Magdalen College proposes to appoint a postdoctoral research assistant in its Calleva Research Centre to work on the project ‘Changing Lives: childhood experience, cumulative risk, and supportive environments across the life course’. The post will commence on 1 September 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter.

*The Calleva Centre at Magdalen College*

Magdalen College, one of thirty-eight colleges within the University of Oxford, carries out research and teaching in the full range of humanities, social science and science subjects. The College is home to a large community of undergraduate and graduate historians, four history tutors, and a Centre for the history of childhood. For further information on the College see [www.magd.ox.ac.uk](http://www.magd.ox.ac.uk).

The College’s Calleva Research Centre for Evolution and Human Science was inaugurated in October 2010. Its aims are to investigate key questions about the origins, development, causes and functions of human behaviour by bridging the humanities, social, cognitive, and biological sciences within a broad evolutionary framework. The Centre’s work is embodied through successive three-year interdisciplinary research programmes that draw on unique collaborations between Magdalen Fellows working in these diverse fields.

*Details of the research programme*

‘Changing Lives’ is an interdisciplinary project, led by Dr Lucy Bowes and Dr Siân Pooley, that brings together the complementary strengths of research from medical sciences and humanities to ask new questions about how experience affects the unfolding of lives.

Childhood experiences shape our lives in many ways. Adverse childhood experiences can lead to outcomes that have enduring and damaging effects, not only for the individual, but also for those who are close to them and for society as a whole. Existing psychological and epidemiological research has focused on the short-term outcomes of early life stress, such as violence, neglect, or abuse. By contrast, historical research has tended to rely on retrospective evidence from adults’ memories of childhood experiences. This project seeks to develop an innovative methodology to
understand the life-long impact of early life experiences prospectively and to help identify what best supports people across the course of their lives.

The post

We are seeking a qualified and highly motivated individual for a postdoctoral research assistant post to examine children’s experiences in mid-twentieth-century England. The applicant will join a stimulating, interdisciplinary research environment. They will have the opportunity to participate in training, seminars, and workshops across Oxford, including research activities organised through the Faculty of History, The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities (TORCH), and Magdalen College.

The postdoctoral research assistant will be principally responsible for archival research. This will include identifying, collecting, and analysing children’s essays, case files, institutional and state records, and personal sources, as well as using published texts. Candidates should have experience of using archival sources to write about lived experience and subjectivity. Candidates must have a knowledge of modern British social history, including the history of childhood, family, welfare, and inequalities, and they will be encouraged to develop future research projects and publications. Candidates should have an interest in interdisciplinary and collaborative research, including public engagement, quantitative evidence, and longitudinal methodologies.

Responsibilities and duties

- Undertake specified archival research on children’s experiences, family relationships, and the impact of social welfare in mid-twentieth-century England.
- Create and sustain an efficient system for storing and analysing evidence for the project.
- Manage research, administrative and writing activities related to the project, so as to meet deadlines.
- Travel regularly to archives in London and occasionally elsewhere in the UK.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues from other disciplines, including through organising team meetings and contributing ideas towards the development of the interdisciplinary project.
- Contribute to co-authored and co-edited publications arising from the project; the post holder will also be encouraged to produce sole-authored publications.
- Contribute to public engagement activities with schools, community groups, policy-makers and practitioners, as well as with the public online and through colloquia.
- Undertake such other duties as may be required from time to time that are commensurate with the grade and responsibilities of this post.
- Conduct themselves with due regard to the University Equal Opportunities and Data Protection policies.
Selection criteria

Required

- Hold or be close to completing a relevant PhD/DPhil in history or a related discipline.
- Experience of conducting archival research using modern manuscript sources to write about lived experience and subjectivity.
- Knowledge of modern British social history, including the history of childhood, family, welfare, and inequalities.
- Ability to interpret evidence sensitively and to write for academic audiences.
- An interest in interdisciplinary and collaborative research, including public engagement, quantitative evidence, and longitudinal methodologies.
- Ability to manage a research project. The post-holder will be expected to operate largely unsupervised in the day-to-day running of the research and administrative aspects of the archival research; good attention to detail and excellent organisational skills are essential.
- Excellent communication and inter-personal skills, with an ability to work co-operatively in a multidisciplinary setting. The post-holder will be expected to contribute to maintaining a collaborative and supportive working environment.
- Ability and willingness to travel to London for archival research. The location of the job will be in Oxford, with frequent travel to archives in London and occasionally elsewhere in the UK.

Salary and benefits

The appointment will be made on grade 6 of University Salary Scale, currently £28,660-£37,345 p.a.

The post carries an entitlement to join, or to remain a member of, the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS). The postholder will be entitled to free meals in college, and may participate in the College’s contributory Healthcare scheme.

The College provides for maternity leave on a basis that exceeds the statutory provisions. Provided that they have at least 26 weeks’ service with the College at the 15th week before the expected week of birth, women are eligible for 26 weeks’ maternity leave on full pay, followed by 13 weeks of leave on Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) and 13 weeks of unpaid maternity leave. Magdalen has a priority claim on three places in the University nurseries. Arrangements are available for paternity leave.
Application procedure

Applications must include the completed application form (available from www.magd.ox.ac.uk/job-vacancies/). Candidates should also submit a covering letter outlining their suitability for the post and a CV. The covering letter, CV, and completed application form should be emailed to human.resources@magd.ox.ac.uk by 12 noon (UK time) on 31st July 2019.

We expect to notify shortlisted candidates within a few days of the closing date. References and a writing sample will then be required from shortlisted candidates. We expect interviews to take place on 7th August 2019.

The appointment will be subject to satisfactory completion of a medical questionnaire and the provision of proof of the right to work in the UK. Applicants who would need a work visa if appointed to the post are asked to note that under the UK’s points-based migration system they will need to demonstrate that they have sufficient points, and in particular that (i) they have sufficient English language skills (evidenced by (a) passing an approved English Language test with at least CEFR level B1 in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, or (b) having an academic qualification that was taught in English and is recognised by UK NARIC as being equivalent to a UK bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, or PhD, or (c) being a national of a majority English-speaking country); and (ii) that they have sufficient funds to maintain themselves and any dependants until they receive their first salary payment. Further information is available at: www.gov.uk/tier-2-general/overview.

Recruitment Monitoring

A Magdalen College Recruitment Monitoring Form will be found at the following page on the Magdalen College web site: http://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/job-vacancies/ Applicants are requested to complete the form and return it to Human Resources, Magdalen College, Oxford OX1 4AU (or by email to human.resources@magd.ox.ac.uk). Please note that the form is anonymous and is used only to monitor and ensure equality of opportunity for all candidates: it is not part of the selection process and will not be seen by any member of the selection committee.

Data protection

All data supplied by applicants will be used only for the purposes of determining their suitability for the post and will be held in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018

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1 But NB if the person appointed to the post is a migrant sponsored under the UK’s new points-based migration system, we are required to retain the applications for all shortlisted candidates until six months after the College has ceased sponsoring the migrant.
and the College’s Data Protection Policy with can be found at http://www.magd.ox.ac.uk/other-policies/data-protection/.