

UKRI policy fellowships 2025: fellowship position

Fellowship title: DHSC securing better health through the prevention of gambling-related harms fellowship

Fellowship type: Core policy fellowship

Host organisation: [Department of Health & Social Care](#)

Host team: Alcohol and Gambling team, working with relevant DHSC policy and evidence teams

Summary: opportunity to use behavioural science knowledge and research skills to evaluate DHSC delivery of activity to prevent and reduce gambling-related harms and improve future policy. The fellowship will focus on understanding and innovating for the prevention, early identification and early intervention for gambling-related harms, to improve health and economic outcomes

Policy topic: this fellowship will contribute to the government's Health Mission, to build an NHS fit for the future and to see fewer lives lost to the biggest killers, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, stroke and suicide

Research Council: UKRI

Academic discipline(s): behavioural science, psychology, economics, statistics, social sciences, quantitative analysis, and evidence reviewing

Research career stage: open to early and 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: fellowship can be based in DHSC offices in London or Leeds, although some travel between the two may be required

Hybrid working: the fellow will not be expected to work from a DHSC office during the inception phase, but should plan for up to three in person meetings at DHSC offices in London (Victoria). DHSC is a hybrid working organisation. DHSC colleagues 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 main placement phase. The fellow will be included in regular (virtual) team meetings and invited to join other relevant DHSC events. During the knowledge exchange phase the fellow will not be expected to work from a DHSC office but should plan for up to three in person meetings at DHSC offices in London (Victoria) 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: Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) 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 ESRC. 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

Policy challenge and developments:

A Public Health England and Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) evidence review brought together and analysed the best available international research evidence on risk factors and gambling-related harms and concluded that gambling should be considered a public health issue, given the widespread harms to individuals, their families, close associates and wider society. Gambling-related harms have considerable cost to the government and society, estimated to be between £1.05 to 1.77 billion.¹

The most socio-economically deprived and disadvantaged groups in England have the lowest gambling participation rates, but the highest levels of harmful gambling and they are also the most susceptible to harm. If there are no interventions to improve this situation, harmful gambling is likely to make existing health inequalities worse.

In 2024 the UK government announced the introduction of a statutory levy, charged to all licenced gambling activity. The levy will be collected and administered by the Gambling Commission under the strategic direction of the UK government, replacing the current system of voluntary industry contributions. Levy funding will be directed in the following proportions for the purposes of research, prevention and treatment, and each stream of the levy system will also have a lead commissioning body:

- Research: 20% of funding to UKRI for the establishment of a bespoke Research Programme on Gambling (RPG), and to the Gambling Commission to direct further research in line with the licensing objectives
- Prevention: 30% of funding to develop a comprehensive approach to prevention and early intervention across all three nations of Great Britain. In early 2025 the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Minister for Gambling, Baroness Twycross, announced that OHID in the DHSC will take on the role as lead commissioning body in this area for England, alongside appropriate bodies in Scotland and Wales
- Treatment: 50% of funding to NHS England, and appropriate bodies in Scotland and Wales, to commission treatment and support services, working collaboratively with the third sector

High-level overview of proposed research areas:

In partnership with DHSC colleagues the fellow will identify priority research questions during the inception phase of the fellowship, focusing on the physical and mental harms associated with gambling. This fellowship is expected to prioritise quantitative approaches and to involve substantial review of international research and evaluation evidence.

Indicative activities:

The main research focus of the fellowship will be planned and codesigned by the fellow in partnership with the host team, in line with the priority research questions identified by the host team and the fellow's expertise and experience. Embedded within the Alcohol and Gambling team, in the DHSC's Health Improvement Directorate, the fellow will undertake activities including, but not limited to:

- Scoping and leading on research-related activity
- Advising policy colleagues on developments and gaps in research evidence
- Contributing to briefings and other outputs produced for departmental colleagues and Ministers
- Supporting colleagues to engage effectively with researchers in academia, for example, advising on commissioning research

Expected outputs:

This fellowship will provide an opportunity for the fellow to codesign and deliver an original research project of direct and timely relevance to policy development in DHSC. The fellow will benefit from experience of working within a government department, alongside policy makers, with the chance directly to influence policy development.

¹ Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (updated 2023), Gambling-related harms evidence review. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gambling-related-harms-evidence-review/gambling-related-harms-evidence-review-summary--2> [accessed 10.03.2025]

- During the placement, the fellow will contribute to internal outputs, including submissions to departmental colleagues and Ministers
- During the knowledge exchange phase, the fellow will be expected to attend up to three knowledge exchange meetings or events at DHSC offices in London or Leeds, to share learnings with DHSC staff, staff from other government departments, and Ministers if appropriate
- Finally, the fellow will be expected to produce outputs for academic and non-academic audiences as agreed during the inception phase, and to undertake other agreed wider engagement activity with policymakers and the wider academic community (outputs for publication will require clearance by DHSC)

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 gambling or in a public health area with a focus on harm prevention, such as alcohol, tobacco or obesity
- Expertise in secondary analysis of public datasets
- Ability to synthesise multiple types of evidence to draw conclusions, identify gaps and make recommendations
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, with experience of communication research to a variety of audiences
- Ability to work at pace and balance competing needs and priorities.

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:

- Expertise in the public health sector ways of working, institutions and structures
- Expertise in stakeholder engagement and collaboration, particularly policymakers or service providers
- Previous experience or demonstrated interest in gambling prevention

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 DHSC's privacy notice can be found here: [DHSC 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.