How does ageing affect cognition, health and wellbeing in older people with autism? (Ref. SoSS-2020-018)

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Research in this area is scarce, but answers are needed in order to improve wellbeing in older people with autism. There is a lack of longitudinal studies which assess the trajectory of function across time in autistic adults particularly in those aged 50+. While working memory generally declines in later adulthood in neurotypical adults, cross-sectional comparisons have suggested this may not be the case for autistic adults; indeed, the trajectory of functional change in areas such as working memory, attention, and fluency may differ in older autistic adults versus adults without autism. Sensory sensitivities, repetitive restricted behaviours and theory of mind may even improve with age, while problems with executive function persist. This project will assess age-related cognitive, health and wellbeing changes in autistic people and non-autistic controls in order to identify, develop and test appropriate behavioural interventions for older autistic people.

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When submitting your application for this project area, please select the option ‘Psychology, PhD’ from the drop-down list on the online application system.