



UKRI Policy Fellowships 2023: Fellowship Opportunity Description

Fellowship Title: DHSC Securing Better Health - Economics and/or Social Research Fellowship

Host Organisation: *Department of Health and Social Care* [Department of Health and Social Care - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Host Team: Deputy Chief Scientific Advisor's team and relevant policy and evidence teams in DHSC and NHSE

Summary:

Opportunity to use economic and/or social science research skills to improve health policy and NHS and social care service delivery.

Fellowship Theme: Securing Better Health, Ageing and Well-being. *Please see the full call text 'What We Are Looking For' for a detailed summary of the research themes targeted in this call.*

Policy Topic: Improving health services for the future. There are three areas that the fellow can choose to address, based on DHSC's new Areas of Research Interest:

1. Acting early to improve health outcomes through the prevention, early diagnosis, and appropriate intervention for people at high risk of poor health
2. Reducing compound pressures in the NHS and social care
3. Shaping and supporting the health and social care workforce of the future

Research Council: *ESRC*

Academic Discipline/s: Social sciences including behavioural science, economics, and health services research

Research Career Stage: *Early or Mid-Career*

Fellowship Structure

Inception Phase:

Estimated Start Date: October 2023. *Exact date to be confirmed by the host depending on onboarding and security clearance requirements*

Duration: 3 months

FTE: 0.4 FTE

Main Placement Phase:

Duration: 12 months

FTE: 1 FTE preferred but negotiation possible.

Knowledge Exchange Phase:

Duration: 3 months

FTE: 0.4 FTE

Work Arrangements

Location Requirements: Fellowship can be based in London or Leeds offices, though if based in Leeds some travel to London offices will be required. *Eligible T&S costs are supported in the main UKRI grant. Please see full call text and guidance for more details.*

Hybrid Working:

DHSC has a 2 day per week or 8 days per month minimum office working requirement. Some negotiation may be possible.

Security Clearance: <http://www.gov.uk/> Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) is expected to take 4-6 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 ESRC. Ideally the security clearance process would be completed before the inception phase begins.* See [National security vetting: clearance levels - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/).

Fellowship Opportunity Description

DHSC has just published three new Areas of Research Interest (ARIs): acting early to prevent poor health outcomes, reducing compound pressures in the NHS and social care, and the health and social care workforce of the future. We are looking for a Fellow to work on one of these three areas, with the choice of the area made by the Fellow based on their interests and expertise.

1. Early action to prevent poor health outcomes

Prevention, early diagnosis, and appropriate intervention for people at high risk of poor health (in particular; obesity, cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes, mental health and early-stage cancer) to prevent excess deaths, improve population health, reduce disparities and decrease reliance on health and social care.

1. Reduce compound pressures on the NHS and social care

Improved patient outcomes and reduced unnecessary stay in hospital through preventing avoidable admissions, innovations to enable routine care, smart discharge and through effective pandemic preparedness to tackle a range of infectious diseases.

2. Shape and support the health and social care workforce of the future

A public health, NHS, social care, and wider health workforce effectively trained, deployed and supported to deliver future effective and efficient models of healthcare which meet the needs of the UKs ageing population effectively and efficiently.

Across all three ARIs we want to deliver research and innovation which:

1. **Promotes economic growth** by delivering a healthier workforce, a more efficient NHS, a highly skilled health and social care workforce, and through investment in the Life Sciences sector.
2. **Reduces health disparities** and improves health and economics outcomes for the most deprived 20% of the population.
3. **Accelerates the adoption and scale of innovation** in the health and care system.

The Fellow will look at current evidence in their chosen ARI to synthesise evidence in key areas, and to identify interventions with sufficient evidence to inform policy and practice in DHSC, NHS England and in Integrated Care Systems. They will work closely with relevant policy teams to identify policy-relevant research gaps and ensure this are funded through NIHR routes as applicable, and provide behavioural science, economic and implementation science expertise and upskilling as relevant to DHSC teams in order to use the evidence to change policy and practice. The scope of the work, deliverables, and the split between activities will be agreed depending on policy needs and the expertise and interests of the Fellow.

As an example, work on the act early ARI could focus on improving the uptake of hypertension management in the general population, including those most at risk in hard-to-reach groups. For compound pressures, the focus could be on mapping key blocker and enabler in end-to-end activity across the health and care system from preventing winter illness to avoiding admissions, managing patient flow through hospital, promoting smart discharge, and increasing capacity in social care. For the workforce ARI, a project could focus on key skills and cadres required for a shift to a more prevention-focused health service.

Research may include:

- Reviewing and synthesising the existing evidence base in one area
- Identifying effective interventions and what research is required to ensure effective adoption at scale
- Identifying research gaps
- Developing and testing interventions

- Considering behaviour change in the health service.

Expected outcomes: Through the fellowship we seek to gain a deeper understanding of the conditions necessary for the development of more resource efficient and effective health and social care services, and how to help change the NHS to a health service rather than a disease service, including understanding what the barriers and enablers to behaviour change in the public attitude to health and within the health service are.

Expected outputs: Evidence summaries, recommendations for new research, and identification of which interventions/service delivery models are suitable for adoption at scale. Working with policy makers to support effective policy development, including how to scale effective interventions.

We welcome academic publications, though depending on topic these may be subject to clearance, and knowledge exchange activities as agreed with policy teams.

Benefits to the Fellow:

- Opportunity to influence policy in a vitally important area that impacts everyone in the UK as well as the work of the research community.
- Experience of Government, in a central team working with senior staff, to see; how government works, how policy is made, and how science and research influence decisions. Helping to make your research truly impactful.
- Access to a huge range of data and analytical expertise.
- Exposure to the ways of working and interests of a major UK health research funder in NIHR.
- Building a network of contacts in government analytical and policy teams and the wider life sciences sector.
- Access to a range of wider training, support and networking opportunities through the DHSC Science and Engineering profession and Government analyst L&D providing a rich experience and opportunity to build transferable skills.

Person Specification

Applications will be assessed against the following opportunity-specific requirements in addition to the generic eligibility and call criteria.

Essential Criteria:

- Knowledge and expertise in one or more of the following disciplines: behavioural science, health economics, implementation science, or health services research.
- Ability to synthesise multiple types of evidence to identify gaps and make recommendations.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills.
- Ability to work with a range of perspectives and balance competing needs and priorities
- Expertise in specific research methods relevant to the programme of interest e.g., mixed methods, quantitative, qualitative, econometrics (noting that these may be different for each of the three project areas so applicants should highlight the area of interest and skills associated).

Desirable Criteria:

- Expertise in organisational or business behaviours, and/or large organisational change
- Expertise in stakeholder engagement and collaboration, in particular with policy makers or service providers.
- Previous experience and/or demonstrated interest in the chosen policy area.