

Start date	Interview date
w/c 14 June 2021 (to be negotiated if needed)	w/c 7 June 2021
Duration of role	Salary
200 hours	£9.50/hour
Working pattern	Number of roles available
25 hours/week over 8 weeks. Hours will be flexible Monday to Friday, expected to fit within 9am – 6pm but that which maximises contact with research participants.	2
Location	Deadline for applications
Remote working	12 midday, 27 May 2021
Eligibility	
<p>To apply for the role of Research Assistant for this research, you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be a current undergraduate student in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law; OR • be a recent graduate (within six months of graduation) of an undergraduate degree in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law. <p>For further details, including a full list of eligible programmes, please visit our website.</p>	

1. Project overview
<p>Voscur is the support and development agency for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in and around Bristol. Working with the University of Bristol, the collaboration will develop a number of in-depth studies on the impact of Covid-19 on the city. This will help the city as a whole develop a better understanding of how we responded to the pandemic, what we have learned and what we might do to take that learning forward.</p> <p>We are looking to recruit two Research Assistants, in the first instance, to help us initiate this project. They will be the first of six undergraduate student Research Assistants to work on the project.</p> <p>Bristol's response to Covid-19 – A joint research project between Voscur and the University of Bristol</p>

[Designing a New Social Reality](#), is recent key report produced by the Black South West Network here in Bristol, and its stakeholders include Voscur and Bristol City Council. It seeks to “analyse the impact of Covid-19 on the VCSE sector in Bristol in order to assess how to foster and embed greater community resilience in the new operating environment, and ultimately provide evidence for planning a thoroughly informed and strengthening VCSE sector recovery strategy that looks beyond Covid-19 and to the long-term future.”

While the abovementioned and similar reports show a great deal of time and sector-specific expertise has been deployed to look into individual areas, there has been no overall view of how Bristol – as a city and its voluntary sector organisations – responded and adapted to the Coronavirus pandemic. It is to this dimension that the proposed research seeks to address.

Working with the University of Bristol, Voscur and its VCSE members, we now have the opportunity to look in depth into a number of areas that have been profoundly impacted since March 2020. Two initial areas of research have been prioritised:

Topic: Homelessness

Study: How charities operating in this area worked with the council and private business to ensure homeless people were not forgotten during the pandemic

Expertise: Shelter, Caring in Bristol, Emmaus, Julian Trust

Topic: Food security

Study: How need arose as part of the pandemic, and how the city responded to this

Expertise: Muslim Hands, North Bristol Foodbank, Trussel Trust, Refresh Bedminster

Other themes that have been identified include:

- Digital inclusion and young people – How the city responded to the new realities of providing education at home.
- Volunteering – Volunteering numbers, gaps filled by volunteers, partnerships, management.
- The environment, wildlife and parks – What lockdown meant for the environment and nature in the city; how people used parks and outdoor spaces for health and wellbeing,
- Older people – How lockdown impacted on services for older people in the city, and how providers adapted.

The scope of research topics for the first two research assistants is yet to be finalised and will certainly be influenced by the research interests of the role applicants alongside those of Voscur staff who want to be part of the research project.

The intention is to generate an evolving and cumulative series of in-depth reports of how the city of Bristol and its VCSE sector responded to and met the challenges of Covid-19 over 2020 and into 2021 and beyond. This is aimed at addressing two overarching research ends. First, to develop a shared and group-based learning experience for the research participants and the wider VCSE sector of how they dealt with Covid-19. Second, to similarly help shape this knowledge exchange across the city and therefore to influence the wider policy implications of what went well and what might we do differently in the future.

2. Role description
<p>In collaboration with their two supervisors – one from Voscur and one from the School of Management, UoB – the Research Assistants are expected to develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an appropriate research agenda and design • take a lead role in conducting the resulting field work for their topic • deliver a report that discusses their findings and collaboratively shape conclusions and recommendations for their topic • and work with others within the research project in shaping group based reflections and emergent conclusions <p>Broadly speaking, we would expect the research period to be 2 weeks of planning and preparation, 3 weeks of field work and 3 weeks of drafting discussion and conclusions. The research process will be one of collaboration with research participants and research supervisors from the University and Voscur.</p>
3. Person specification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research experience – Having some experience of a social research programme would be beneficial but the roles are open to applicants who do not have to have a track record. Indeed, this role might be their first involvement in social research. More importantly, we are looking for Research Assistants who have a passion for getting involved in the research topics discussed above and a hunger to be part social change. • From their degree coursework applicants must have an awareness of the range of social science research methods that might be deployed in this project. This knowledge should include an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of mainstream research methods that involve the design of questionnaires/surveys, focus groups and open-ended interview questions. • Applicants should have strong communication skills in both interpersonal interactions and in writing. • Applicants should be self-driven and well organised in getting through tasks and hitting deadlines.
4. Overview of induction and ongoing support/supervision
<p>Research Assistants will be supervised by Professor Martin Parker (Professor of Organisation Studies, School of Management) and Dr John McGoldrick (seconded and volunteer to Voscur).</p> <p>Tom Burnett of Voscur will oversee the management, production, launch and publicity for this work. Voscur will also provide access to Bristol's voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.</p> <p>Tom Burnett and Dr John McGoldrick will advise the Research Assistants on framing the research questions for each topic and provide guidance on process and standards. Voscur staff may also be involved and be made available to part of the research resource and therefore might team up with research assistants <i>(TBC)</i>.</p>

Orientation guidance meetings will be provided by Tom Burnett and Dr John McGoldrick to brief the Research Assistants on the VCSE sector in Bristol and the background settings of the research topics. These meetings will also help the Research Assistants shape their research questions and the appropriate research designs that flow from them. They will also provide continuing support to the post holders throughout the research project, with regular meetings to assess progress.



5. Additional info

[*Designing a New Social Reality*](#), Black South West Network report on impact of Covid-19

[*Bristol Refugee and Asylum Seeker Partnership – Evaluation and lessons learnt*](#)

[*Never more needed - Voscur's impact study for 2019/20*](#)

[*Bristol and climate change – a joint University of Bristol & UKRI report*](#)

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 [Bristol Model Research Assistant guidance document](#).

Any questions please contact the Professional Liaison Network – fssl-pln@bristol.ac.uk