**Funding Source: Self-funded / own sponsor**

**Proposed start date: to be confirmed/negotiable**

**Closing date for applications: open until filled**

**Eligibility: UK/International**

***International Tuition fee: £29,300 per annum (2024/5 entry).***

***Standard UK PhD tuition fees for Home students:*** *full-time £4,786, part-time £2,393 (2024/5 rates). Please note that depending on your area of research there may be additional costs to allow for such as attendance at conferences, travel, training and consumables etc.*

**Department/School: Healthcare**

**Supervisors:**

Dr Linda Birt [Linda.birt@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:Linda.birt@leicester.ac.uk)

Dr Sion Scott [s.scott@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:s.scott@leicester.ac.uk)

Dr Fawn Harrad-Hyde.

**Project Title: Advance care planning conversations in care home, understanding resident and family experiences.**

**Application link:**

[**https://le.ac.uk/study/research-degrees/research-subjects/school-of-healthcare**](https://le.ac.uk/study/research-degrees/research-subjects/school-of-healthcare)

**Project Description:**

**Highlights:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. | Demographic predictions indicate increasing numbers of older people will reach end of life in care homes making effective use of advance care planning conversations essential. |
| 2. | Exploring the perceptions of residents, families and care staff about barriers and enablers to having advance care discussions will support effective practice development. |
| 3. | This PhD will provide a sound methodological base for an applied health early career researcher. |

**Background**

Advance care planning is a process of conversations about a person’s preferred care and treatment, the place they would like to receive any care, and often involves considering what treatment people may not wish to receive.1 These discussions can happen at any stage of a person’s life but are particularly important when an older person is in a care home. Older people in care homes often have high frailty scores and many have cognitive impairment meaning that emergency admission to hospital is common. Relatives are often asked to involved in decisions about how to manage an older person’s deterioration in health, especially if they have advanced dementia. There are known challenges to talking about, and planning for end of life care2,3 but there is a lack of evidence about advance care planning form the perspective of residents and families.2

Recent research by the supervisory team has found that finding the right time to have advance care conversations is a concern for care home staff and relatives. 4 Timely and consistent approaches to advance care choices in care homes has the potential to reduce older care home residents transfer to hospital. Such transfers are known to be highly traumatic to older people and are resource intensive. A systematic examination of barriers and enablers to advanced care conversations, specifically from resident and family perspectives will support the development of best practice guidance. This may enable older care home residents to die in their preferred place surrounded by people and objects they know.

**Methodology**

There are three phases to this project each developing distinct research skills:

**Phase 1** use qualitative data synthesis such as meta ethnography to examine and define current global practices around advance care planning practices in older people long term care facilities and identify what is not yet known.

**Phase 2** collect qualitative data using appropriate methods (i.e. interviews, focus groups, observation) in UK care homes to understand barriers and enablers in instigating conversations around deteriorating health and end of live. Data analysis will be underpinned by the Theoretical Domains Framework to help extrapolate behavioural domains relevant for practice development.

**Phase 3** work with relevant stakeholders (residents, families, care home staff, primary care teams palliative care specialists to develop resources on advance care planning for use in care homes.

Post graduate research work would look to implement and evaluate efficacy of the resources. The School of Healthcare supervisory team have experience of research in care homes, development of behavioural change interventions and extensive qualitative research experience. Throughout the project there is opportunity to work with palliative care specialists at LOROS Hospice.

***References:***

*1.Sudore, RL, Lum ,HD, You, JJ, et al. (2017), Defining Advance Care Planning for Adults: A Consensus Definition From a Multidisciplinary Delphi Panel. J Pain Symptom Manage, 53(5):821-832.e1. doi:10.1016/j.jpainsymman.2016.12.331*

*2.Spacey, A., Scammell, J., Board, M. and Porter, S. (2021), A critical realist evaluation of advance care planning in care homes. J Adv Nurs, 77: 2774-2784.* [*https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.14822*](https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.14822)

*3. Zhou, Y., Wang, A., Ellis-Smith, C., Braybrook, D., Harding. (2022). Mechanisms and contextual influences on the implementation of advance care planning for older people in long-term care facilities: A realist review’ Int. J. Nurs Stud.,133. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2022.104277*

*4.Harrad-Hyde F, Faull C, Agrawal S, Birt L (2023), Could peer-mentors support families of care home residents to prepare for deterioration and end-of-life? An interview-based study with current and bereaved families and care home staff. In review*

**Entry requirements:**

Applicants are required to hold/or expect to obtain a Bachelor Degree 2:1 in a relevant subject area.

The University of Leicester English language requirements apply where applicable: <https://le.ac.uk/study/research-degrees/entry-reqs/eng-lang-reqs/ielts-70>

**Application advice:**

To apply please refer to: <https://le.ac.uk/study/research-degrees/research-subjects/school-of-healthcare>

With your application, please include:

* CV
* Personal statement explaining your interest in the project, your experience, why we should consider you in addition to confirmation of how you will pay your fees.
* Degree Certificates and Transcripts of study already completed and if possible transcript to date of study currently being undertaken
* Evidence of English language proficiency if applicable
* In the reference section please enter the contact details of your two academic referees in the boxes provided or upload letters of reference if already available.

*In the proposal section please provide the name of the supervisors and project title (a proposal is not required)*

Application and project queries to [soh-pgr@le.ac.uk](mailto:soh-pgr@le.ac.uk)