



Economic
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Research Council



The Mass Development of Wobble Rooms for Front-Line Healthcare Staff in the NHS: The Politics of Space and Communities of Coping

ESRC DTP Collaborative Studentship

University of Nottingham and Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

The Midlands Graduate School is an accredited Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP). The Midlands Graduate School is a consortium involving the University of Warwick, Aston University, University of Birmingham, University of Leicester, Loughborough University and the University of Nottingham.

In association with our collaborative partner, Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, the University of Nottingham, as part of Midlands Graduate School, is inviting applications for an ESRC Doctoral Studentship to commence in October 2021. Supervisors at Nottingham are Prof. Marek Korczynski, and Dr. Simon Bishop.

The Project

During the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a spontaneous mass development of wobble rooms in NHS hospitals. Wobble rooms are dedicated spaces to allow staff (mainly nurses and allied health professionals) to process and cope, often collectively, with the stresses of their jobs. Bradford was home to the first wobble rooms, and co-supervisor on the project, Prof. Pilling, of Bradford, helped to propagate their spread.

The project examines the development of wobble rooms, with particular reference to 2 academic literatures:

1. *Communities of coping* are informal autonomous networks of reciprocated caring among workers in jobs heavy with emotional labour. Research here shows the importance of a safe space within the organisation for such communities to flourish; and the persistence of autonomous communities of coping in implicit resistance to managerially-controlled forms of workforce support.
2. *The politics of space, particularly in NHS settings*. Research shows how financial logic drives the provision of space so that managerial and policy reforms often leave insufficient space for social and rest areas for staff. Research also points to staff resistance to managerial attempts to reconfigure space.

The successful student can use these and other literatures to analyse deeper processes within the development of wobble rooms.

The research questions focus on the experience of wobble rooms by front line staff, and the politics of how wobble rooms have developed. The research will involve interviews and case studies. The student will gain opportunities to collaborate with stakeholders in conducting research and translating and disseminating research in an applied, practitioner context.

Person Specification

Research methods training is available as part of the scholarship. We are looking for applicants with excellent qualifications at undergraduate and/or postgraduate level relating to healthcare sociology, sociology of work, organisation studies, or human resource management. Applicants should have a commitment to scholarship which engages not only with academic knowledge, but also with implications for practice.

Application Process

To be considered for this PhD scholarship, please email your [application form](#), along with academic transcript(s), a one-page cover letter and a CV (including marks awarded to date plus details of two referees) to karen.maltby@nottingham.ac.uk.

Application deadline: Midday, 3rd March, with interviews, 3-5pm, 11th March.

Award Details

[ESRC studentships](#) cover fees at the home rate, a maintenance stipend, and extensive support for research training, as well as research activity support grants. Support is available to both home and international applicants. Nottingham also provides a limited number of fee scholarships for international students (to cover the difference between home fees and international fees). Further details [here](#).

Please direct informal enquiries to Simon.Bishop@Nottingham.ac.uk.