

UKRI policy fellowships 2025: fellowship position

Fellowship title: College of Policing behavioural systems mapping fellowship

Fellowship type: What Works innovation fellowship

Host organisation: [College of Policing](#)

Host team: Research, Analysis and Knowledge Sharing (RAKS)

Summary: behavioural systems mapping to improve data sharing for crime prevention

Policy topic: Safer Streets

Research Council: ESRC

Academic discipline(s): behavioural science, social psychology, applied psychology and research methods

Research career stage: open to mid-career researchers and onwards

Fellowship structure

Inception phase:

Estimated start date: February 2026. Exact date to be confirmed by the host depending on onboarding and security clearance requirements

Duration: three months

FTE: 0.4 FTE

Main placement phase:

Duration: 12 months

FTE: 0.6 to 1 FTE

Knowledge exchange phase:

Duration: three months

FTE: 0.4 FTE

Work arrangements

Location Requirements: much of the fellowship can be undertaken via remote working with occasional meetings taking place at our London offices in Canary Wharf.

As the fellow will be undertaking their research within one or more police forces, this will require travel to the force(s) which agree to take part. Travel costs should be covered by the UKRI grant

Hybrid working: the fellow can decide how many days they want to come into the London office. Many remote workers choose to go into the office once a week or as necessary. Working arrangements will be agreed during the inception phase. The fellow will be invited to weekly team meetings online and will also have a weekly one-to-one with their Line Manager. Eligible Travel and Subsistence costs are supported in the main UKRI grant. Please see full call text and guidance for more details

Security clearance: Non-police Personnel Vetting (NPPV) Level 2. Estimated duration: three to four months processing time. Inception phase can begin before the security clearance process is completed but it will be required for the main placement phase in order to access IT and other systems

Fellowship description

The College of Policing is seeking to embed a fellow in their Behavioural Science team to support the translation of behaviour change theory into policing practice. The fellow will be immersed in a policing context and learn about the opportunities and challenges that comes with applying a behaviour change approach in a fast-paced, dynamic sector.

The College of Policing has its own in-house behavioural science team which uses the Capability Opportunity Motivation Behaviour (COM-B) and the Behaviour Change Wheel as its core evidence-based frameworks, combining insights from disciplines such as psychology, sociology and neuroscience. These frameworks help to develop in-depth 'diagnoses' and enable the development of targeted interventions to help solve complex and widespread problems. The College is seeking a fellow to help apply these frameworks to the issue of data-sharing across agencies.

Ineffective sharing of data between policing and partner agencies, which might include health, social care, children's services, education, housing, substance abuse support services and third sector agencies that support victims of crime, can negatively impact outcomes relating to prevention, safeguarding and the ability to assess the impact of interventions. The Year Four report from the domestic homicide project showed 30% of suspects and victims were known to other agencies, but not the police. Victims and suspects were commonly in contact with five different agencies: mental health, children's social services, health and ambulance services, domestic abuse support services and adult social services (Hoeger et al., forthcoming). Improved sharing of data and information, then, has the potential to enable police to better prevent crime, offer the right support to victims and better assess the effectiveness and value for money of interventions designed to reduce reoffending. Yet there has been little improvement in this element of multi-agency working.

The College would like the fellow to apply a method called 'behavioural systems mapping' developed at [University College London](#) (UCL). Behavioural systems mapping is an evidence-driven approach which uses the COM-B model of behaviour to systematically map enablers and barriers to behaviour. It then identifies causal pathways and feedback loops between these enablers and barriers and visualises them in a whole systems map. The process of building the map involves drawing on academic research as well as engaging relevant stakeholders to ensure it reflects the lived realities of those in the relevant parts of the system. The purpose of creating the map is twofold: firstly, to determine 'weak' points in the system and recommend which parts of the system should be targeted for change and secondly to develop behaviourally informed strategies that are more likely to impact behavioural change.

There will be three key phases in during the fellowship. In all three phases the fellow will have significant autonomy over the direction of the work.

1. Setup and codesign:

- Define the problem and agree objectives for the work
- Decide which agencies should be involved and establish a multi-agency working group
- Scope what evidence need to be included to build the behavioural systems map

2. Research and stakeholder engagement:

- Undertake a full literature review, interviews or workshops and observations
- Analyse and code research using COM-B to develop a behavioural diagnosis
- Convert COM-B findings into variables useable for the systems map methodology
- Identify causal connections and feedback loops between variables

3. Building map and making recommendations:

- Build an initial behavioural systems map using specialist software
- Test the map with stakeholders and make refinements
- Highlight which parts of the system are contributing most to the problem
- Write up findings and make recommendations for specific behavioural strategies

The fellow will be contributing to the evidence base on how we can achieve better data sharing to prevent crime and offer better victim support. We anticipate using the findings to inform national guidance and design interventions to drive the radical improvements in data sharing that will be required to deliver 50% reductions in knife crime and VAWG. We expect the fellow to be given platforms to disseminate the findings within policing and across other sectors. The fellow could also produce broader recommendations on how behavioural systems mapping can be applied to systems issues, which would be of benefit to other What Works Centres. The fellow should have the opportunity to publish the research findings, dependant on approval from the College and where data and other sensitivities allow.

The fellow will be line managed and supported by the College's Behaviour Change Lead, who will provide training on the Behaviour Change Wheel model and its application. The fellow will also receive specific training on the Behavioural Systems Mapping method from UCL.

The fellow will benefit from access to the National Police Library, College and Civil Service Learning programmes. They can also join the RAKS Professional Community. As a member of the Professional Community, the fellow would be involved in regular meetings with the other members of the community, where College of Policing priorities and strategic decisions are discussed, and presentations are given on ongoing work to allow for shared learning.

Person specification

Applications will be assessed by UKRI panel assessment against the following essential opportunity-specific requirements in addition to the generic eligibility and call criteria:

Essential criteria:

- Demonstrable knowledge of behavioural science and its application
- Experience in developing behavioural interventions
- Experience of running coproduction processes with stakeholders from multiple agencies
- Quantitative and qualitative research skills, including rapid evidence reviews, statistical analysis and thematic analysis
- Experience in running evaluations of research interventions, including obtaining ethics approvals, recruitment, data collection and data synthesis

Applicants shortlisted from the panel assessment will be assessed at the host led interview selection process against the following desirable opportunity-specific requirements:

Desirable criteria:

- Knowledge of the policing sector
- Knowledge of systems mapping methods
- Experience of developing and implementing national level policies

Processing personal data

If applicants are shortlisted by the UKRI assessment panel UKRI will need to share the application and any personal information that it contains with the host for the host led interview selection process.

Your personal data will be handled in line with UK data protection legislation and managed securely. If you would like to know more, including how to exercise your Rights, please see the UKRI [privacy notice](#).

The College of Police's privacy notice can be found here: [College of Police privacy](#) Hosts will delete your data at the end of the selection process unless you are successful, in which case we will retain your data as an independent data controller.