

Dr Lou (Louisa) Thomas

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PERSONAL STATEMENT

I am an experienced Research Manager and early career researcher with a strong background in neuroscience, psychology and autism research. In my role at NHS England, I support researchers by aligning their work with policy priorities, securing funding, and fostering collaborations with key stakeholders. I am passionate about advocating for early career researchers and underrepresented groups. My resilience, adaptability, and knowledge of research and funding processes enable me to work effectively in my role as Research Manager, and to support researchers to thrive in their research careers.

EDUCATION

2017 – 2021	Ph.D Researcher (social/cognitive neuroscience) Thesis: Knowing me, changing you: Individual differences in social learning and influence in discounting tasks Royal Holloway, University of London
2018	ADOS-2 (Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule) Training Pearson
2017 – 2018	Programme in Skills on Teaching to Inspire Learning To become an Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy Royal Holloway, University of London
2013 – 2016	BSc. Psychology, Development, and Developmental Disorders 2:1 Royal Holloway, University of London

EMPLOYMENT

09/2022 – present	Research Manager National Autism Programme Learning Disability and Autism Programme NHS England
2021 – 2022	Postdoctoral Research Associate Centre for Autism University of Reading
2019 – 2021	Psychology Research Methods and Analysis lab class tutor Royal Holloway, University of London
2017 – 2019	Psychology Research Methods and Analysis SPSS workshop demonstrator Royal Holloway, University of London
2016	Research Assistant Royal Holloway, University of London
2015	Experimental Psychology Society Funded Research Assistant Royal Holloway, University of London

VOLUNTARY WORK

2013 – 2018	Youth Worker (ad hoc) Anstee Bridge (Achieving for Children)
2015	Student Mentor Windsor Boy's School and Royal Holloway, University of London
2013 – 2015	Classroom Assistant (ad hoc) Malden Parochial Church of England Primary School

SELECTED INVITED TALKS

2024	<i>Overview of NHS England policy context and getting research into policy</i> Sheffield Autism Research Lab, University of Sheffield
2024	<i>Overview of my career</i> Royal Holloway, University of London
2023	<i>Getting research into policy</i> British Psychological Society, Developmental Psychology section
2021	<i>Being an autistic teacher in higher education</i> THESIS seminar Royal Holloway, University of London

OUTREACH AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

2022 – 2023	<i>Early Career Researcher training</i> Autistica
2022 – 2023	<i>Speaker panel and discussion organisation</i> Experimental Psychology Society
2022	<i>Undergraduate Research Opportunities Placement supervision to produce a dissemination podcast (NeuroDives: Diving into Neurodiversity)</i> University of Reading
2022 – present	<i>Podcast host</i> PsychologiCALL , season 3 and 4
2022	<i>Writing a thesis podcast recording</i> The Psychology Debrief
2021	<i>Neurodiversity podcast recording</i> The Psychology Debrief
2019	<i>Postgraduate Research Convention organisation</i> Royal Holloway, University of London
2018 – 2019	<i>Postgraduate Research Student Representative</i> Royal Holloway, University of London
2018 – 2020	<i>SAD (Social, Affective, and Decision) Neuroscience Journal Club organisation</i> Royal Holloway, University of London

FUNDING, AWARDS AND PRIZES

2022	Undergraduate Research Opportunities Placement supervisor of the year University of Reading
2022	Awarded funding for Undergraduate Research Opportunities placement student project University of Reading
2021	College Team Teaching Commendation Royal Holloway, University of London
2021	PGR Programme Positive Impact Award Royal Holloway, University of London

2016	Jack Westaway Memorial Prize Royal Holloway, University of London
2015	Experimental Psychology Society Student Research Assistant Bursary Royal Holloway, University of London

PUBLICATIONS

1. Su, Z., Garvert, M., Zhang, L., Manohar, S. G., Vogel, T. A., **Thomas, L.**, Balsters, J., Husain, M., Apps, M. A. J., & Lockwood, P. (in press). Older adults are relatively more susceptible to impulsive social influence than young adults. *Nature Communications*. [Pre-print](#).
2. **Thomas, L.**, Lockwood, P. L., Garvert, M. & Balsters, J. H. (2021). Contagion of temporal discounting value preferences in neurotypical and autistic adults. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-021-04962-5>
3. Lucas, R., **Thomas, L.**, & Norbury, C. (2017). Can children with autism spectrum disorders learn new vocabulary from linguistic context? *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-017-3151-z>

REPRODUCIBILITY AND OPEN SCIENCE

1. **Thomas, L.**, Scerif, G., Evans, N. J., & Manning, C. (2022). Speed-accuracy trade-off and motion coherence processing in autistic and non-autistic children. *Pre-registration*. <https://osf.io/kbeja/>
2. **Thomas, L.**, Scerif, G., Evans, N. J., & Manning, C. (2022). Visual orientation processing in autistic and non-autistic children. *Pre-registration*. <https://osf.io/rsg39/>

KEY SKILLS

Policy and funding skills

- Supporting researchers to develop funding applications, considering policy needs and the practicalities of delivering research in an NHS setting
- Supporting researchers to identify appropriate funding calls
- Co-authoring guidance and policy documents
- Identifying research needs and producing evidence signals
- Producing accessible summaries of evidence
- Maintaining relationships with key stakeholders

General research skills

- Study design
- Participant recruitment
- Writing academic papers
- Data collection (behavioural and fMRI)
- Data management

Programming, software, and hardware

- Microsoft Office: e.g., Excel, PowerPoint, Word
- Experienced with using Mac, Linux and Microsoft operating systems
- MATLAB, R, Python, E-Prime
- National Instruments grip force measure (for behavioural data collection)

Behavioural research and analysis methods

- Questionnaire development and coding
- Behavioural analysis: JASP, Jamovi, SPSS, MATLAB, R, Python
- Statistical analysis including General Linear Models, Principal Component Analyses, Canonical Correlation Analysis
- Qualitative analyses
- Model fitting and comparison

- Trained in the delivery of standardised assessments for child participants (e.g., WASI and TOWRE)
- Trained in the delivery of ADOS-2 assessments (2018)

Neuroimaging (MR) research and analysis methods, and software

- First Aid trained (2018) and MRI scanned approved person (2019)
- MRI console operation
- MRI pre-processing (SPM: shell scripting, batch scripting, and GUI)
- General Linear Model-based analyses of event-related fMRI data (SPM: shell scripting, batch scripting, and GUI)
- TFCE corrected fMRI contrast randomisations (FSL shell scripting)
- FMRI data visualisation: SPM, FSLeys and MRICron