UKRI policy fellowships 2027

Fellowship position

Fellowship title:
DHSC gambling harms prevention fellowship

Fellowship type:
Gambling policy fellowship

Host organisation:
Department of Health and Social Care

Host team:
Gambling Harms Prevention Team, Health Improvement Directorate

Academic discipline/s:
Public health (especially commercial determinants of health), behavioural science, epidemiology, psychology, economics

Summary:
An opportunity to co-design original research that addresses priority evidence gaps and informs government action to prevent and reduce gambling-related harms.

Policy topic:
Support the government's Health Mission by strengthening the evidence base for gambling harms prevention activity.

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 role can be based in London (39 Victoria Street, SW1H 0EU) or Leeds (Quarry House, LS2 7UE). The team is split between both locations though the majority are currently London based. There may be some requirement to travel between these locations to meet other team members, take part in team days and key policy sessions (approximately a handful of times a year).

Hybrid working:

DHSC has a 60% office working requirement in line with the rest of the UK Civil Service. We would be content to discuss more flexible office attendance if required, at any location listed above, during the inception and main placement phase.

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:

Basic Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) is required, which usually takes around six weeks. We would 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. Inception phase can begin before the security clearance process is completed but will be required for the main placement phase. The civil service also has nationality requirements that candidates would need to meet in order to take up the post. Please see civil service recruitment nationality rules for further information. Candidates should check these requirements before applying to ensure they meet the eligibility criteria.

Fellowship position description

The fellow will join the Department of Health and Social Care's Gambling Harms Prevention Team, co-designing and delivering policy-relevant research to strengthen the evidence base for preventing gambling-related harms. The fellowship will support the department's work as Prevention Commissioner for the statutory gambling levy. It will provide an opportunity to undertake original research addressing live policy and delivery questions, gaining first-hand experience of how evidence informs government decisions.

Research focus

During the inception phase, the fellow will work with policy, analytical and research colleagues to agree a focused project reflecting departmental priorities, evidence gaps and their expertise. The final research questions, methodology and outputs will be co-designed during the inception phase however, areas which could be considered include:

- integrating data to measure the prevalence, health impacts and economic costs of gambling-related harm
- examining the effectiveness of gambling-blocking and other digital tools
- preventing harm among children and young people
- identifying innovative prevention approaches that could inform future levy-funded activity

Research activities and evidence

The precise research design will depend on the agreed focus and the fellow's methodological expertise. Activities could include:

- evidence synthesis and evidence-gap analysis
- quantitative, qualitative or mixed-methods research

- secondary analysis of relevant datasets
- evaluation or implementation research
- comparative policy analysis
- development of practical frameworks or recommendations for future policy, research or delivery

The fellow will have access to relevant departmental systems, policy material and analytical expertise, subject to applicable information-governance, security and data-access requirements. Opportunities to use particular internal, linked or external datasets will be explored and agreed during the inception phase.

Outputs and policy impact

The fellow and host team will agree a proportionate set of outputs. These may include:

- original research or analysis addressing an agreed evidence gap
- an evidence review or policy research report
- recommendations for a future gambling harms prevention project
- briefings and presentations for policy colleagues, senior officials and ministers
- knowledge-exchange activity connecting government, academic and stakeholder communities
- academic or other publishable outputs, where appropriate and subject to departmental clearance

The fellow will also work with colleagues to help policy colleagues identify, interpret and apply research across the wider gambling harms prevention programme.

The fellow would be expected to gain the following from the fellowship:

- experience of designing research that directly informs UK Government policy
- practical understanding of how evidence is developed, communicated and used in government
- experience translating research into policy and programme recommendations
- detailed knowledge of the statutory gambling levy and wider prevention system
- opportunities to engage with ministers, senior officials, analysts and policy professionals
- relationships with policymakers, academics, regulators and delivery organisations
- membership of the wider UKRI gambling research and policy fellowship community, including participation in the policy fellow mentorship scheme

Support and embedding

The fellow will be fully embedded in the Gambling Harms Prevention Team. They will receive line management, regular check-ins, office space, appropriate IT equipment and access to relevant departmental systems. They will participate in team and policy discussions and work across the department. They will also have access to learning and development opportunities, departmental networks, previous fellows and a senior mentor.

This fellowship is funded through the UKRI Research Programme on Gambling – UKRI as part of the statutory gambling levy. Fellows will become part of the wider network of research funded through the programme and are expected to engage both with the cohort of policy fellows and the levy system as a whole.

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 relevant to gambling-related harm, public health prevention or the commercial determinants of health
- expertise in quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods relevant to the analysis of complex public health or policy questions

- experience of synthesising evidence to identify research gaps and inform policy, practice or decision-making

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 developing (and interpreting) reliable data in assessing and measuring the prevalence and impact of less healthy commodities (smoking, vaping, gambling, alcohol, food etc)
- experience of evaluating public health policies, programmes or interventions
- understanding of health inequalities and how harms, interventions or outcomes can vary between population groups and places

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 DHSC'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.