UKRI policy fellowships 2027

Fellowship position

Fellowship title:

MHCLG building safety environment fellowship

Fellowship type:

Core policy fellowship

Host organisation:

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

Host team:

The fellow will be hosted within the Building Systems and Insights Directorate, working in collaboration with policy teams across divisions that are responsible for building safety regulation, construction products, industry competence, professions and other related areas. They will also be working with the Chief Construction and Scientific Adviser's Office at MHCLG.

Academic discipline/s:

Engineering, architecture, behavioural science, systems thinking

Summary:

An opportunity to inform government policy on building safety through research and analysis, helping to address complex challenges relating to regulation, construction products, industry competence and the delivery of safe, high-quality homes.

Policy topic:

Supporting the development of evidence-based policy on building safety by addressing emerging challenges relating to regulation, construction products, industry competence and wider system performance, contributing to the Government's priorities for safe, high-quality homes, housing delivery and 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:

MHCLG has offices throughout the UK: London, Belfast, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Darlington, Edinburgh, Leeds, Manchester, Nottingham and Wolverhampton. The role can be based in any MHCLG office, although most colleagues are based in London. We anticipate that the fellowship could be undertaken effectively with remote working and occasional visits to an MHCLG office (where appropriate) to meet colleagues.

Hybrid working:

The fellow should generally aim to align with MHCLG's standard working arrangements for office attendance where feasible. These are currently 40-50% depending on the office location. During the inception phase of the fellowship this may involve more regular in-person engagement to support effective engagement and collaboration.

There is flexibility for the fellow and host to agree alternative arrangements, depending on the nature of the work being undertaken, location and individual circumstances. Fellows will be expected to maintain regular engagement with colleagues through hybrid working to support delivery. Occasional visits to London may be required where an outside London location is agreed. Eligible travel and subsistence costs are supported by the main UKRI grant.

Security clearance and nationality eligibility criteria:

Basic Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) is required, which usually takes around six weeks to process. 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. Whilst completing the fellowship is not conditional on having Counter Terrorist Check (CTC) clearance, the fellow would not be able to work from MHCLG's London Office regularly, or without an escort if CTC clearance is not undertaken. Therefore, if it is expected that the fellow will be working from MHCLG's London Office, CTC clearance should commence at the earliest possible opportunity. Please review the national security vetting: clearance levels and civil service recruitment: nationality rules for further information. Candidates should check these requirements before applying to ensure that they meet the eligibility criteria.

Fellowship position description

Safe, high-quality buildings are essential to supporting sustainable housing delivery, economic growth and building confidence in the built environment system. The Government has committed to delivering 1.5 million homes this Parliament whilst ensuring that people across the UK can live and work in safe, high-quality buildings. Achieving these objectives requires the government to address complex and evolving challenges relating to building safety regulation, construction products, industry competence and the wider performance of the building safety system. Addressing these challenges benefits from collaboration between policy professionals, industry expert and academic professionals.

We are seeking a policy fellow who can contribute to evidence-based policy development across the building safety environment. The fellow will work with policy teams responsible for building safety,

construction products and professions, supporting strategic thinking and policy development through research, evidence synthesis, horizon scanning and stakeholder engagement. The fellow will also help improve our connections to relevant industry experts and academic institutions.

The fellowship will be co-designed by the fellow, MHCLG policy teams and the Chief Construction and Scientific Adviser's (CCSA) office, reflecting both departmental priorities and the fellow's expertise. Research questions and outputs will be developed collaboratively during the inception phase, but examples could include:

- how can regulation most effectively improve building safety outcomes whilst support housing delivery and economic growth targets
- what emerging technologies, materials or construction methods present future building safety opportunities or risks
- what factors can influence competence, compliance and safety culture across the built environment sector
- how can government and regulators better identify, understand and respond to building safety issues
- what evidence can improve our understanding of the effectiveness and impact of current building safety policies and regulatory interventions

Given the evolving nature of the policy environment, we anticipate that fellowship activities and deliverables will be co-agreed and reviewed regularly on a rolling basis (e.g. every three months) with the fellow and MHCLG senior leadership. Activities will be co-produced with policymakers and could include:

- providing expert advice on priority policy problems
- producing evidence summaries, reviews and analysis
- preparing policy papers and briefings that translate research for non-specialist audiences
- conveying policy workshops to bring academic challenge and rigour to policy development
- identifying research gaps and future research priorities
- supporting capabilities within policy teams by improving access to and understanding of relevant research and evidence, including knowledge sharing with universities
- supporting wider learning across the built environment sector by connecting policy development to relevant communities and academic debate

As a result, fellowship outputs may include evidence reviews, policy papers and briefings for senior policy audiences, insights from policy workshops and proposing opportunities for future research opportunities. The fellowship may also contribute to stronger links between government, academia and relevant stakeholders that will improve the use of evidence in policymaking. We will support academic publication and wider dissemination of research findings arising from fellowship activities, subject to relevance, sensitivities and departmental clearance processes.

The fellow will be embedded within a policy division in the Building Systems and Insights Group, aligned to their interests and expertise, and will collaborate across divisions and the CCSA's Office.

The fellow will benefit from gaining insight into government decision making, opportunities to influence nationally significant policy issues affecting building safety, access to policy, analytical and scientific networks across government, including at Senior Civil Service Level, and experience producing policy-relevant outputs alongside rigorous academic work.

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:

- academic research expertise, relative to career stage in a discipline relevant to building safety and the built environment
- strong analytical and research skills, including the ability to synthesise qualitative and quantitative evidence to address policy problems

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:

- subject matter expertise in one or more of the following subjects; building safety, construction products, industry competence, housing quality or regulatory systems
- experience applying systems-thinking approaches to complex policy problems
- experience applying scientific or technical expertise to inform policy or regulatory decision-making

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 MHCLG 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.