

UKRI policy fellowships 2025: fellowship position

Fellowship title: UKHSA social and behavioural science for health security and the changing climate fellowship

Fellowship type: Natural Hazards and Resilience fellowship

Host organisation: [UK Health Security Agency](#)

Host team: Behavioural Science and Insights Unit (BSIU) and Centre for Climate and Health Security (CCHS)

Summary: working across the UKHSA's BSIU and CCHS to apply social and behavioural science to mitigate the health security impacts of climate change

Policy topic: health security, climate change and social and behavioural science

Research Council: UKRI

Academic discipline(s): social and behavioural sciences

Research career stage: open to both early career 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: fellow can be based anywhere in the UK, although the majority of the UKHSA team work in the UKHSA offices at 10 South Colonnade, Canary Wharf, London. E14 4PU or Porton Down, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP4 0JG

Hybrid working: whilst UKHSA has a three-days a week minimum office working requirement in line with the rest of the UK Civil Service, we would be content for a minimum one day a week office attendance in the main placement phase. In the inception phase, up to six face-to-face meetings would be required. Eligible Travel and Subsistence costs are supported in the main UKRI grant. Please see full call text and guidance for more details

Security clearance: a minimum Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) check is required for this role. Please see [National security vetting: clearance levels](#) for further information

Fellowship description

The UKHSA is the nation's expert body for health security, responsible for preparing for, preventing and responding to infectious diseases and environmental hazards. As an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), UKHSA provides scientific and operational leadership to protect public health and enhance national preparedness. Climate change is increasingly recognized as a major health security threat, amplifying risks such as vector-borne diseases, extreme weather events and environmental hazards like air pollution and flooding.

The BSIU at the UKHSA plays a crucial role in applying behavioural and social science to enhance health security, including in the context of the changing climate. UKHSA's CCHS is dedicated to strengthening evidence on the health impacts of climate change, supporting interventions to build resilience, and ensuring that public health strategies account for emerging environmental challenges (see, for example, [Health Effects of Climate Change \(HECC\) report](#)). Working together, BSIU and CCHS are integrating social and behavioural science into health protection policy and practice, to strengthen resilience and mitigate the health impacts of climate-related health challenges.

The UKRI Natural Hazards and Resilience fellow will work jointly with the BSIU and CCHS at UKHSA to design and evaluate behaviour change interventions to mitigate the health security impacts of climate change, such as improving preparedness for extreme weather and promoting protective behaviours to reduce vector-borne disease risks. The fellow will lead and collaborate on multidisciplinary research and translate findings into actionable guidance to strengthen resilience to climate-related health challenges. The fellow will contribute to building public health resilience and advancing evidence-based approaches to climate-related health security challenges through:

- Understanding and incorporating behavioural insights to enhance the effectiveness of interventions aimed at mitigating the health impacts of climate change and adverse weather
- Exploring behavioural factors in case studies of interventions by local authorities to address climate-related health impacts and assessing barriers and facilitators to the uptake of climate change interventions
- Developing community engagement initiatives to promote behavioural change in response to climate change
- Creating educational materials and workshops to foster informed action on climate adaptation
- Testing different risk communication approaches to understand what works best in various climate-related scenarios
- Producing toolkits and training programs that incorporate behavioural science to empower stakeholders in addressing climate change and extreme weather events
- Establishing frameworks to monitor and evaluate behavioural outcomes of climate-related interventions over time

The policy fellow will be expected to add value by integrating social and behavioural science into climate adaptation strategies, enhancing UKHSA's ability to mitigate the health impacts of climate change. They will support the development of behavioural interventions, helping UKHSA to act and improve public engagement with climate adaptation measures. Their contributions will drive more effective, evidence-based responses to climate-related health risks, strengthening overall public health security. They will also support collaborative working between two UKHSA teams, the CCHS and the BSIU, helping to embed social and behavioural science evidence in a key priority area of UKHSA.

Benefits to the fellow:

Working within UKHSA, and with the BSIU and the CCHS specifically, will provide a range of benefits to the successful fellow. These include:

- Experience working with world leading experts in behavioural science, climate change and public health, developing skills, knowledge and methodologies
- Being embedded within these teams (for example, the successful fellow will be supervised by an experienced researcher within the BSIU and will be invited to engage in team meetings and networks) to gain insight from the wealth of research conducted by team members
- Opportunities to present to local teams within UKHSA, UKHSA as a whole, or cross-government and academic networks to foster collaborations and raise awareness of their research
- Support provided from UKHSA to facilitate the publication of open access journal articles and support from experienced researchers to develop and publish outputs from research projects
- Opportunities to work with policymakers to use their research and evidence to influence policy, practice and guidance
- Opportunities to support subject matter experts from UKHSA's BSIU and CCHS with responding to rapid turnaround queries or incident response in the fellow's field of research

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:

- First degree in the behavioural sciences (for example, psychology, social science, anthropology)
- Relevant PhD and relevant post-doctoral experience or MSc and equivalent significant experience of working at a similar level in a relevant specialist area
- Demonstrated potential in the application of behavioural and social science theories and methodologies to the design, development, implementation or evaluation of behavioural interventions
- Experience or demonstrated potential in qualitative and quantitative research, desk-based literature research, abstracting, data or report analysis and report preparation in behavioural analysis and intervention design

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:

- An established track record of research and publication in the field of public health and climate change
- Experience with coproduction methodologies and public involvement in research and intervention design
- Knowledge of project management principles, techniques and tools and project management experience
- Experience working with stakeholders (public, policy, third sector, and beyond) to implement or evaluate behaviour change interventions in real world contexts

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