# UKRI policy fellowships 2027

## Fellowship position

### Fellowship title:

Scottish Government keeping the promise to Scotland's care community fellowship

### Fellowship type:

Core policy fellowship

### Host organisation:

The Scottish Government

### Host team:

Office of the Chief Social Policy Adviser (OCSPA)

### Academic discipline/s:

Data science, child and family studies, social work, sociology, psychology

### Summary:

This is an opportunity to generate key evidence to enhance understanding of progress towards implementing the Independent Care Review's recommendations for Scotland by 2030.

### Policy topic:

The fellowship will focus on informing progress towards the Scottish Parliament's commitment to implement the 2020 Independent Care Review's recommendations by 2030 in order to improve outcomes for children, young people and adults with care experience.

### 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:

Flexible on location. There is potential for the role to be entirely remote or partially based in St Andrews House, Edinburgh (host team location) or another Scottish Government building (e.g. in Edinburgh, Glasgow or London) if desired.

## Hybrid working:

There is scope for the fellow to be located remotely and to agree a programme of in-person work with the wider team and policy colleagues in Edinburgh. We envisage the following pattern of attendance, but this can be discussed and agreed with the fellow:

- at least one in-person day in St Andrew's House, Edinburgh during the three-month inception phase for an induction session
- approximately four in-person days in Edinburgh for the duration of the main placement phase to engage in meetings of the wider network around Keeping the Promise
- approximately three in-person days in Edinburgh or Glasgow during the knowledge exchange phase

If the fellow is based near one of our Scottish Government buildings and has a preference for more regular office attendance this can be accommodated.

A laptop will be provided enabling remote working and 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:

The fellow will need to pass the Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS). This process takes around six weeks and must be completed before the fellow can access Scottish Government systems. Security clearance should be confirmed before the inception phase can commence. Part of this entails verifying that the fellow meets the Civil Service Nationality Rules - see the Annex C flowchart to check eligibility for non-reserved posts. By applying for this fellowship, you are affirming that you have understood these requirements and expect to be able to pass BPSS.

# Fellowship position description

## Context:

The Scottish Parliament committed to implementing the 2020 Independent Care Review's recommendations by 2030 to improve outcomes for children, young people and adults with care experience. The Promise's Data and Evidence Group's review suggests that critical evidence gaps could be addressed through:

- administrative data linkage studies
- qualitative research on experiences across population groups; or
- evaluation of the implementation of this complex system change

This fellowship will focus on addressing one of these critical evidence gaps, with the precise contribution tailored to the fellow's disciplinary or methodological expertise through collaborative design of the final project brief during inception. The project has potential to be an exemplar of mixed-methods approaches for other evidence areas.

## Indicative activities:

It is broadly envisaged that the fellowship would involve:

- engagement with the host team and internal and external stakeholders in the first three months to define a detailed and focused scope and questions for the project, mapping policy landscape, data sources and potential indicators
- work across the 12-month core placement to access, collate or gather data and conduct original analysis supported by Scottish Government colleagues (e.g. linking administrative datasets to track service use journeys of adults with care experience; or conducting qualitative research with the care community to articulate what keeping the Promise will feel like for them)
- having delivered a report for publication by Scottish Government, the fellow will work with the policy host in the final three months to promote this evidence resource among policymakers and analysts across the public sector and beyond, including through developing further publications and making presentations to executive bodies and high-level forums

## Management:

The fellow will be line managed within the Office of the Chief Social Policy Adviser (OCSPA), whose role providing expert advice to policy teams will support the fellow's engagement across government and opportunities to present ongoing work. Team level interaction will involve attending regular meetings and advisory groups including The Promise Data and Evidence Group (DEG), chaired by Chief Social Policy Advisor Professor Linda Bauld. Close working with the DEG will provide access to a network of analysts, policy professionals, delivery partners and external stakeholders with particular expertise and specialist knowledge, including the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and The Promise Scotland. The fellow will have a Scottish Government email address through access to a SCOTS account.

## Benefits:

This is an opportunity to propose innovative methods and to publish findings that address key evidence needs set out in The Promise: Areas of Research Interest 2026-29 and will directly inform a high-profile, critical objective of the Scottish Government (SG) and partners. The fellow can strengthen understanding of how their research aligns with priorities and evidence use in government through close engagement with analysts and policy officials. Understanding and demonstrating progress towards keeping the Promise is central to the SG's leading priority to eradicate child poverty, and outputs and emerging insights will therefore be of interest to decision makers at a high level. There is scope for wide knowledge translation and engagement across government: the reporting timetable aligns advantageously with the Promise partners' schedule for evidencing and acting upon wider progress, and OCSPA engage with key SG programmes such as those to address child poverty and population health.

# 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:

- a proven track record in social science research
- relevant subject matter expertise in topics related to the fellowship (for example with children and families, the care system or other relevant areas)
- strong analytical skills in synthesising a range of quantitative and qualitative data

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 of data linkage studies and analysing administrative data
- experience of conducting qualitative data research with vulnerable groups

- strong established relations with organisations working with the care community and families, children or young people

# 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 Scottish Government'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.