

UKRI policy fellowships 2025: fellowship position

Fellowship title: DWP labour market analysis fellowship

Fellowship type: Core policy fellowship.

Host organisation: [Department for Work & Pensions](#)

Host team: the fellow will be working as part of our Labour Market Analysis Division (LMAD), and would also collaborate with analysts in the DWP, Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) Joint Work and Health Unit

Summary: opportunity to improve understanding of the labour market to inform both national policy and activity at more local level, as set out in the Get Britain Working White Paper, utilising a range of data sources including some newly available, or available only within DWP

Policy topic: labour markets and the Future of Work, economic growth, welfare, education skills and training, health

Research Council: ESRC

Academic discipline(s): labour economics, employment studies

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 successful applicant could base themselves in or make use of office space in London (Westminster), Sheffield, Newcastle or Manchester where LMAD analysts are all present. We anticipate that the fellowship can be undertaken effectively with remote working with visits to DWP offices (as appropriate) to meet colleagues and teams

Hybrid working: we would expect the successful applicant to combine time working in one of DWP's sites, to benefit from face-to-face interaction with colleagues, with some remote working, as is the case for most DWP employees. The usual expectation for DWP employees is to spend 40% of their time in the office, but the precise arrangements will be negotiated with the successful applicant. During the inception phase we would expect to have around six in-person meetings, either in Sheffield or London. Eligible Travel and Subsistence costs are supported in the main UKRI grant. Please see full call text and guidance for more details

Security clearance: Basic Personnel Security Standard checks (BPSS), expected to take four to six weeks. Please see [National security vetting: clearance levels](#) for further information

Fellowship description

The fellow will be involved in implementing the vision set out in the Get Britain Working White Paper, to bring a fundamentally different approach to the challenge of bringing down economic inactivity and driving up employment rates. This is described in the White paper as “the biggest reforms to employment support for a generation, bringing together skills and health to get more people into work and to get on in work”. As well as the White Paper, published in November 2024, a Green Paper on reforms to the health and disability benefit system is planned for Spring 2025, and the Keep Britain Working review is due to produce recommendations in Autumn 2025. These and other policy developments will generate new analytical and research needs. During the inception phase particularly, the fellow will collaborate with DWP to codesign a research project which makes the best use of their skills and interests.

While there is already a great deal known about the factors associated with inactivity, and those associated with a return to, or continued employment, there are clear opportunities to add to that knowledge by exploiting newly available data sources, as well as data only currently available within DWP, applying cutting-edge approaches to explore causality, investigating specific research questions thrown up by new policy initiatives, and developing results appropriate to a different range of actors, including local areas

An example of a key data source available within DWP is the Registration and Population Interactions Database (RAPID) which brings together data on all DWP benefits and HMRC data on earnings and employment. While this will be made available externally through Administrative Data Research UK, within DWP it will be possible to link it to additional data including education data. The fellow will be involved in discussions about the developments of existing, and the creation of new data resources, potentially including linked labour market and health data, helping to prioritise developments based on their potential for answering important questions.

Externally, a powerful new resource which will shortly become available through the UK, the UK Longitudinal Linkage Collaboration. This will include a range of external longitudinal surveys (such as the UK Household Longitudinal Study, and birth cohort surveys) linked for the first time to DWP and HMRC administrative data. The fellow will be at the forefront of exploiting the power of this new resource to drive forward policy thinking, as well as identifying other potentially useful sources.

There will be a strong emphasis on driving actionable results. Crucially, given the emphasis in the White Paper on local areas leading and driving action, there will be a need to understand which results are useful at local level and to develop appropriate ways of presenting these. The availability of rich administrative data will be particularly important in developing these spatially disaggregated findings. The fellow will need to work with others in DWP and directly with local areas to understand how new provision is being developed at both national and local levels, to identify clear research questions and approaches to answering them. The fellow's research will need to be complementary to the existing substantial programme of analysis being conducted in DWP and elsewhere.

The fellow will benefit from experiencing directly how evidence-based policy is being developed following the change in approach, and the power of new data resources and new methods to contribute to that process, in conjunction with other evidence from existing research and from qualitative inquiries conducted by and for DWP.

A significant part of the work of the fellow will be to conduct high-quality analysis of the available data, but it will also include working with stakeholders to understand both what it is they need to know, and how the evidence can be most helpful presented to them. Knowledge exchange activities will naturally include presenting findings to appropriate audiences, but also communicating to stakeholders on what more can be done with the available and data. This will differ for different audiences: for those involved in making, implementing and evaluating policy it will be a non-technical explanation of what sort of questions can be answered whereas for potential data users both in government (central and local) and in academia, a more technical understanding of the strengths and limitations of the sources. Within DWP the fellow will look to build capacity by explaining the methods they have used, and their advantages and disadvantages compared to other approaches.

Outputs from the work will include presentations of results for stakeholders, more detailed write-ups of the analysis which clearly document methods used suitable for publication by DWP, accompanying documented code so that results can be replicated, updated or built on as needed, internal technical seminars on methods. We would anticipate that some of the analysis will be suitable for academic publication by the fellow.

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:

- Past experience of investigating labour market issues
- Strong quantitative analysis skill, including techniques for investigating potential causal links in observational data

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 or demonstrated potential for researching links between health and work outcomes
- Experience of or demonstrated potential for working with administrative data
- Experience of or demonstrated potential for working with large-scale social survey data (such as the UK Household Longitudinal Study)
- Experience of or demonstrated potential for engaging with government officials, local or national, policy or analytical

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 DWP's privacy notice can be found here: [DWP personal information charter](#). 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.