



UKRI Policy Fellowships 2023: What Works Innovation Fellowship Opportunity Description

Fellowship Title: Wales Centre for Public Policy Lived Experience Policy Fellowship

Available budget: The full economic cost is £210,000 inclusive of additional £40,000 budget for research and collaboration costs, for further details on the additional budget see the 'How to apply' section specific to the What Works Innovation Fellowships. UKRI will fund 80% of the full economic cost of the grant.

What Works Host Organisation: [Wales Centre for Public Policy](#)

What Works Collaborating Centres: *Centre for Ageing Better, Youth Futures Foundation, Centre for Homelessness Impact*

Host Team: Amanda Hill-Dixon, Senior Research Fellow, Josh Coles-Riley, Research Associate, WCPP, Cardiff University.

Summary: Opportunity to enhance the understanding, capabilities and skills of evidence-generators, policy-researchers, policy-makers and practitioners related to including lived experience evidence and involving people with lived experience in their work.

Fellowship Theme: Data and Evaluation. 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: The Fellowship is primarily methodological in nature but may relate to one or more policy areas such as inequalities, decarbonisation, ageing, youth employment and/or homelessness.

Research Council: ESRC

Academic Discipline/s: Public policy research, public administration, policy studies, policy sociology.

Research Career Stage: 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: 0.8-1 FTE

Knowledge Exchange Phase:

Duration: 3 months

FTE: 0.4 FTE

Work Arrangements

Location and hybrid working: The Wales Centre for Public Policy has a hybrid working policy. Their precise working pattern will be agreed with the Fellow during the inception phase in light of their needs and circumstances (including travel time, caring responsibilities etc.). We anticipate that they will work remotely for the majority of the time. But we believe that there will be benefits in spending some time in our offices in Cardiff University's new state-of-the art Social Science Park to build links with other research centres at Cardiff who have a strong interest in lived experience evidence. The Fellow may also opt to spend some time working at the offices of our three collaborating What Works Centres in London, Birmingham or Leeds. Eligible travel and subsistence costs are supported in the main UKRI grant. Please see full call text and guidance for more details.

Security Clearance: *Not applicable*

Fellowship Opportunity

Description

There is increasing recognition that the social research community needs to make more progress in embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in its work, and the ESRC's Strategic Delivery Plan (2022) recognises this as a priority. One way of promoting EDI is through greater recognition of the value that lived experience (defined as 'personal knowledge about the world gained through direct, first-hand involvement' (Chandler & Munday, 2016) can bring to the research and policy process (The Young Foundation, 2021).

Broader arguments for incorporating lived experience, include a democratic rationale which emphasises that people should be able to influence the decisions that affect their lives (Bell & Reed, 2021) and that people's direct experiential knowledge should be valued alongside other sources of expertise and insight (Beresford, 2003). Involving lived experience in the policy process can also improve policy decisions and outcomes, by ensuring that policy is better attuned to the needs and context of the people it seeks to impact (Smith-Merry, 2020), resulting in policy decisions which are more workable, relevant, and legitimate (Institute for Community Studies, 2020).

Around half of the What Works Centres (WWCs) currently have stated aims and active practice in relation to incorporating lived experience into their work, but there is significant scope for identifying, innovating, and spreading effective models of incorporating lived experience into policy research and knowledge mobilisation work. The goal of this Fellowship will therefore be to strengthen the capabilities and skills of the whole What Works Network (WWN) in relation to incorporating lived experience evidence and/or expertise¹, and by extension the capabilities and skills of the policy-makers and practitioners who work with the WWN. This will be achieved through a combination of original research exploring current practices, reviewing existing literature and guidance, knowledge mobilisation, experimentation and reflection. The Fellow will be hosted by the Wales Centre for Public Policy and will be supported to work in collaboration with the Centre for Ageing Better, Youth Futures Foundation and Centre for Homelessness Impact as part of an action research and innovation process, and through informal collaboration with the wider WWN.

The inception phase of the Fellowship will allow for co-creation of a plan and methodology with the Fellow themselves. But the Fellowship will likely involve the following four key activities which will feed each other iteratively:

1. **Learning from within the WWN to explore current understandings and practices** in relation to incorporating lived experience to gain an understanding of: how and why this varies, barriers and enablers, what is working well or less well, and what the impact of this work is.
2. **Learning from beyond the WWN**, from both literature as well as innovative practice and expertise in the broader sector and from other fields, to identify models of practice, tools and experts (including experts by experience), who could support the WWN to better incorporate lived experience. This will also involve working with policy partners to understand their positions and requirements.
3. **Experimentation and innovation within the WWN** by drawing together learning from the two activities above to share and apply relevant methods for involving lived experience within 2-3 WWCs (dependent on opportunities as they emerge) as part of an action research and innovation process which will produce ongoing learning to inform adaptation and improvement of practice.
4. **Sharing learning and increasing capabilities more broadly** by producing at least: reports on learning from activities 1 and 2, case studies on each of the 2-3 action research processes, a toolkit to support practice, a briefing for policy-makers, a presentation at the What Works Council, and a half day event in the Evidence Quarter. In addition, learning will be generated and shared on an ongoing basis across the WWN through the project 'working group'. The Fellow will be supported to convene representatives from the broader WWN, as well as policy partners, to make up the working group with the goal of enabling and amplifying the work of the Fellowship.

The Fellow will be thoroughly supported by the Wales Centre for Public Policy through 1:1 supervision from a senior line manager, regular attendance at WCPP meetings, support from junior and professional services colleagues, access to spark, Cardiff University's social science research park.

¹ By lived experience 'evidence' we mean existing or newly collected evidence relating to people's lived experience of a policy issue, whereas by lived experience 'expertise' we mean collaborating with people with lived experience to guide or support the delivery of some or all of the policy research process, for example by co-creating research questions or co-delivering research.

Person Specification

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

Essential Criteria:

Research

Knowledge, Skills and Experience

1. An established expertise and proven portfolio of research, publications and/or relevant professional experience within one or more of the following research fields:
 - Public policy research
 - Qualitative research
 - Lived experience research
 - Co-production of research and/or policy
 - Evaluation
 - Evidence synthesis
 - Knowledge integration and mobilisation
2. Experience of managing research and/or knowledge exchange/mobilisation projects with multiple strands of activity, competing deadlines and finite resources.

Communication and Team Working

3. Proven ability to work effectively in a team and with a wide range of stakeholders, such as policy-makers, academics, voluntary sector stakeholders, and people with lived experience of policy issues.
4. Proven ability to present work to internal and external audiences and to engage key stakeholders in the research process.
5. Experience of effectively communicating research or policy work to a range of external audiences, for example through blogs, videos, podcasts, policy briefings and/or social media.

Other

6. Experience of designing and delivering participatory workshops and/or training.

Desirable Criteria:

1. Proven ability to demonstrate creativity, innovation and leadership in enhancing the capacity or understanding of others in relation to involving lived experience in the policy research process.
2. Evidence of collaborations with policy-makers and/or public service practitioners.
3. Experience of working in research or policy related to social inequalities, decarbonisation, ageing, youth employment and/or homelessness.