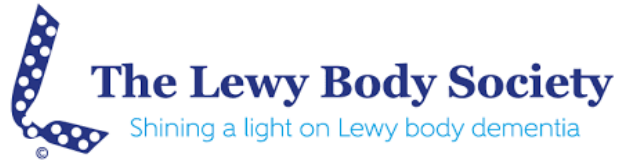


## Lewy Body Dementia



### Doctoral Training Network

#### Title of the award

PhD studentship - Diagnostic delays in Lewy Body Dementia; exploring the primary care perspective using a mixed methods approach

#### Award summary

A 4 year funded PhD with home fees and annual stipend allowance paid (starting at £19,500). A training allowance and consumables budget is also available.

#### Overview

Background: People with Lewy body dementia (LBD), which includes related disorders: dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB) and Parkinson's disease dementia, are more likely to wait longer for an accurate diagnosis. Such delays may negatively affect their subsequent care. The NIHR funded DIAMOND Lewy programme aimed to identify, and explore the reasons behind, diagnostic delays in LBD from a specialist, secondary care perspective to develop an assessment toolkit for use in NHS care (<https://research.ncl.ac.uk/diamondlewy>).

However, the primary care pre-diagnostic pathway for people with LBD i.e. how GPs manage patients prior to specialist referral and eventual diagnosis, remains unexplored.

Objective: to explore, using a mixed methods approach, the primary care pathways of people diagnosed with LBD prior to diagnosis.

Methods: The project will ideally comprise a mixed methods approach, with quantitative and qualitative data collection; however, flexibility according to the successful student's experience and needs is possible i.e. a purely quantitative or qualitative programme is possible. The first objective is to quantitatively describe the primary care pre-diagnostic pathway of people diagnosed with LBD, compared to matched age/sex controls of those diagnosed with Alzheimer disease (AD), using large primary care databases e.g. Clinical Practice Research Database (CPRD)\*.

The second objective is to explore in detail the factors which influence primary care pre-diagnostic pathways for people diagnosed with LBD via a qualitative study with key stakeholders (people with LBD, their family carers and GPs). Data collection will be via individual interviews for people with LBD and their family carers and 1-1 interviews and/or focus groups for primary care professionals.

Finally using key findings from both of the above, task groups (a modified focus group approach) will be held with i) people with LBD and their family carers and ii) healthcare professionals to identify possible solutions for example, a primary care amendment to the DIAMOND Lewy specialist toolkit.

\*Example of CPRD data to be collected: number of consultations x years prior to diagnosis LBD vs AD; time from first presentation with any possible dementia symptom to diagnosis (e.g. a memory impairment code) for LBD vs AD; time from first symptom to referral to specialist clinic for LBD vs AD; other specialist referrals prior to diagnosis; number of comorbidities diagnosed in x years before diagnosis.

Potential impact: Academic outputs and non academic outputs e.g. guidelines for GPs

## Number of awards

1

## Start date

15 Sep 2025

## Award duration

4 years

## Application closing date

31<sup>st</sup> January 2025

## Sponsor

The Lewy Body Society (LBD DTN)

## Name of supervisor/s

Professor Dame Louise Robinson [Staff Profile | Faculty of Medical Sciences | Newcastle University](#)

Professor Louise Allen [Louise Allan Profile | University of Exeter](#)

Professor Matthew Prina

## Eligibility Criteria

A 2:1 honours degree, or international equivalent, in a relevant subject. A Masters with strong research training element would be highly advantageous.

If your first language is not English you need an overall IELTS score of 6.5 (at least 5.5 in all sub-skills) or equivalent language qualification.

International applicants may require an ATAS ([Academic Technology Approval Scheme](#)) clearance certificate prior to obtaining their visa and to study on this programme. International applicants will be required to pay the difference between home and international fees.

## How To Apply

You must apply through the University's Apply to Newcastle Portal

Register and apply through the University's Apply to Newcastle Portal

<https://applyto.newcastle.ac.uk/> and 'Create a Postgraduate Application'.

<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/fees-funding/search-funding/?code=ph056>

In 'Course choice' tab, click 'Search Course' put 'Postgraduate Research', in 'Type of Study', 'Full Time', in 'Mode of Study', '2025' as 'Year of Entry', code '8370F' in 'Course Title', blank in 'Research Area'.

Press 'Search', select 'PhD Population Health Sciences (FT)', and click 'Save selection.'

Either upload a document or write into 'Personal Statement'. Put code 'PH056' in 'Studentship/Partnership Reference'. When prompted for research proposal, select 'Write Proposal'. Type in the title of the research project from this advert. A research proposal is not required. You can also upload a covering letter and CV, please state how your interests and experience relate to the project.

You must submit one application per studentship, you cannot apply for multiple studentships on one application.