UKRI policy fellowships 2027

Fellowship position

Fellowship title:

MoJ knowledge exchange evaluation fellowship

Fellowship type:

Core policy fellowship

Host organisation:

Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

Host team:

Evidence and partnerships hub in MoJ policy group's analysis directorate

Academic discipline/s:

Knowledge mobilisation, evaluation, evidence-based policy, social policy, metascience

Summary:

Opportunity to explore and evaluate how evidence is used and mobilised within policy and practice decision-making.

Policy topic:

The fellowship reflects MoJ's commitment to provide transparent mechanisms for engagement and collaboration, and the demonstration of their impact, as well as the overall vision for academic partnerships as set out by the MoJ Chief Social Researcher in the Ministry of Justice areas of research interest 2025.

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:

MoJ welcome applications from researchers based across the UK (Fellows must be UK-based for the duration of the Fellowship and cannot work outside the UK). The Evidence and Partnerships Hub, with whom the Fellow will work with, are based in offices in Leeds and London; the full range of offices where the Fellow could work from can be found in the MoJ National Office Network.

Hybrid working:

A laptop will be provided. MoJ offers hybrid working arrangements that allow fellows to work from different MoJ offices, their university, from home, or a combination – subject to adherence to information security at all times. We anticipate the fellow will attend an MoJ office two times per month or more to meet with relevant colleagues during the main placement phase.

In addition to office attendance, it would be useful to budget for travel to London around four times in the placement year 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:

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 the 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 Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Evidence and Partnerships Hub, based in Policy Group's Analysis Directorate, enhances MoJ's strategic research capabilities, to enable evidence-based decisions, by collaborating with academic experts, research networks, and research funders. They have established a structured approach to evidence usage and academic engagement, enabled by the departmental Areas of Research Interest (ARI).

The Hub's approach comprises ARIs, academic engagement and knowledge exchange events, research networks and networking, formal partnerships with funded research projects, and fellowships and secondments. While these activities have helped embed a strong knowledge exchange (KE) culture and attracted positive feedback, their costs, benefits and impact have not been systematically evaluated.

The Fellow will be embedded in the Hub to co-design and deliver a work programme to generate practical recommendations on what works to maximise evidence impact in decision-making and develop a strategic evaluation framework for KE activity. This could combine stakeholder mapping and engagement, interviews, piloting, monitoring and evaluation activity, and economic appraisal. This will build on work already started in MoJ, where the Hub developed a theory of change for academic engagement and have begun thinking about evaluation of knowledge exchange activity.

The Fellow will bring specialist expertise in evidence use, knowledge mobilisation, and research on research evaluation and appraisal methods. Working across policy, analytical and practice teams, they will develop practical methods to measure, monitor, and evaluate the costs, benefits, and impact of evidence generation, usage, and KE activity.

The intellectual project ownership given to the fellow will allow them to make the project their own whilst delivering a strategic evaluation framework that can strengthen research impact. Research has shown that of 1,922 academic-policy KE initiatives undertaken worldwide, only 3% have a published evaluation; the number of those evaluations focussing on government-initiated KE activity is in single figures. The

fellowship will therefore make a significant and world-leading contribution to the global evidence base on research usage and KE evaluation, and publication is expected as part of this.

The fellow will be embedded in and line managed by the Evidence and Partnerships Hub. As part of this, the fellow will receive ongoing guidance and support on a regular (one-to-one) basis, and will also jointly participate in team meetings, away days, and training as appropriate. They will be supported by the Evidence and Partnerships Hub in the translation, dissemination and application of their work, including via knowledge exchange opportunities such as seminars, roundtables, and specialist academic advice sessions to maximise the impact of their fellowship. The fellow will also be part of a (growing) network of MoJ fellows from existing and past iterations of the Policy Fellowships Scheme.

The fellow will benefit from wider support, networking opportunities and learning and development available to the Analytical Community, giving them a richer experience during their fellowship. The Analytical Community in MoJ consists of multidisciplinary teams embedded throughout the department, providing analysis and research across a diverse and exciting agenda. They provide high-quality data, analysis, and research to ensure strategic, policy, finance, corporate and operational decisions are based on robust evidence.

Testimonial from a past fellow:

“During the policy fellowship, I really enjoyed conducting empirical research on subjects that were of interest to policy and analysis colleagues, as well as being related to my research expertise. I also developed excellent networks across the Ministry of Justice and His Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service and through my cohort of fellows. The Evidence and Partnerships Hub team were incredibly welcoming and supportive.”

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:

- experience of translating academic research evidence into policy and practice
- working knowledge of how evidence is used in policy and practice and decision-making
- strong analytical skills in applied evaluation and appraisal

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:

- previous experience of collaborating with a UK government department or agency
- knowledge of the justice evidence landscape or specific topics or themes within the MoJ ARI

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 MoJ’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.