

**UKRI policy fellowships 2025: fellowship position****Fellowship title:** DCMS gambling advertising fellowship**Fellowship type:** Core policy fellowship**Host organisation:** [Department for Culture, Media & Sport](#)**Host team:** DCMS Gambling Policy Team, Sport and Gambling Directorate**Summary:** opportunity to conduct a piece of research on novel developments in online gambling advertising with content creators now marketing gambling products, including unlicensed products, through platforms popular with children and young people**Policy topic:** this fellowship will contribute to the government's policy development on gambling, in line with the manifesto commitment to ensure responsible gambling and promote responsible growth. The fellowship will also provide important evidence to help situate gambling policy in relation to the government's Health Mission and Growth Mission**Research Council:** UKRI**Academic discipline(s):** economics, behavioural science, psychology, advertising and marketing studies, platform economics**Research career stage:** open to early or mid-career researchers**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:** the fellow can be based at any DCMS location, although some travel to the London office (Westminster) may be required**Hybrid working:** the fellow will not be expected to work from a DCMS office during the three-month inception phase but should plan for up to three in-person meetings at DCMS offices in London. DCMS is a hybrid working organisation. DCMS colleagues based in London and Manchester are expected to spend a minimum of 60% of their working time working face-to-face with their colleagues either in offices or on official business, so ideally the same would be expected of the fellow during the 12-month main placement phase. The fellow will not be expected to work from a DCMS office during the three-month knowledge exchange phase but should plan for up to three in-person meetings at DCMS offices in London. The fellow will have the opportunity to be embedded within the DCMS Gambling Policy Team and attend regular team meetings and social events. Eligible Travel and Subsistence costs are supported in the main UKRI grant. Please see full call text and guidance for more details

**Security clearance:** Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) is required and is expected to take four to six 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 UKRI. Ideally the security clearance process would be completed before the inception phase begins. Please see [National security vetting: clearance levels](#) for further information

### **Fellowship description**

The liberalisation of gambling advertising was one of the major changes introduced by the Gambling Act 2005. Before the Act, only bingo and lotteries were permitted to advertise on TV. Since its implementation, gambling marketing has become highly visible and lucrative, with gambling operators spending around £1.5 billion across all advertising channels in the UK, accounting for around seven per cent of the £22.2 billion UK advertising sector [in 2017](#).

Gambling advertising reaches most adults in Great Britain: according to the [Gambling Commission](#), 85% of adults reported seeing gambling advertising or sponsorships, with six in ten reporting seeing them at least once a week. Children's exposure is lower but still significant, with 64% of the 11 to 16-year-old respondents to the [2024 Young People and Gambling Survey](#) having seen or heard gambling advertising via offline platforms and 62% seeing it online. However, it is unclear what impact, if any, the continual growth of gambling marketing since 2005 has had on gambling participation and gambling-related harm.

Alongside this overall growth, the nature of gambling marketing has also changed significantly. Marketing online now accounts for well over half of operators' advertising spend. Regulus Partners' estimate found that between 2014 and 2017, TV gambling advertising spend had grown from £80 million to £145 million and social media gambling advertising had grown from £40 million to £140 million, both excluding lottery advertising. The sector will have continued to change since this estimate, and the COVID-19 pandemic caused the advertising market to shrink overall, but it is likely that the dominance of data-driven online advertising has been further cemented over recent years.

Inevitably, this has led to boundary-pushing advertising practices, including through 'influencers' on social media sites such as Instagram and YouTube, and streaming sites such as Twitch and Steam popular with children and young people. Content creators dedicate social media channels to filming themselves playing on gambling, or gambling-like products, often with humorous commentary. In light of this emergent form of digital media, the evidence base regarding the nature, prevalence, features and impact of this novel form of advertising is relatively underdeveloped. Greater evidence on the intersection between user-generated content online featuring gambling participation, the audiences consuming such content and the implications for their attitudes, behaviours and experiences in relation to gambling would be hugely valuable.

The expanding grey area between online gambling and digitally mediated production and consumption in the context of the historic growth of the online gambling sector poses a number of vital questions for the government. We are, therefore, interested in the rise of content creators online involved in marketing gambling products and an assessment of its impact or associated harms, particularly among young people. An understanding of whether there are specific impacts associated with the promotion of unregulated versus regulated gambling products in this space would also be a vital addition to the evidence.

The main research phase will be planned and codesigned in collaboration between the fellow and the host, matching the interests and skill set of the fellow with the policy questions of the host. Indicative activities include:

- Scoping an appropriate research problem and developing an analysis plan
- Testing and agreeing a research methodology (qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods)
- Sharing knowledge and expertise with members of the Gambling Policy Team to inform public policy development
- Primary data collection on the prevalence of, and young people's engagement with, content creators' marketing of gambling products online
- Qualitative research on the experience of vulnerable groups, including children, young people or those already experiencing gambling harm, with content creator promotion of gambling
- Advising policy colleagues on developments and gaps in research evidence

Expected outputs:

- Produce updates and briefings throughout the project, with members of the Gambling Policy Team and other stakeholders

- An assessment of the 'influence', broadly conceived, of content creator marketing of gambling products on young people's gambling attitudes and behaviours
- Detailed analysis of the gambling journey flowing from novel forms of gambling advertising and any differences associated with the marketing of regulated versus unregulated products
- Contributions to briefings and other outputs produced for departmental colleagues and Ministers
- Publishable research paper containing key findings and recommendations for further research

There are also a range of potential benefits of undertaking the fellowship in this area:

- The opportunity to codesign and lead the delivery of original research within government
- Experience working closely with government officials on high-profile issue for the department
- Opportunity to build a network of contacts in government policy
- Policy influence and impact with the opportunity for research to feed directly into official advice to DCMS Ministers
- Opportunity to publish research findings (subject to DCMS approval)

### **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:**

- Knowledge and expertise in online advertising, preferably from the perspective of young people's consumption of content online
- Strong analytical skills including experience of working with both primary and secondary types of data, such as survey data or operational data
- Strong spoken and written communication skills to convey and present complex data analysis and evidence to internal and external audiences, including in accessible written outputs
- Ability to synthesise multiple types of evidence to draw conclusions, identify gaps and make recommendations
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, with experience of communicating research to a variety of audiences

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:**

- Experience of research in young people's consumption of online advertising content

### **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](#).

DCMS's privacy notice can be found here: [DCMS privacy notice](#). 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.