



UKRI policy fellowships 2026

Fellowship position

Fellowship title:

College of Policing misogyny in policing ethnography fellowship

Fellowship type:

What Works Innovation fellowship

Host organisation:

[College of Policing](#)

Host team:

Research, Analysis and Knowledge Sharing (RAKS)

Academic discipline/s:

Ethnography, sociology, criminology

Summary:

Opportunity to conduct ethnographic research on misogyny and sexual harassment in policing, examining organisational culture and responses to reforms aimed at strengthening the police response to violence against women and girls.

Policy topic:

Violence against women and girls (VAWG). As part of its Safer Streets Mission, the government pledged to halve violence against women and girls within a decade. The government's VAWG strategy calls for a 'radical shift in how policing views VAWG', and the 2026 police reform White Paper highlights VAWG as a priority area.

Research career stage:

Open to all career stages

Fellowship structure

The fellowship is estimated to begin in May 2027. The exact date will be confirmed by the host depending on onboarding and security clearance requirements. The fellowship will have three phases:

- inception: duration is 3 months at 0.4 FTE
- main placement: duration is 12 months at 0.6-1 FTE
- knowledge exchange: duration is 3 months at 0.4 FTE

Work arrangements

Location requirements:

The fellow will be undertaking their research within one or more police forces. Though there is no guarantee that any specific force will participate, any force or forces within England and Wales might be approached. The ethnographic fieldwork will require regular travel to the force(s) which agree to take part. The exact number of visits would be determined during the project inception phase, but multiple visits will be required. It is possible that fieldwork visits could be undertaken in blocks or phases. Travel costs should be covered by the UKRI grant.

The principal contact within the College of Policing will be based in London so occasional travel to London will be required.

Hybrid working:

The majority of work relating to the fellowship can be undertaken via remote/home working, with occasional meetings at the College's London offices. The fellow is welcome to budget for as many London-based meetings as they consider necessary; we would suggest a minimum one face-to-face meeting during the inception phase and a minimum of quarterly meetings during the main placement phase.

Alternatively, the fellow may choose to be a hybrid/office worker, either at Canary Wharf (London) or Ryton (Coventry). While the College has a 51% minimum office working requirement (40% outside London), we would be content for the fellow to attend the office only as required, during the main placement phase. A laptop will be provided enabling homeworking or working at other sites, providing access to host IT.

Eligible travel and subsistence costs are supported in the main UKRI grant. Please see full call text and guidance for more details.

Security clearance and nationality eligibility criteria:

Non-Police Personnel Vetting (NPPV) Level 2 is a requirement to undertake fieldwork in force and for access to College IT. Estimated processing time is 3-4 months. To obtain national security vetting, applicants must have resided in the UK for a minimum of three years at the point of applying. We would expect the successful applicant to start the vetting application process, with support from the host team, as soon as their fellowship has been confirmed by UKRI. The inception phase can begin before the security vetting process is completed but it will be required for the main placement phase in order to access fieldwork sites and IT systems. For more information, please see [Police National Vetting Service | Warwickshire Police](#)

This fellowship is broadly open to the following groups:

- UK nationals
- nationals of the Republic of Ireland
- nationals of Commonwealth countries who have the right to work in the UK
- nationals of the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein and family members of those nationalities with settled or pre-settled status under the [European Union Settlement Scheme \(EUSS\)](#)
- nationals of the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein and family members of those nationalities who have made a valid application for settled or pre-settled status under the [European Union Settlement Scheme \(EUSS\)](#)
- individuals with limited leave to remain or indefinite leave to remain who were eligible to apply for EUSS on or before 31 December 2020
- Turkish nationals, and certain family members of Turkish nationals, who have accrued the right to work in the Civil Service

Prior to considering an application, please see [further information on nationality requirements \(opens in a new window\)](#)

Fellowship position description

The College of Policing is seeking to embed a research fellow in its Research, Analysis and Knowledge Sharing unit to undertake ethnographic research on misogyny and sexual harassment in policing.

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is now widely recognised to have reached 'epidemic' levels (see [VAWG National Policing Statement 2024](#)). The police are a frontline agency in the response to VAWG yet many victims report poor experiences, [reviews](#) and [inspections](#) have highlighted institutional failings, and the government's [VAWG strategy](#) calls for a 'radical shift in how policing views VAWG. While classic ethnographic accounts of policing identified a hyper-masculine and sexist culture, there was little focus on the experiences of women specifically. There is a dearth of ethnographic studies which assess how sexism and misogyny operate in policing, either from the perspective of female officers and staff experiencing these behaviours, or from the perspective of male officers and/or 'bystanders'.

There has been considerable recent policy and practice activity intended to change police culture including training on preventing sexual harassment. A previous College fellowship used a behavioural science approach to help identify problematic sub-cultures. Yet there has been little qualitative work undertaken to examine how officers perceive attempts at reform and any cultural or institutional resistance to change. Ethnography can help with refining policies and identify where interventions may need to be reinforced or redesigned.

We envisage the fellow will carry out ethnographic research within the overarching framework of sexism and misogyny. The precise focus of the fieldwork can be co-designed and might include:

- how officers conceptualise and define misogyny, sexism and sexual harassment, including what is regarded as 'banter' and what is regarded as acceptable and unacceptable and by whom
- female police officer and staff experiences of sexism and sexual harassment; how sexist and misogynist culture manifests in different areas of policing
- the actions and views of male officers in relation to misogyny and sexism
- how officers and staff perceive and react to policies and interventions designed to change police culture and/or promote different responses to VAWG
- how police culture influences bystander willingness to call-out sexist actions or language

The College is also keen that the fellowship contributes to methodological advancement. There have been recent calls for a greater focus on researcher safety in the field, by challenging ethnography's historical 'fixations' with solitude, danger and intimacy.¹ The fellow will be encouraged to write about positionality and their experiences in the field, including how they felt sex and gender facilitated or otherwise access to and relationships with research settings and subjects. The fellow will be encouraged to co-produce with the College a set of principles or framework for safe fieldwork practice which might guide future projects across government or beyond.

The fellow will be line-managed by an Evidence and Evaluation Advisor with experience of conducting ethnographic fieldwork in police forces. The fellowship presents an opportunity for the fellow to:

- codesign, produce and publish original research, ensuring that findings contribute to policy, practice and the advancement of methodology
- be embedded in the College of Policing with access to a wider network of policymakers, practitioners and analysts and with opportunities to engage with and influence national policing leads, police partner agencies and government departments
- be a member of the Research, Analysis and Knowledge Sharing Professional Community and be involved in meetings where College of Policing priorities and strategic decisions are discussed, and presentations are given on ongoing work to allow for shared learning
- benefit from access to the National Police Library and Civil Service learning programmes
- have the opportunity to collaborate with the National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection (NCVPP), which is situated in the College

¹ See Hanson R and Richards P (2019) Harassed: Gender, Bodies and ethnographic research.

- access the Government Anthropology and Ethnography Network, a group of researchers who support and promote the value of ethnographic research across government

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:

- understanding of ethnographic fieldwork methods (participant observation; ethnographic interviews) and readiness to undertake ethnographic research
- experience of undertaking thematic analysis of qualitative data
- knowledge of or interest in the topic of violence against women and girls

Applicants shortlisted from the panel assessment will be invited to a host led interview. At this stage the host will also take into account the following desirable fellowship-specific requirements.

Desirable criteria:

- experience of undertaking participant observation in a fieldwork setting
- experience of negotiating access to a fieldwork setting
- knowledge of policing/police culture

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](#).

Please see the Hosts' [privacy notice](#) and they 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.