



UKRI policy fellowships 2026

Fellowship position

Fellowship title:

Public Health Wales evaluating climate change surveillance systems policy fellowship

Fellowship type:

Natural hazards and resilience fellowship

Host organisation:

[Public Health Wales](#)

Host team:

Research, Data and Digital Directorate

Academic discipline/s:

Epidemiology, climate science, environmental health, implementation science, population health sciences

Summary:

Opportunity to evaluate and strengthen climate change and health surveillance systems within PHW, generating evidence to inform climate resilience, public health adaptation and natural hazard preparedness across Wales and the wider UK.

Policy topic:

The fellowship focuses on natural hazards and climate resilience, with particular emphasis on climate-related risks to population health. It supports the ongoing implementation of [Wales' national Climate Adaptation Strategy](#) and the wider public health commitments under the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act](#) by evaluating and strengthening the systems used to detect and track climate-related health impacts.

The evaluation will help inform the continued development and enhancement of public health surveillance systems designed to monitor emerging and long-term risks including heat-related illness, changes in infectious disease patterns, air quality impacts, and mental health consequences of climate change. By addressing critical evidence gaps in the sensitivity, completeness and responsiveness of health surveillance to climate change, the fellowship will generate practical insights that guide policy and investment decisions on population health protection, emergency preparedness, and climate resilient health system planning across Wales and beyond.

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 applicant can be based anywhere in the UK. The base for the role is the PHW Cardiff Office in Capital Quarter 2 (CQ2), with travel approximately once per month to the Office to meet with team members.

Hybrid working:

There will be expected travel to the PHW Cardiff Office in Capital Quarter 2 (CQ2), both during the inception and placement phases, approximately once per month to meet with team members. There may be occasional travel to engage with stakeholders including with Welsh Government, UK partners and four nations climate resilience forums. A laptop will be provided enabling work from home or other sites, providing access to host systems. 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:

The fellowship is open to candidates who have the right to work in the UK at the point of commencing the post. If you require sponsorship under the Skilled Worker or Health and Care Visa routes, please ensure you self-assess your eligibility for sponsorship for this role before applying. Check the [Skilled Worker visa](#) or [Health and Care visa](#) guidance for details on job eligibility, salary, English language, and sponsorship requirements.

Fellowship position description

Climate change is increasingly affecting population health across the UK through heatwaves, flooding, changing patterns of infectious disease, declining air quality and wider ecological disruption. PHW has developed climate health surveillance systems to anticipate, monitor and respond to these emerging risks, supporting public health action and adaptation planning.

This fellowship will evaluate how the current surveillance system functions, identifying gaps and exploring how enhancements such as new data sources, improved spatial or temporal resolution, and stronger system integration could strengthen forecasting, risk assessment and public health response. The evaluation will improve understanding of system performance, effectiveness and equity impacts, generating evidence to inform future climate monitoring, resilience planning and policy decision-making across Wales and the UK.

The fellow will support the ongoing implementation of [Wales' national Climate Adaptation Strategy](#) and the wider public health commitments under the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act](#) by evaluating and strengthening the systems used to detect and track climate-related health impacts.

While the final scope and research questions will be codesigned during the inception phase, the fellow will explore areas such as:

- effectiveness of climate-health surveillance systems in detecting, interpreting, and communicating climate-related health risks
- use of surveillance evidence in supporting national and local policy decisions and action

- equity considerations, including representation of different population groups within surveillance data
- system responsiveness and performance during climate-related shocks (e.g. heat events, flooding)
- development of evaluation frameworks and indicators for climate resilience and natural hazard preparedness

The role will work closely with PHWs' Environmental & Climate Epidemiology (ECE) team, ensuring direct engagement with technical leads. They will collaborate closely with other key stakeholders including Welsh Government climate and public health teams, Directors of Public Health from Health Boards in Wales, Local Authority Environmental Health Officers, the Office for National Statistics (ONS), UK Health Security Agency's (UKHSA) climate surveillance programmes and the four-nations Climate Change Surveillance Strategy group.

The fellow will benefit from:

- the opportunity to influence national policy on climate resilience, natural hazards and public health adaptation
- experience leading a high-profile evaluation of a surveillance system of national importance
- access to multidisciplinary expertise across public health, climate science, evaluation and data analytics
- opportunities to publish both academic and policy-facing documents and disseminate findings and engage with a wide network of partners
- professional development within a mature research and evaluation environment embedded in a national public health system

This fellowship provides a unique, policy-embedded opportunity to evaluate climate health surveillance in Wales. Through co-designed, multidisciplinary research, the fellow will generate high-impact evidence that strengthens Wales' ability to anticipate, detect, and respond to climate-related health risks.

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:

- expertise in public health, environmental health, climate science, evaluation or a closely related field
- PhD in a quantitative discipline (e.g., climate science, environmental modelling, statistics, infectious disease modelling, or data science)
- strong statistical modelling skills using R, Python, or MATLAB, including the ability to develop and apply analytical methods to surveillance 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 in evaluating surveillance systems, monitoring frameworks or early warning systems
- strong stakeholder engagement, collaboration, and communication to translate technical findings into actionable policy and practice recommendations
- familiarity with Communicable Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for evaluating surveillance systems

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.