

Start and end dates	Interview date
01/05/2022 – 30/04/2023	Friday 13 May 2022
Duration of role	Salary
420 hours	£9.90/hour
Working pattern	Number of roles available
Flexible but a minimum of 7 hours a week	2
Location	Deadline for applications
Bristol, with some tasks being worked remotely.	12:00 midday, Thursday 5 May 2022
Eligibility	
<p>To apply for the role of Research Assistant through the <a href="#">Civic Research internship programme</a> you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be a current 2<sup>nd</sup> year undergraduate student in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law able to commit to a year's research project;</li> </ul> <p>For further details, including a full list of eligible programmes, please visit our <a href="#">website</a>.</p>	

## 1. Project overview

This is an exciting year-long opportunity to work on deliberative democracy in practice with Dr Jack Nicholls from [SPAIS](#), Bristol City Council, and Vivid Regeneration. The work and insights will inform an innovative grant-making process that amplifies the voices of citizens from across the city. Don't miss out on this amazing opportunity.

**Bristol City Council (BCC)** has partnered with Dr Jack Nicholls from the University of Bristol and [Vivid Regeneration](#) to carry out an evaluation of its new [Community Resilience Fund \(CRF\)](#), which will fundamentally change the way community grant funds will be allocated to communities in need. Following on from the Citizen's Assembly experiment in more direct forms of democracy, the CRF will apply deliberative democratic and participatory decision-making processes to award the CRF funding of £4 million to Voluntary Community Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations from across Bristol. The overall aim is to widen participation in decision-making and give power to communities to consider how they can make the biggest impact.

The evaluation will involve a yearlong mixed methods analysis of the participatory processes that are being trialled over the first-year pilot phase. The funding allocation process will aim to

increase participation in decision making, build connections and shared understanding through deliberative conversations.

The fund will support recovery and longer-term resilience, responding to the recommendations from ‘[Designing a New Social Reality](#)’ to create more capital, allowing revenue streams to be re-established and assets to be managed effectively by community organisations and anchors, social enterprises and community businesses.

The focus will be on both geographic and citywide communities of interest which experience the greatest inequity. This is because we know exclusion and inequity undermine community resilience.

The evaluation will involve reviewing the following participatory process:

It will start with community conversations about opportunities and priorities. This stage of identifying priorities will be led by a community or voluntary organisations with strong connections and roots in the community. Organisations will be encouraged to partner with others, to reach a diverse network of relevant groups, and so that collaborations between small and larger organisations can build community capacity where it is limited. The process will need to be inclusive and equitable, considering levels of deprivation.

Once priorities are identified, VCSE organisations, residents and local ward councillors will come together to deliberate. These deliberative groups may choose to agree the projects which will receive funding directly or may decide to offer a short-list of potential project to a public, participatory voting process for decision. Funding will be made available for those leading the conversations and facilitating. These organisations will take part in training to co-design the approach which balances consistency across the city and ability to adapt to local conditions. Once the priority projects have been approved, BCC will then work with shortlisted organisations to develop a more detailed delivery plan and a funding agreement to deliver the community priorities.

## **2. Role description**

The two research students will lead the empirical data collection process under the supervision of Jack Nicholls (Senior Research Associate, SPAIS), Nora Pau (PLN) and Di Robinson and Judith Taylor from Vivid Regeneration.

The evaluation will involve qualitative empirical data collection, qualitative coding analysis, report writing, workshop preparation and presentations to partners and other interested organisations.

The primary data collection process will involve attending the community conversations and deliberative groups and producing high quality notes based on observations. These notes will be transcribed, coded and analysed by the student researchers to produce a report on the process which will build the empirical foundation of the evaluation.

## **3. Person specification**

*Essential:*

A good understanding of qualitative social science research.

Excellent written and verbal communication skills.

Confidence to attend meetings and talk in workshop settings.

Ability to produce high quality written reports.

A can-do attitude, self-motivated and caring attitude to other members of the research team.

*Desirable:*

Knowledge of deliberative democracy.

Knowledge of challenges faced by VCSE organisations.

Interest in research design.

#### **4. Overview of induction and ongoing support/supervision**

Dr Jack Nicholls and Nora Pau will carry out an induction that will cover all elements of the process. Supervision will take place regularly over the course of the project.

#### **5. Additional info**

As part of the interview we will spend some time discussing the following proposed aims of the evaluation:

1. To understand the extent to which the decision making process fulfilled the anticipated outcomes listed in the theory of change
2. To understand the successes and challenges of the participatory and deliberative decision-making process used and how it was developed
3. To understand the impact of the decision-making process on community building and addressing community identified priorities, and wider, unexpected impacts outside the explicit outcomes of the programme and individual organisations
4. To contribute to and enable shared learning between VCSE organisations involved, the council and the wider sector which we hope will encourage the development of a citywide approach to participatory decision making, and understand how it can contribute to Bristol's One City Plan objective
5. To recognise the successful aspects of the decision making process which are scalable and replicable, for future use within participatory and deliberative decision making.

6. To make clear recommendations which can grow the use of participatory decision-making in the city

The roles will require the successful candidates to spend some of their time working remotely and have access to a laptop or computer and internet connection. If you need support in any of these areas, please email [fssl-pln@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:fssl-pln@bristol.ac.uk) when you submit your application.

For a detailed outline of the application process, tips for applying and links to application and interview support provided by the Careers Service see our [Civic Research Internship Research Assistant guidance document](#).

Any questions please contact the Professional Liaison Network – [fssl-pln@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:fssl-pln@bristol.ac.uk)