UKRI policy fellowships 2027

Fellowship position

Fellowship title:

Home Office safer streets behavioural science fellowship

Fellowship type:

Core policy fellowship

Host organisation:

Home Office

Host team:

Office of the Chief Scientific Advisor

Academic discipline/s:

Psychology, Behavioural Science, Forensic Psychology, Social Psychology, Clinical Psychology,

Summary:

Build and strengthen the evidence base needed to address critical behavioural science knowledge gaps to support the delivery of the His Majesty's Government's (HMG) Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy.

Policy topic:

The Safer Streets Mission aims to reduce serious harm, increase public confidence in policing and the criminal justice system, and halve knife crime and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) within a decade, with this role providing behavioural science insight to inform and strengthen approaches to inter-personal abuse, VAWG, knife crime, and related areas.

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 team is based in London, with key partners also based in London. However, the Home Office has offices suitable for this role in London, Croydon or Sheffield, with some flexibility. Some travel into London will be necessary, though options for working from home two or more days a week will also be considered for the right candidate.

Hybrid working:

Our current working model is a minimum of three days a week in one of our office locations, with hybrid working available to the fellow for both the inception and placement phase. We are committed to supporting a diverse range of applicants and will consider flexible and inclusive working arrangements, including adaptable attendance requirements where appropriate to accommodate individual circumstances and locations. While flexibility is available, we encourage regular in-person attendance as it provides valuable opportunities for collaboration, relationship-building, informal learning and engagement through team meetings, directorate events and wider organisational activities. Eligible travel and subsistence costs are supported through the main UKRI grant; please see the full call text and guidance for further details.

Security clearance and nationality eligibility criteria:

Applicants should be eligible under the Civil Service rules and have the right to work in the UK, and UK/EEA nationality. Security check clearance (SC) is required. The process of gaining SC clearance can take up to several months. Please see National security vetting: clearance levels for further information. For specific information on the nationality requirements, please see Civil Service recruitment: nationality rules. Successful applicants will only be able to start on completion of the clearance process.

Fellowship position description

This policy fellowship position will be based in the Office of the Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA); a Directorate with central oversight of the science, technology and innovation advice across Home Office (HO) business. The Chief Scientific Advisor, Professor Brooke Rogers owns the central Behavioural Science capability in the Home Office, and the policy fellow will be in her reporting line. Being situated in the CSA's Office will afford the policy fellow a number of opportunities to apply Behavioural Science Advice across a wide range of HO activity; as part of the Home Office's Crisis Response Cadre; in response to requests from the Home Office Science Advisory Council (HOSAC) and in assessing the human facing risk of new and emerging technology.

Delivering to the Safer Streets mission within the Home Office, providing broad scientific and strategic oversight, the policy fellow will work closely with policy colleagues, researchers, analysts and partners from across the Home Office and Whitehall, including the Interpersonal Abuse Unit policy team, colleagues in the Home Office Analysis and Insight (HOAI) Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) programme, Homeland Security Group (HSG), the strategic communications team, the Science, Innovation & Technology Delivery Team, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), Department for Education (DfE), National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), police forces, GO-Science and Defence Science and Policy Laboratory (DSTL). Using a collaborative approach the policy fellow will build on the work already done, but specifically, using behavioural science understanding, develop novel policy and operational approaches of value to the whole community.

As part of the fellowship opportunity, you will help build the evidence base to support for example, the delivery of the Home Office owned objectives in the cross-government strategy Freedom from violence and abuse and the Non-Ideological Violent Extremist (NIEV) Task Force. You will scope, design and deliver research projects against priority knowledge needs for the delivery of the government's strategies and associated action plans which set ambitious across-government agendas to prevent VAWG and NIEV and intervene early, pursue perpetrators and support victims. There is an ambitious across-government agenda to prevent VAWG and NIEV following the Southport Inquiry, to intervene early, pursue perpetrators and

support victims. As a government priority, there is a high level of Ministerial oversight with bi-monthly Ministerial governance meetings co-ordinated through Cabinet Office.

The policy fellow should expect to collaborate in co-designing projects applying a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods, with colleagues across policy and analysis and insights in the Home Office, across other government departments and with academics and research agencies. This may include analysis of administrative data, stakeholder engagement, process evaluation activities, and the development of evidence to inform future policy and operational decision-making. The fellow will be encouraged to draw on their own expertise and interests to address emerging evidence needs as strategy delivery evolves.

Dependent on timing, there may also be the opportunity to work as a behavioural science persona in testing AI enabled data resources and applications of synthetic data.

Research problem and context

The fellowship takes place against the backdrop of a significant drive in the Home Office to reduce violence against women and girls, reduce knife crime and intervene to prevent non-ideological extremist violence. 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 this work, 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 what works and how to scale interventions across the relevant systems

The postholder will support the development and delivery of empirical research in support of HO priority deliverables. This may include examining how to reduce and or deter offending behaviour. The role will involve designing practical and robust analysis, collecting and analysing data, and communicating findings to policy and operational stakeholders. The Home Office has access to a range of administrative data sources and established relationships with partner organisations. This will provide a unique opportunity to contribute to evidence generation in important, high-profile and rapidly evolving policy areas.

Outputs

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

- valuable contribution to the evidence base on intervention and prevention
- presentations to analysts, practitioners and policymakers
- internal reports that may be shared across government departments
- contributions to briefings and practitioner workshops/roundtables.

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:

- demonstrable expertise in behavioural science, research and evaluation, with the ability to design, deliver and assess evidence-based interventions that improve policy and operational outcomes

- strong analytical and research capability, including experience of mixed-methods research, evaluation frameworks, data analysis, and translating complex evidence into clear, actionable insights for decision-makers
- excellent stakeholder engagement and communication skills, with the ability to build effective cross-disciplinary relationships, influence senior audiences, and apply subject matter expertise in violence prevention, VAWG, stalking and related Safer Streets priorities

Desirable criteria:

Applicants shortlisted from the panel assessment will be assessed at the host led interview selection process against the following desirable opportunity-specific requirements:

- human factors and behavioural science expertise, with the ability to apply evidence and insight to complex policy and operational challenges
- research, project and programme delivery experience, including designing and delivering research in strategy, policy or operational environments
- strong stakeholder engagement and collaboration skills, with experience of influencing across multidisciplinary teams and navigating complex policy issues

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 Offices' 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.