



ESRC Policy Fellowships 2023: Opportunity Description

Fellowship Title: Home Office National Crime & Justice Lab Policy (NCJL) Fellowship –

Crime Prevention – Crime Data Analytics

Host Department: [Home Office - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Host Team: National Crime & Justice Lab – sits within the Home Office’s Crime Strategy and Performance Unit in the Crime Reduction Directorate.

Summary: *Opportunity to use matched/linked data and data analytics to assist in the prevention and reduction of crime across the UK.*

Fellowship Theme: Building a secure and resilient world. *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: *Crime Prevention.*

Research Council: ESRC

Relevant academic disciplines: *Research expertise in criminology, quantitative data analysis, computational social science, analytics and statistics.*

Relevant research career stage: *Early or mid-career researchers.*

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: 0.6-1 FTE (flexible – to be agreed with the Fellow)

Knowledge Exchange Phase:

Duration: 3 months

FTE: 0.4 FTE

Work Arrangements

Location requirements: The NCJL policy Fellow will be embedded within the NCJL team and will work closely with the Home Office Analysis and Insight (HOAI) team and the Data Services and Analytics (DSA) team. The Fellow will be line managed by the NCJL Academic Lead (yet to be appointed). Office space and IT equipment will be provided by the Home Office. Regular travel to Croydon and London will be required for this posting. Remote working may be possible depending on the data being analysed. Eligible T&S costs are supported via the main UKRI grant. Please see full call text and guidance for more details.

Necessary level of security clearance: Applicants will need to be willing to undergo Security Check (SC) and Non-Police Personnel Vetting (NPPV) Level 3 clearance processes. On average SC

clearance takes 5 weeks to complete and NPPV L3 clearance takes approximately 3 months. All costs associated with the clearance processes will be covered by the Home Office. The Fellow will be able to begin the inception phase of the Fellowship before security clearance is completed. For more information on these clearance process please visit see the following links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/united-kingdom-security-vetting-clearance-levels/national-security-vetting-clearance-levels>;

<https://www.securityclearedjobs.com/article/understanding-nppv-what-you-need-to-know>

Fellowship Opportunity Description

Background:

The Home Office intends to establish the NCJL to fulfil a 2019 Manifesto commitment to “create a world-class National Crime Laboratory”. The NCJL will facilitate secure access to sensitive crime and justice data for academic researchers and industry partners, harnessing their expertise to deliver valuable insights on use-cases which aim to deliver concrete benefits for law enforcement and criminal justice organisations. The Lab aims to maximise the potential of the data currently held within policing and across government to support a data-driven approach to strategic policing, criminal justice system (CJS) and wider Home Office activities. The NCJL will focus on addressing the most pressing strategic and policy questions related to crime prevention. This is a ground-breaking and pioneering new programme that will have a real impact on evidence across policing and beyond and will allow for key lessons and experience to be cascaded nationally.

Why is the National Crime and Justice Lab being set-up?

Across policing and the Home Office there are critical questions that need answering in order to improve criminal justice outcomes. The data exists to answer many of these questions but is hidden within large datasets that need cleaning up, linking and analysing. To date, this has been constrained by a limited access to and understanding of the data, and the capacity and abilities of existing in-house resources.

The NCJL will utilise the untapped capacity and capabilities of academia and industry to provide a cost-effective and innovative response to pressing CJS priority areas and challenges. It will form part of the Home Office’s commitment to becoming an innovative, data-driven Department by driving the use of innovative data science techniques to prevent and reduce crime. In doing so, it will contribute to government and Home Office ambitions including: The National Policing Mission as defined in Policing Vision 2025, the Beating Crime Plan, and the overall Home Office Vision and Data Strategy.

Overall, the NCJL aims to:

1. Increase the utilisation and value of CJS data
2. Improve data-driven policymaking, leading to improved CJS outcomes
3. Increase the resource capacity to conduct rigorous and robust research
4. Improve analytical capabilities (including methods, tools and expertise)
5. Build partnerships across Government, Policing and Academia

Research

The NCJL policy Fellow will undertake research and analysis on newly linked datasets and deliver responses to specific use-cases that address Police and Ministerial priorities and provide insights that inform and shape policy and practice, with the aim of improving criminal justice outcomes. They will contribute towards the development of a research demand pipeline that will focus on tackling areas such as homicide, serious violence, drugs, violence against women and girls (VAWG) and neighbourhood crime. Example use-cases have included:

- Analysing trends on sex offender risk ratings to better understand threat and improve resource allocation.
- Identifying offenders and victims who are disproportionately linked to crime in order to inform targeted interventions.

- Improving understanding of the drivers of burglary offences to support local force strategies and policy approaches.

The role is purposefully kept open for the Fellow to scope out clear tasks in conjunction with the NCJL team and analysts in the Home Office based on policy needs and the Fellow's interests and skills, but ultimately the Fellow will work to support a data-driven approach to policymaking and strategic policing to deliver improved criminal justice system outcomes.

The successful candidate will be expected to:

- Work closely with the NCJL core team within the Home Office, the Data Processing Team leading on linking relevant datasets and the NCJL Academic Lead (yet to be appointed).
- Identify priority evidence gaps and research questions that can be addressed through data linkage in line with departmental priorities. Identifying and delivering key analytical projects to demonstrate the potential of linked data to address critical evidence gaps.
- Work with existing Home Office analysts to oversee strategic research projects focused on the newly linked datasets in line with NCJL's strategy.
- Promote and champion the programme, raising awareness through engagement with the research community, including through academic conferences and stakeholder events.
- Liaise and collaborate with key policy and police stakeholders (such as the College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs Council) and support the identification of future use-cases.

Key benefits to Fellow

- Original and novel research – the NCJL policy Fellow will play a pivotal role in a flagship programme to create linked datasets that enable crucial research into the criminal justice system. They will have access to newly linked datasets, providing a unique opportunity to conduct original research and data analysis.
- Co-design and collaboration – Although use-cases will be directed by departmental priorities, they will be refined with input from the Fellow who will have freedom to select the approach and methodology they want to apply. The Fellow's interests and skills will also be taken into account when shaping tasks, within the parameters set by the NCJL team.
- Policy influence and impact – the Fellow will be directly involved in responding to the most pressing strategic and policy questions related to crime prevention and will develop evidence that supports local and national force strategies and policy approaches.
- Publications – opportunities to publish research findings, although in some cases outputs will be subject to clearance by Data Owners.

Opportunity-specific person specification

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

Essential Criteria:

- A track record in quantitative social science research, preferably with experience of quantitative criminology research and/or crime data analytics.
- An understanding of data linking and matching.
- Awareness of the techniques, methodologies and toolsets associated with statistical methods, statistical modelling and administrative and linked data.
- Knowledge of data sharing, data governance and data ethics.
- Outstanding communication skills, suitable for engagement with senior research sector and government stakeholders.

Desirable Criteria:

- Experience of analysis in R, Python or SQL programming languages.
- An appreciation of the UK Policing and Criminal Justice System landscape.
- Experience proactively creating, maintaining and promoting a strong network of connections across research and policy contexts.