

UKRI Policy Fellowships 2023: Fellowship Opportunity Description

Fellowship Title: *DHSC Securing better health through prevention, Biological Sciences Fellowship*

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

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

Summary: Opportunity to use biological science knowledge and 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. Innovation for prevention, early detection, and timely intervention to improve health and economic outcomes.

Research Council: *BBSRC*

Academic Discipline/s: *any of Biological sciences/ Diagnostics/ data science/genomics/ transcriptomics/immunology or equivalent*

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/](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](https://www.gov.uk) (www.gov.uk).

Fellowship Opportunity Description

DHSC has just published three new [Areas of Research Interest \(ARIs\)](#):

1. Early action to prevent poor health outcomes
2. Reducing compound pressures on the NHS and social care
3. Shaping and supporting the health and social care workforce of the future

We are looking for a Fellow to work in the early action to prevent poor health outcomes space, though the ARIs overlap and there is room for the fellow to choose areas of focus most relevant to their skills and interest.

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.

In addition, 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 work closely with relevant teams to identify policy-relevant research gaps. 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. The aim of the work is to conduct research that answers policy relevant questions in early intervention.

For example, the Fellow could synthesise evidence in areas of their choice in the early action space in desk based research and potentially through working with industry, communicate the body of evidence to policy makers in DHSC and NHS England, and identify technologies and innovations with sufficient evidence to inform policy and practice. Suitable areas could include precision medicine approaches (including data-driven) for prevention and early intervention, or new diagnostics and therapeutics. There is a particular interest in identifying new technologies with potential and researching how the health and care system can rapidly adopt them, including working with policy teams in DHSC and NHSE.

Research may include:

- Reviewing and synthesising the existing evidence base in at least one key topic
- Identifying evidence-based interventions suitable for adoption at scale
- Identifying research or innovation gaps and what support is required to develop the right novel technologies and diagnostics to have major impacts on population health, healthy lifespan and improving the health of the working age population
- Identifying areas where intervention is required to support growing a cutting-edge UK science and technology sector.

The fellow will have the opportunity to co-design clear research tasks in collaboration with officials in government based on policy needs and the fellow's interests/skills during the inception phase of the fellowship.

Expected outcomes: Through the fellowship we seek to gain a deeper understanding of the possibilities of new technologies to support the improved prevention, early diagnosis and timely intervention necessary for good population health, more resource efficient and effective health and social care services, and which can ultimately help pivot the NHS to a health service rather than a disease service.

Expected outputs: Evidence summaries, recommendations for new research, and identification of which technologies will add value and are suitable for adoption at scale. Working with policy makers to support effective policy and service development.

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. Will gain experience and understanding of how government works, how policy is made, and how science and research influence decisions, helping to make your research truly impactful.
- Access to a wide 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, learning and development, support and networking opportunities through the DHSC Science and Engineering and Analysts professions 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 scientific areas covered by the Act Early area of research interest, for example: precision medicine, diagnostics, 'Omics technologies, data science (noting that these may be different for different project areas so applicants should highlight the area of interest, why it's relevant to the area of early intervention/prevention, and your skills and experience associated with this area).
- Ability to synthesise multiple types of evidence to identify gaps and make recommendations.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills.
- Ability to work at pace with a range of perspectives and balance competing needs and priorities

Desirable Criteria:

- Expertise in life sciences business/ sector ways of working
- 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.