanding of research?**

I hope it will make a tremendous difference.

Learning through taking part with experienced professionals offers so many opportunities missing in independent study. While nursing increasingly provides a chance to learn about research through academic work, the focus is far more on findings and their applications than the methodology involved. The First Steps Gateway Award will allow me to see how research takes place outside of the theory.

**What do you hope to do in the future and how do you think this Gateway Award will help you achieve this?**

In the short term I plan to undertake an MSc in Psychological Research, and this Gateway Award will help provide a foundation of knowledge going into this. Longer term I would love to be employed in a dual capacity which would allow me to be involved both in research and clinical work.

**For more information please contact:**

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