



### UKRI policy fellowships 2025: fellowship position

**Fellowship title:** DCMS land-based gambling fellowship

**Fellowship type:** Core policy fellowship

**Host organisation:** [Department for Culture, Media & Sport](#)

**Host team:** DCMS Gambling Policy Team, Sport and Gambling Directorate

**Summary:** opportunity to conduct a piece of research on the value of land-based gambling and an analysis of motivations behind people's choices to gamble in physical premises in an increasingly online world

**Policy topic:** this fellowship will contribute to the government's policy development on gambling, in line with the manifesto commitment to ensure responsible gambling. The fellowship will also provide important evidence to help situate gambling policy in relation to the government's Health Mission and Growth Mission

**Research Council:** UKRI

**Academic discipline(s):** economics, sociology, human geography, behavioural science, psychology

**Research career stage:** open to early or mid-career researchers

### Fellowship structure

#### **Inception phase:**

**Estimated start date:** February 2026. Exact date to be confirmed by the host depending on onboarding and security clearance requirements

**Duration:** three months

**FTE:** 0.4 FTE

#### **Main placement phase:**

**Duration:** 12 months

**FTE:** 0.6 to 1 FTE

#### **Knowledge exchange phase:**

**Duration:** three months

**FTE:** 0.4 FTE

### Work arrangements

**Location requirements:** the fellow can be based at any DCMS location, although some travel to the London office (Westminster) may be required

**Hybrid working:** the fellow will not be expected to work from a DCMS office during the three-month inception phase but should plan for up to three in-person meetings at DCMS offices in London. DCMS is a hybrid working organisation. DCMS colleagues based in London and Manchester are expected to spend a minimum of 60% of their working time working face-to-face with their colleagues either in offices or on official business, so ideally the same would be expected of the fellow during the 12-month main placement phase. The fellow will not be expected to work from a DCMS office during the three-month knowledge exchange phase but should plan for up to three in-person meetings at DCMS offices in London. The fellow will have the opportunity to be embedded within the DCMS Gambling Policy Team and attend regular team meetings and social events. Eligible Travel and Subsistence costs are supported in the main UKRI grant. Please see full call text and guidance for more details

**Security clearance:** Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) is required and is expected to take four to six weeks from submission. We expect the successful applicant to start the security clearance application process, with support from the host team, as soon as their fellowship has been confirmed by UKRI. Ideally the security clearance process would be completed before the inception phase begins. Please see [National security vetting: clearance levels](#) for further information

### **Fellowship description**

In April 2023, DCMS published its [white paper](#) on gambling setting out the government's plans for bringing the regulation of the gambling sector into the digital age. It set out over 60 evidence-based proposals to respond to the risks and opportunities which have emerged since the Gambling Act 2005.

The modernisation of out-dated and restrictive land-based measures was a core component of the proposals outlined in the white paper. The white paper acknowledged that the emergence of new technology and the availability of online gambling since the Gambling Act 2005 came into force has substantially altered the gambling landscape. In September 2019, the Gross Gambling Yield (GGY) generated by remote gambling [overtook that of land-based gambling](#) for the first time (excluding lotteries).

With this in mind, the government committed to ensuring that the regulation of land-based gambling is fit for the modern age and is proportionate to the risk associated with the gambling products on offer. The characteristics of land-based products have substantially improved since the introduction of the Gambling Act 2005. For example, safer gambling functionality is now available and widely used on many gaming machines. This is in addition to improvements in monitoring and staff supervision of customers. However, we recognise that a minority of customers do experience gambling-related harm and that it is necessary to have safeguards in place to protect customers.

The land-based gambling sector, unlike the online gambling sector, has faced significant challenges in recent years as a result of business inactivity during periods of COVID-19 restrictions. In addition, operating costs have risen significantly over this period, especially as a result of rising energy costs, which have increased by over 225% for some operators. As a consequence, many venues have closed in recent years, impacting local communities through the loss of jobs and decreased economic activity. For example, the number of bingo halls across the UK declined from 335 at the end of 2018 to 251 as of January 2024. These venues are important local institutions which promote social cohesion and help safeguard against social isolation. However, the emergence, and relative resilience, of Adult Gaming Centres means adult participation in land-based gambling sector and the varied profitability within different parts of the sectors poses interesting questions for the present and future of the land-based gambling industry.

However, the evidence base regarding the social and economic value of land-based gambling premises is mixed. Understanding more about the motivations behind gambling in land-based venues in an increasingly online world and amidst challenges to the high street and local economies more broadly would be a valuable addition to the evidence base. The government's priorities around growing the economy while doing more on prevention and improving the nation's health would make research in this area especially timely. Novel primary research to understand public attitudes and perceptions around land-based gambling, but also economic analyses of the value of land-based gambling, including whether any economic multipliers are at play, would be a significant step forward. We are also interested in the social and economic 'trade-offs' at play, for example, the relative (social) costs versus benefits of participation in land-based gambling, including comparisons with other sectors or consumer behaviour more generally. This research would have real value for public policy and would be undertaken at an important time in the government's gambling agenda.

The main research phase will be planned and codesigned in collaboration between the fellow and the host, matching the interests and skill set of the fellow with the policy questions of the host. Indicative activities include:

- Scoping an appropriate research problem and developing an analysis plan
- Testing and agreeing research methodology (qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods)
- Sharing knowledge and expertise with members of the Gambling Policy Team to inform public policy development
- Advising policy colleagues on developments and gaps in research evidence

Expected outputs:

- Updates and briefings throughout the project, produced with members of the Gambling Policy Team and other stakeholders
- An assessment of 'value' broadly conceived of land-based gambling. This could include an assessment of economic or social value (costs, benefits, trade-offs), split by subsector
- Contributions to briefings and other outputs produced for departmental colleagues and Ministers
- Publishable research paper containing key findings and recommendations for further research

There are also a range of potential benefits of undertaking the fellowship in this area:

- The opportunity to codesign and lead the delivery of original research within government
- Experience working closely with government officials on high-profile issue for the department
- Opportunity to build a network of contacts in government policy
- Policy influence and impact with the opportunity for research to feed directly into official advice to DCMS Ministers
- Opportunity to publish research findings (subject to DCMS approval)

### **Person specification**

Applications will be assessed by UKRI panel assessment against the following essential opportunity-specific requirements in addition to the generic eligibility and call criteria:

#### **Essential criteria:**

- Knowledge and experience in economic theory and assessment of economic and social metrics
- Expertise in primary, survey, qualitative research methods
- Ability to synthesise multiple types of evidence to draw conclusions, identify gaps and make recommendations
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, with experience of communicating research to a variety of audiences
- Strong analytical skills including experience of working with different types of data, such as survey data or operational data

Applicants shortlisted from the panel assessment will be assessed at the host led interview selection process against the following desirable opportunity-specific requirements:

#### **Desirable criteria:**

- Interest in the economic and social value of land-based gambling sector

### **Processing personal data**

If applicants are shortlisted by the UKRI assessment panel UKRI will need to share the application and any personal information that it contains with the host for the host led interview selection process.

Your personal data will be handled in line with UK data protection legislation and managed securely. If you would like to know more, including how to exercise your Rights, please see the UKRI [privacy notice](#).

DCMS's privacy notice can be found here: [DCMS privacy notice](#). Hosts will delete your data at the end of the selection process unless you are successful, in which case we will retain your data as an independent data controller.