



# UKRI policy fellowships 2026

## Fellowship position

### Fellowship title:

Scottish Government health and social care transitions fellowship

### Fellowship type:

Core policy fellowship

### Host organisation:

[Scottish Government](#)

### Host team:

Health and Social Care Analysis Division, Social Care Analytical Unit

### Academic discipline/s:

Social policy, economics, social statistics and applied health research

### Summary:

Opportunity to contribute to the delivery of the Health and Social Care Service Renewal Framework and to develop research on strengthening health and social care integration, by analysing how care works across the boundaries between social care and health.

### Policy topic:

Scottish Government Priority: delivering high quality and sustainable public services / health and social care reform.

Ensuring high quality and sustainable public services is a [Scottish Government priority](#) area. To meet this priority the Health and Social Care portfolio have committed to bold reform to meet the challenges facing health and social care now and in the future.

In June 2024 the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care set out a new vision for health and social care in Scotland: "A Scotland where people live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives". However, health and social care services in Scotland are facing sustained pressures and increasing demand. The Health and Social Care [Service Renewal Framework](#) provides a high-level guide for change, to ensure the sustainability, efficiency, quality, and accessibility of health and social care services in Scotland.

The fellowship will fit within work to support the delivery of the Health and Social Care [Service Renewal Framework](#), and [the Health and Social Care Service renewal Programme Board](#), which identifies the major changes needed to realise this vision.

The [Social Care Analytical Unit Areas of Research Interest](#) publication identifies several areas of research relevant to this fellowship, with questions relating to access to care, integration and prevention.

## 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 fellow will be based in Edinburgh (St Andrews House).

### Hybrid working:

The fellow should anticipate approximately three in-person days in Edinburgh at St Andrews House during the three month inception phase, a minimum of two in-person days in St Andrews House per month for the duration of the main placement phase, and a further three in-person days at St Andrews House during the knowledge exchange phase. If the fellow is based near Edinburgh and has a preference for in person working this could be accommodated.

### Security clearance and nationality eligibility criteria:

The fellow will need to pass the [Baseline Personnel Security Standard](#) (BPSS). This process takes around six weeks and must be completed before the fellow can access Scottish Government systems. Security clearance should be confirmed before the inception phase can commence. Part of this entails verifying that the fellow meets the [Civil Service Nationality Rules](#) - see the [Annex C flowchart](#) to check eligibility for non-reserved posts. By applying for this fellowship, you are affirming that you have understood these requirements and expect to be able to pass BPSS.

## Fellowship position description

### Research Areas

The fellow will co-design and deliver research that directly supports the delivery of the Health and Social Care Service Renewal Framework (SRF), and which is aligned to the SRF principles of prevention and strengthening integration. The overall focus is on exploring the boundaries and transitions between health and social care, how these are experienced by people accessing social care support, unpaid carers and health and social care services, and the variations in outcomes and impacts. There are a range of relevant approaches that would fit within this scope, which could include focusing on particular groups of people, types of localities or service types.

Our evidence base is informed by qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods research and secondary data analysis. This includes the use of data linkage. While datasets are useful on their own, bringing them together means that researchers can find patterns and insights that we would not see if we only considered

those datasets individually in isolation. Linking data can allow researchers to draw insights from across the data, looking at issues over time (longitudinally), across the population and examine nuanced issues.

There is scope for the fellow to shape the role, identifying areas of research interest that are most relevant to the fellow's interests, background and expertise, and engage with policy and analytical colleagues in the research design process. This is a major change programme and there will be opportunities to work with partners across the system. We envisage the fellow will carry out a research project in one of these areas of interest, with the scope to be agreed as part of the inception phase:

- understanding how the boundaries and transitions between health and social care are experienced by people accessing social care support, unpaid carers and health and social care services and the variations in outcomes and impacts
- analysing how health and social care pathways vary for different demographic groups (age, region, need, experiences, client groups and service users)
- analysing people's experiences of different care pathways and transitions between services and how these vary for different demographic groups and by geography
- understanding how social care operates as part of the wider system of health and social care and where there are opportunities to strengthen access through further integration of services
- identifying cross-cutting lessons from the experience of delivering integrated health and social care services that can be applied to strengthen future policy and practice, including supporting a shift towards preventive care
- identifying approaches that have been implemented to contribute to a shift towards preventative care and early intervention and the impact of such approaches for those receiving and providing care, planning and commissioning services, and interactions with other services

The fellow will be embedded in the Social Care Analytical Unit and will work collaboratively with Health and Social Care analytical and policy teams. There will be opportunities to attend regular policy and analytical meetings to understand how the fellowship work sits within the wider context. There will be a designated line manager who will meet regularly with the fellow and provide input and feedback.

### Potential benefits to the fellow:

- being embedded in the Social Care Analytical Unit with access to internal systems and processes, gaining an in-depth understanding of the policy process and the role of analytical teams
- access to a wide array of Scottish Government policy and analytical teams working on social care and the Health and Social Care Reform Programme
- opportunity to undertake research of strategic importance and facilitate its use throughout the Scottish Government and the fellow's academic networks with support for knowledge exchange
- provide insights with relevance for policy, practice and system transformation, and inform social care policy development and delivery in Scotland by supporting improved knowledge of transitions between social care and health and the role of prevention and integration
- the opportunity to produce and publish original research, ensuring that findings contribute to wider scientific and policy discussions, while adhering to necessary security protocols
- improved understanding of how research outputs can be effectively integrated into the policy development and monitoring and evaluation process, leading to more impactful future 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:

- subject matter expertise in social care and/or health and social care integration.
- experience of delivering high quality research and analysis based on the application of mixed methods approaches relevant to the research areas that are the focus of the proposed work, such as prevention, integration and transitions in health and social care, or related topics.

- ability to analyse and synthesise multiple types of evidence and communicate this for consideration in policy development

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:

- existing knowledge of the Scottish policy and delivery context
- ability to work with a range of perspectives and balance competing needs and priorities
- experience of developing engaging and accessible research outputs suitable for a non-specialist audience

## 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.