UKRI policy fellowships 2027

Fellowship position

Fellowship title:

Home Office criminal justice system strategy analysis fellowship

Fellowship type:

Core policy fellowship

Host organisation:

Home Office

Host team:

Criminal Justice System (CJS), Victims analysis team, Crime Analysis Unit

Academic discipline/s:

Sociology, criminology, geography, psychology and social sciences

Summary:

Build and strengthen the evidence base needed to address critical knowledge gaps and inform policy decisions on the implementation and impact of Sentencing Act changes on the police, and wider criminal justice reforms.

Policy topic:

Rebuilding confidence in the criminal justice system, a key strand of the UK Government's Safer Streets mission.

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, Croydon, Sheffield or Manchester. Please note however that members of the team are predominantly in London. There will be some requirement to travel to meet other team members, this would be at least once a month, but we are happy to discuss flexible options around this depending on location of the fellow and in line with hybrid working policies.

Hybrid working:

The Home Office has a three-days a week minimum office working requirement in line with the rest of the UK Civil Service. However, we would be content for a minimum one day a week office attendance, at any location listed above, during the main placement phase. A laptop will be provided enabling work from home or other sites, providing access to host systems. In addition to office attendance, it would be useful to budget for travel to London approximately once a month in the main placement phase and once in the inception phase.

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:

Security clearance must be obtained before the inception phase of the fellowship can begin. The process of gaining security check (SC) clearance can take up to several months. We would expect the successful applicant to start the security clearance application process, with support from the Home Office, as soon as their fellowship has been confirmed by UKRI.

For specific information on the nationality requirements, please see the Civil Service recruitment: nationality rules.

Fellowship position description

We are offering a fellowship opportunity to work in the Criminal Justice System (CJS) Strategy Analysis team within the Crime Analysis Unit at the Home Office. You will work closely with policy colleagues, researchers, analysts and partners from across the CJS, including the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS), National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), Probation Service and police forces. You will help build the evidence base on the implementation and impact of the Sentencing Act on the police, and wider CJS reforms.

The design and delivery of the work will be underpinned by a co-design approach developed during the inception phase, involving close collaboration with analysts, researchers and policy officials across the Home Office and partner organisations. The fellow will be encouraged to draw on their own expertise and interests to address emerging evidence needs as reforms continue to develop. The fellowship will involve designing and delivering analysis in a complex and evolving policy area, applying a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods. This may include statistical analysis of administrative data, process evaluation activities and interviews with stakeholders to inform future policy and operational decision-making.

Research problem and context

The fellowship takes place against the backdrop of significant change across the criminal justice system. Recent reforms are intended to support a more effective and sustainable justice system while maintaining public confidence and protecting victims. Alongside legislative changes, criminal justice agencies continue to adapt their operational processes to respond to changing demand, capacity pressures and wider policy priorities.

Given the scale and pace of these reforms, there is a need to develop a robust evidence base on how changes are being implemented and the extent to which they are achieving their intended objectives. While

some evidence exists on the effectiveness of interventions in this area, there remains limited evidence on how large-scale system reforms are experienced in practice and how they influence processes and outcomes across agencies. The postholder will support the development and delivery of empirical research in this area. This may include examining how planned charges influence case progression through the CJS, assessing impacts on resources and workloads across agencies, and evaluating outcomes related to crime and re-offending.

Outputs:

We anticipate that the project will make an important contribution to expanding the evidence base in this area. The expected outputs of the fellowship are likely to include:

- a valuable and novel contribution to expanding the evidence base on the implementation and impact of the legal and procedural change in the criminal justice system
- presentations to analysts, practitioners and policymakers and contributions to briefings and practitioner workshops
- internal reports that may be shared across government departments

Benefit to the fellow:

- contribute to public policy decision making
- proximity to, and experience of, key debates in policymaking
- develop networks with government analysts, policy leads and operational partners such as police and prosecutors
- exposure to the policymaking process in government and in particular the role that analysis plays

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:

- knowledge and application of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, including quantitative and qualitative forms of evaluation
- ability to build effective relationships with, and communicate complex ideas and information to, a range of stakeholders, which may include policymakers, practitioners and non-analytical partners
- willingness to work flexibly in a demanding and reactive analytical environment

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:

- project or programme management experience
- experience of undertaking research in a strategy, policy or operational environment
- experience of stakeholder engagement

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 Home Office'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.