



UKRI policy fellowships 2025: fellowship position

Fellowship title: Welsh Government using behavioural science to inform successful climate policies fellowship

Fellowship type: Core policy fellowship

Host organisation: [Welsh Government](#)

Host team: Climate Behaviour Change and Engagement team (Climate and Fuel Poverty Division)

Summary: opportunity to research and recommend approaches to embedding social and behavioural science evidence across Welsh Government policy in areas linked to tackling climate change, nature recovery and the environment

Policy topic: climate change, related sub-topics and the role of the general public in achieving net zero emissions by 2050

Research Council: ESRC

Academic discipline(s): behavioural science and social research

Research career stage: open to both early and mid-career researchers. Given the interdisciplinary and multi-level policy context, this opportunity is suited to researchers with at least some experience of behavioural science or social research within a related field

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: Cardiff

Hybrid working: the post will involve a hybrid working pattern, the emphasis on which will be remote working but with the expectation that the post-holder will spend at least two days a month in the office during the main 12 month placement, and up to three to four days during the three-month inception phase to codesign the research. Eligible Travel and Subsistence costs are supported in the main UKRI grant. Please see full call text and guidance for more details

Security clearance: Basic Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) is required as well as Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. Please see [National security vetting: clearance levels](#) for more information

Fellowship description

This topical fellowship opportunity will involve researching, codesigning and recommending approaches for embedding social and behavioural science research across multiple government policy areas linked to tackling climate change, promoting nature recovery and the environment.

Whilst the focus will be to define an approach for the devolved government of Wales, the research fellow will be required to work with other UK nations and forge links with related research programmes such as Advancing Capacity for Climate and Environment Social Science ([ACCESS](#)) which is funded by the ESRC.

The role will explore whether the Welsh Government's ongoing social and behavioural science research is making a positive contribution towards the successful delivery of the Climate Action Wales public engagement programme. The Welsh Government's [Public Engagement Strategy](#) provides the framework for delivery of this programme and sets out the policy topic in more detail.

During the inception phase, the fellow will have the opportunity to work with the team to codesign the research plan for the main placement matching their interests and policy questions of the host. The fellow will also analyse social and behavioural research gathered through this programme around the barriers and motivations to public action on climate change, nature recovery and sustainable management of natural resources and will consider how this evidence can be packaged and shared to ensure it is used to inform more integrated government policymaking. This will include looking at how evidence is currently used to inform policies to achieve multiple priorities linked to public health, economic growth and social and community cohesion. As well as methods for using the evidence, the research will explore levels of understanding amongst policymakers around the connections between poor environmental quality, climate change, inequality, poverty and public health.

The fellow will sit within the Climate Change and Fuel Poverty Division and will form part of a small Behaviour Change and Engagement programme team, reporting to the head of programme and working closely with the Welsh Government Climate and Environment Research Team who will provide access to useful research tools and guidance.

During the placement the fellow will engage with a broad range of Welsh Government departments and priorities (including health, environment, agriculture and rural affairs, food, marine and fisheries, energy, housing, circular economy, education and skills and transport) in order to understand how evidence is currently used to inform the design of climate and environmental policies and programmes.

Outputs:

- A briefing paper setting out the proposed research approach, supported by findings from the scoping review undertaken during the three-month inception phase
- A final report for publication, detailing the research findings, recommended methods and systems for the Welsh Government to ensure the development of evidence-based climate and environmental policies and programmes

Benefits to the fellow:

- Opportunity to codesign, produce and publish original research
- Academic knowledge exchange with related UK research programmes
- Professional development support from the Welsh Government's Climate and Environment Social Research team and opportunities to network with other social and behavioural science practitioners from across the organisation

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 expertise in behavioural and social sciences
- Knowledge of one or more of the following topics (or a closely related area): climate mitigation, climate adaptation, circular economy, environment or biodiversity

- Ability to synthesise multiple sources of evidence to develop usable insights and recommendations for a policy (non-academic) audience
- Excellent communication skills, with an ability to design, lead and facilitate engagement with a range of stakeholders who may have varying levels of experience with behavioural science
- Expertise in the application of social or behavioural science research methods, particularly qualitative approaches

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:

- An understanding of the Welsh policy context, including reserved and devolved governmental powers
- Background knowledge of UK and Welsh Government policy contexts linked to climate change, nature and the environment
- An understanding of research within a political or governmental context

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](#).

The Welsh Government's privacy notice can be found here: [Welsh Government 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.