



UKRI policy fellowships 2026

Fellowship position

Fellowship title:

DWP causal analysis of consequences of poverty fellowship

Fellowship type:

Core policy fellowship

Host organisation:

[Department for Work & Pensions](#)

Host team:

The fellow will be working as part of our Income, Families and Disadvantage Analysis Division (IFDA).

Academic discipline/s:

Econometrics, statistics, causal analysis

Summary:

The aim of the fellowship is to develop robust evidence of the causal links between experience of poverty and subsequent outcomes.

Policy topic:

To inform the continuing strategy to tackle child poverty by better understanding of the causal pathways by which early experience of poverty influences subsequent outcomes. This is key to the mission to Break Down Barriers to Opportunity.

Research career stage:

Open to 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 successful applicant could base themselves in or make use of office space in London (Westminster), Sheffield, Leeds, Newcastle or Manchester where IFDA 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 60% 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 and nationality eligibility criteria:

Basic Personnel Security Standard checks (BPSS), expected to take four to six weeks. 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 further information.

Fellowship position description

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is seeking to embed a fellow within its Income, Families and Disadvantage analytical division (IFDA), working alongside analysts who are leading on the government's child poverty strategy published in December 2025¹. The 10 year UK child poverty strategy sets out the steps to reduce child poverty in the short term, as well as putting in place the building blocks needed to change the course and create long-term change. The strategy brings together the action the government has already taken, alongside new measures, to increase incomes, reduce essential costs and strengthen local services.

A key outcome of the strategy is to improve outcomes for children affected by poverty. There is wide body of evidence on how growing up in poverty can have negative associations with children's outcomes and that these continue into adulthood. This was set out in the evidence pack published alongside the child poverty strategy². DWP is interested in understanding the causal links between child poverty and subsequent outcomes, particularly the risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training).

The fellow will play a crucial role in advancing the government's understanding of these causal links. The fellow will push the boundaries of survey and administrative data analysis, exploring, identifying, and understanding these issues, with a particular emphasis on economic inactivity among young people—a priority area for policy development. This will require combining sophisticated data analysis with an understanding of the extensive academic literature on child poverty and its long-term effects. The fellow will be expected to draw upon a wide range of relevant social surveys, as well as DWP's rich administrative data, to investigate these causal relationships.

The fellow will have the opportunity to co-design clear research tasks in collaboration with government officials, based on policy needs and their own interests and skills, during the inception phase of the

¹ [Child Poverty Strategy - GOV.UK](#)

² [Child Poverty Strategy: Evidence Pack - GOV.UK](#)

fellowship. We expect the Fellow to draw upon literature and academic networks to identify potential policy responses to the issues uncovered through their research.

The fellow will benefit from:

- the opportunity to influence policy thinking in this vitally important area
- experience of government ways of working and how policy is made, helping to 'land' research more effectively
- access during the fellowship to DWP datasets and information not generally available for academic research
- building a network of official contacts in analytical and policy teams within DWP and other government departments

The fellow will also benefit from wider support, networking opportunities, and learning and development available to Government analysts, providing a richer experience during the Fellowship. They will be supported by the DWP analytical division in the translation, dissemination, and application of their work for policymakers and DWP analysts. This will include knowledge exchange opportunities such as seminars and roundtables, as well as support in developing internal capability to further advance the research in the future—for example, upskilling DWP analysts in any novel analytical techniques, code, or datasets used during the fellowship. The fellow will have the opportunity to produce and publish original research, ensuring that findings contribute to wider scientific and policy discussions, while adhering to necessary security protocols.

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:

- strong quantitative analysis skills, including analysis of causal links from observational data
- experience of working with large-scale longitudinal social survey data (such as the UK Household Longitudinal Study)
- experience of using broader research findings, including qualitative research, to inform a programme of quantitative analysis

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 or demonstrated potential for working with administrative data
- experience of or demonstrated potential for engaging with government officials, local or national, policy or analytical
- experience of researching poverty

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.