



# UKRI policy fellowships 2026

## Fellowship position

### Fellowship title:

DHSC tackling alcohol related harms fellowship

### Fellowship type:

Core policy fellowship

### Host organisation:

[Department of Health and Social Care](#)

### Host team:

Alcohol Policy Team, Health Improvement Directorate as well as working with relevant DHSC policy and evidence teams.

### Academic discipline/s:

Behavioural science, psychology, economics, statistics, social sciences

### Summary:

An opportunity to generate high-impact evidence on alcohol consumption and shape population level alcohol policy that reduces harm and support the government's priority of shifting the focus for the NHS from treatment to prevention.

### Policy topic:

Alcohol-specific deaths in England are at historically high levels and the estimated total societal cost of alcohol harm in England was £27.4bn per year in 2021 to 2022, equivalent to over 1.2% of GDP. There have been some substantial shifts in how alcohol is consumed in the last two decades. 70% of alcohol is now purchased from the off-trade for consumption at home or in other private settings, and while we are seeing more people abstain completely, we are also seeing some consuming alcohol even more heavily. There have also been changes in how alcohol is marketed, due to online and social avenues, and changes to access due to the emergence of online rapid delivery services.

This challenge was recognised in the 10 Year Health Plan for England, which committed to introducing mandatory calorie and health warning on alcohol labelling to help people make healthier choices about alcohol.

This fellowship will provide valuable support as DHSC continues to work across government to consider further measures to reduce the negative impact of excessive alcohol consumption on health, crime and the economy, including the ongoing review of the licencing regime. The fellow will work closely with policymakers, to assess and improve the department's understanding of the evidence available on alcohol consumption trends and drivers of alcohol consumption. It will also provide an opportunity to consider

further mechanisms for preventing and reducing alcohol related harms, which could include research into emerging trends mentioned above, as well as work to support the governments wider ambitions, such as the safer street mission to halve violence against women and girls, and the government economic growth ambitions.

## Research career stage:

Open to both early and mid-career researchers

## 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 can be based in Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) offices in London or Leeds, although some travel between the two may be required.

### Hybrid working:

During the inception and knowledge exchange phases you will not be expected to work from a DHSC office, although you should plan for up to three in person meetings at DHSC offices in London (Victoria) or Leeds across each phase. The placement phase will take within DHSC hybrid working model. DHSC colleagues are expected to spend, at a minimum, 60% of their working time working face to face with their colleagues either in offices or on official business, and the same would be expected of the fellow. The fellow will be included in regular (virtual) team meetings and invited to join other relevant DHSC events.

### Security clearance and nationality eligibility criteria:

Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) is expected to take 4-6 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 more information.

## Fellowship position description

This fellowship will help support policymakers by supporting our work to addressing alcohol related harms by ensuring we have a robust evidence base for any case for change. We are looking for a fellow with an interest, or experience, in either alcohol harms specifically, or other preventable risk factors (e.g. smoking, obesity, gambling, NCDs) which provides transferable knowledge and skills.

There is a broad spectrum of work already underway within government to address alcohol harms, and even broader spectrum of alcohol policy this department is interested in, and we will work with the fellow to determine a work programme that supports our most pressing needs as part of the inception phase. We will work with the fellow to ensure alignment with the fellow's interest, skills and expertise.

Benefits to the fellow:

- a unique opportunity to experience and influence policy-making in a high-profile and dynamic policy environment which has very strong political interest
- support policymakers in their close work with Ministers, senior officials such as the Chief Medical Officer, and other Government Departments, by supporting the development of evidence-based briefings and submissions, and picking up evidence commissions
- opportunities to engage with current alcohol policy commitments to experience the full policy-making process from strategy through to implementation (e.g. delivery of policies committed to in the 10 Year Health Plan for England), and to be part of new commitments relating to emerging issues and trends
- opportunity to produce and publish original research and analysis on the topic of alcohol harms, including impacts on health, crime and the economy, and/or the measures to address them, contributing to policy development and wider scientific and policy discussions
- build a network within the alcohol policy landscape and develop a unique understanding of policymaking that can support your career and impact of your future work

The fellow's work will help support policymakers as they work with Ministers, senior officials. The fellow will be line managed by a policy lead within the alcohol policy team. The fellow will be fully embedded into the DHSC alcohol policy team, with full access to IT systems and will be expected to engage with a wide network of policy professionals, academic stakeholders and external experts which the department engages with on a regular basis.

## 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:

- subject matter expertise in preventable risk factors and the evidence on effectiveness of policies and interventions used to address these (e.g. alcohol, gambling, smoking harms, obesity)
- a proven academic track record in one or more of behavioural science, epidemiology, psychology, economics, statistics, social sciences or public health
- strong quantitative and qualitative analytical skills (for example, expertise in statistical analysis and data science methods, and experience in qualitative research methodology)

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:

- an academic background in alcohol harms and interest in the wider alcohol policy environment
- experience working in the policy-making process (this could either be directly with central or local government or with third sector organisations such as think tanks)

## 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.