



**UKRI Policy Fellowships 2023: Fellowship Opportunity Description**

**Fellowship Title:** Welsh Government Sustainable Futures Fellow

**Host Department:** [Welsh Government](#)

**Host Team:** Sustainable Futures Division

**Summary:** Design the methodology for, and conduct the first stage of, an evaluation for Wales' ground-breaking Well-being of Future Generations legislation.

**Fellowship Theme:** Data and Evaluation

**Policy topic:** Policy evaluation, well-being, sustainable development, governance.

**Research Council:** ESRC

**Academic Discipline/s:** Policy evaluation, policy impact studies, multi-level governance, behaviour change

**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:** 0.6-1 FTE

**Knowledge Exchange Phase:**

**Duration:** 3 months

**FTE:** 0.4 FTE

**Work Arrangements**

**Location Requirements:** UK-based remote working. Occasional travel to Welsh Government offices would be beneficial.

**Hybrid Working:** Flexible with opportunity to discuss remote and hybrid working arrangements with the successful applicant during the inception phase.

**Security Clearance:** Basic level DBS. We would 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.

## **Fellowship Opportunity Description**

### **High-level overview**

The [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) (WFG Act) is a unique piece of Welsh legislation that has been operating for more than six years and its impact is felt across the devolved Welsh public sector and beyond. It has been recognised internationally as a progressive policy response to the multiple policy challenges of sustainable development, improving well-being and good governance. The Minister for Social Justice is committed to scoping out an evaluation of the WFG Act with the aim of improving its effectiveness in improving the well-being of people in Wales and to inform future policy developments.

### **Role of the Fellow**

The scope of the project will be co-developed with the ESRC fellow, but we expect it to include **systematic evidence review** and a **social impact assessment** to enable the impact of the WFG Act to be evaluated. Given the broad nature of the WFG Act and its reach in terms of government, public bodies, public services boards and town and community councils, the Fellow will work with key stakeholders from across the devolved Welsh public sector. The Fellow will work closely with officials in the Sustainable Futures Division to co-develop the approach to the evaluation.

Specific deliverables will be agreed with the Fellow during the inception phase, but potential activities could include:

**Systematic evidence review** – the collection, organisation, and analysis of the existing evidence base, including but not limited to statutory reports from each of the 48 public bodies named under the WFG Act, reviews conducted under powers granted by the WFG Act to the Future Generations Commissioner and Auditor General for Wales, and relevant research conducted within the private and academic sectors.

**Social impact assessment development** – a comprehensive description of the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, impacts, risks, and assumptions of implementing the WFG Act. An initial model drawn from the findings of the evidence review will be supported by primary data collection among key stakeholder groups. The fellow will be expected to review the merits of different social impact assessment approaches, which could include a theory of change, and will develop an evaluation protocol that includes the parameters and timescales for future phases of the evaluation. The exact approach toward primary data collection will be agreed between the researcher and the Sustainable Futures Division. A suitable approach may, however, entail a series of focus groups conducted among a representative sample of key stakeholders, i.e., individuals with sufficient experience and expertise in delivering the WFG Act both from within named public bodies and from relevant governing bodies.

### **Aims and benefits of the research**

- To better understand how the WFG Act is being implemented and has been implemented.
- To better understand what effects the WFG Act has had, for whom, and why.
- To better understand whether the WFG Act is having the intended effects.
- To examine the overall impact and effectiveness of the WFG Act compared to what was expected under 'Business As Usual'.
- To improve accountability and transparency in how we manage public resources.
- To add to the evidence base available to Welsh Government for delivering its policy objectives to promote sustainable development
- To identify and disseminate good practice so that lessons may be drawn from the successes and failures.
- To focus efforts on improving implementation and realising the benefits of the WFG Act – improving current interventions.
- To help manage risk and uncertainty, particularly for the WFG Act, which is an innovative legislative space.
- To strengthen our culture of continuous improvement.

- To provide evidence for further post-legislative review activities.

The Sustainable Futures Fellow would benefit from:

- Being involved in national policy and decision-making, working on an influential and unique piece of devolved legislation.
- The opportunity to influence how academic research interacts with government policy.
- Experience of working in Welsh Government – a devolved national government – and working with Welsh Ministers and senior civil servants.
- Access to a network of policy, analysis, and research teams across Welsh Government.

### **Person specification**

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

#### **Essential Criteria:**

- Demonstrates thorough knowledge and applied experience of research methodology, including policy evaluation methods.
- Experience of design, development, management, and timely delivery of research.
- Holds a track record of collaboration with the wider research community and helping others make good use of research evidence.
- Proven ability to effectively communicate and present complex research, including for the purposes of advice or recommendation.

#### **Desirable Criteria:**

- Experience of developing effective communication links with other researchers and analysts to provide appropriate collaborative support to research.
- Experience of stimulating interest in research and its applications and persuading others of the value of the research to the policy process.
- Demonstrates an understanding of the devolved policy context in Wales and the WFG Act.