UKRI policy fellowships 2027

Fellowship position

Fellowship title:

Centre for Ageing Better exploring the economic growth potential of addressing inequalities in ageing fellowship

Fellowship type:

What Works Innovation fellowship

Host organisation:

Centre for Ageing Better

Host team:

Ageism and Inequality team

Academic discipline/s:

Health economics, microeconomics, public economics, human capital economics, behavioural economics

Summary:

An opportunity to explore and analyse the economic growth potential of addressing inequalities in ageing, and how this can drive up productivity, prosperity and living standards across the UK.

Policy topic:

Kickstarting economic growth

Research career stage:

Open to early and mid-career researchers

Fellowship structure

The fellowship is scheduled to begin on 1 October 2027 subject to 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 post is located in Centre for Ageing Better's Central London office, near Goodge Street station. Hybrid working arrangements are supported, with regular travel to London expected.

Hybrid working:

The Centre for Ageing Better promotes flexible working and the current hybrid working policy is six office days per month for full-time colleagues (four days per month for part-time staff). This will include in-person meetings with the team and wider colleagues. More contact time will be likely during the inception phase with an expectation of attendance once a week. For the main placement phase, a minimum of two attendances in the London office a month will be expected. 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:

No security clearance required, or national eligibility criteria.

Fellowship position description

Summary:

The UK's ageing population is often framed as an economic challenge, presented in terms of rising health and care costs and a shrinking working-age population. However, the real challenge is not population ageing itself, but the inequalities that shape later life, including avoidable ill health, barriers to work, unsuitable housing and economic insecurity. The Centre for Ageing Better is a what works centre tackling inequalities in ageing. This fellowship will address a critical evidence and policy gap by exploring how reducing inequalities in mid to later life can support inclusive, sustainable economic growth.

Scope:

The fellowship will explore the economic implications of improving health, employment, financial security and wellbeing for people in their 50s and 60s experiencing the poorest health, financial, social and housing outcomes.

Working across labour economics, health economics, human capital and public policy, the fellowship will strengthen understanding of how prevention, inclusion and greater equity in later life can contribute to productivity, labour market participation, regional prosperity and sustainable economic growth. The fellow will work with Ageing Better and key stakeholders to co-design the research. The exact focus will be agreed during the inception phase, reflecting the fellow's expertise, initial scoping and the host's guidance on policy and practice relevance.

The fellowship will build on existing evidence, including Ageing Better's commissioned research, to identify key gaps for original analysis. It will sit within wider NIHR, ESRC and UKRI-funded work on health inequalities, economic inactivity and labour market inequality.

The fellow will develop new economic frameworks and empirical approaches for understanding how ageing, inequality and economic performance interact. They will strengthen the evidence base on the economic value of prevention and greater equity, complementing wider research on effective interventions.

Depending on the fellow's expertise and interests, the research may use a range of methods such as causal inference, microsimulation, quasi-experimental analysis, economic modelling, cost-benefit analysis, productivity analysis, longitudinal data analysis or conceptual framework development. We also encourage exploration of how behaviours, incentives, choices and decision-making, and the wider systems and environments that shape them, contribute to inequalities in later life.

The fellow will support Ageing Better's policy work with national, regional and local governments, including through briefings, submissions, events and collaboration with Mayoral Strategic Authorities. With support from the External Affairs team, they will develop an influencing plan to inform policy throughout the fellowship and during dissemination. The programme will frame longer lives as a source of economic and social value that is currently under-realised and unevenly shared.

Benefits to the fellow include:

- co-design, produce and publish research that informs scientific and policy discussions
- contribute to Ageing Better's programme development and cross-disciplinary policy work
- publish research with Ageing Better's approval
- connect with senior policymakers, leading researchers and influential stakeholders
- join the Ageing Better team and gain insight into policy processes
- participate in policy roundtables, workshops and wider knowledge-exchange networks
- develop a distinctive research portfolio in labour economics, health economics, inequality and productivity

Delivery:

Ageing Better will work closely with the successful fellow to co-design the programme of work and ensure they are quickly and effectively integrated into the organisation.

The fellow will be fully embedded within Ageing Better throughout the duration of the fellowship and will receive a host email address, be included in relevant internal communications, and participate in staff and team meetings.

The fellow will have a dedicated line manager, the Deputy Director of Ageism and Inequality, who will provide day-to-day support and strategic guidance, and support from the Deputy Director of Work, who will act as a technical adviser.

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:

- a strong academic track record in economics, including demonstrated expertise in the study of inequalities and/or the development and assessment of equity-focused economic approaches
- a strong publication and research track record in economics, with expertise in one or more of the following areas: productivity and growth, labour economics, health economics, public economics, inequality, human capital, regional economics or demographic change
- experience of co-designing and delivering research with multiple stakeholders, including voluntary, community and civil society organisations to shape research design, implementation and dissemination

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 working on, or demonstrable interest in, ageing, older people and demographic change
- a pragmatic approach, and the ability to make sense of a complex evidence context while remaining focused on end user outcomes
- subject matter expertise is underpinned by an understanding of behavioural economics, enabling exploration of how behaviours, incentives and decision-making shape inequalities and outcomes in later life

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 Centre for Ageing Better's 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.