



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

## **A synthesis of evidence on parental decisions about childcare for children aged nine months to two years old**

### **Summary**

This is an exciting opportunity to do a paid work placement on a project for the Welsh Government. The focus of the project is to undertake a synthesis of evidence to support ongoing early years policy development. The successful applicant will work closely with Welsh Government officials and stakeholders to research and develop a varied range of research outputs and support the Welsh Government in their research process. The applicant will have the opportunity to apply research skills in a policy environment, further develop generic skills (such as report writing or making presentations), and to enhance their knowledge of research outside academia.

### **The Organisation**

The Welsh Government is the devolved Government for Wales with responsibility for the economy, education, health and the Welsh NHS, business, public services and the environment of Wales.

Specifically, the internship will be based in the Children, Families and Childcare Evidence branch within the Equality, Poverty and Children's Evidence and Support Division (EPCESD). This recently established division plays a crucial role in supporting the Communities and Tackling Poverty and Primary Care, Mental Health and Early Years directorates, which aim to promote the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities and their economic prosperity. By providing research, evidence, planning and finance support to policymakers, we support a wide range of priorities across Communities and Tackling Poverty, including:

- Promoting the early years and ensuring children have the best start in life.
- Providing support for parents in order to secure children's wellbeing and help ensure they fulfil their potential.
- Increasing the availability of quality, affordable childcare and play provision.
- Tackling Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) by adopting a preventative approach and building resilience to withstand the impact of ACEs.
- Tackling child poverty.
- Promoting the rights and participation of children and young people.

## The Internship

The project will focus on a rapid review of existing evidence about how parents make decisions about childcare for children aged from nine months to two years of age. The internship will provide an exciting opportunity to work at the heart of Welsh Government. The internship will require working closely with policy officials and researchers and will provide an opportunity to apply research skills in a policy environment, further develop generic skills (such as report writing or making presentations), and to enhance policy knowledge.

The successful candidate will benefit from development opportunities offered centrally by the Welsh Government, potentially including mentoring, shadowing, peer support and training.

Interns will benefit from the experience of working closely with the Welsh Government in the following ways:

- Gaining a better understanding of the world outside of academia and increasing employability, using their knowledge and skills to contribute to the work of the Welsh Government.
- The intern's colleagues at the Welsh Government can offer an insight into the intern's PhD project that can contribute to the success of their thesis', as well as networking opportunities within the policy arena linked to their research area
- Developing transferable skills and knowledge, including time management skills and report writing skills

## The Project

### **A synthesis of evidence on parental decisions about childcare for children aged nine months to two years old**

The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring that every child in Wales has the best start in life. The early years are vitally important in a child's life, providing formative opportunities and setting the course for longer term learning and development. Investment in early years care and education, as set out in our vision for Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care, is key to children's happiness and well-being and sets children on the path to achieve their full potential.

The Welsh Government has two funded childcare programmes supporting children and parents in the early years. These are the childcare element of the Flying Start programme<sup>1</sup> and the Childcare Offer for Wales<sup>2</sup>. Government funded childcare is currently available to some children from the age of two.

In other UK nations Government funded childcare is available to children as young as nine months old. There is a wide range of evidence about the benefits of childcare to both children, families and the economy. We would like to understand more about what factors influence parents' decisions about childcare for children under the age of two.

This project aims to:

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<sup>1</sup> [Get help from Flying Start | GOV.WALES](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Childcare Offer for Wales | Help With Childcare Costs Wales | GOV.WALES](#)

- identify and synthesise the available research and data on the factors that influence parents' decisions on childcare through a rapid evidence assessment.

The evidence review should include Welsh Government produced research and data, as well as other research covering Wales, the other UK nations and International evidence where appropriate. This evidence synthesis should be conducted in an unbiased and reproducible way to provide evidence for practice and policy-making.

Anticipated project outputs:

- Publication of a Government Social Research report.
- A written briefing for Ministers and officials outlining the key findings from the analysis.
- A presentation to analytical colleagues and policy officials on the findings of the project.

## **Internship responsibilities and requirements**

The internship will last for 3 months, with the option of extension, during which time the students PhD project will be paused by their home institution. The student will be paid the equivalent of their stipend during their internship. Over and above leave policies, time for existing PhD commitments can be arranged on discussion with line managers. E.g. research groups meetings and conference presentations. Applications are encouraged from part-time students.

It is anticipated that the successful applicant will work in a hybrid way between home and a Welsh Government office during their internship. This may change depending on Welsh Government policy. Any changes to working arrangements will be discussed with successful applicants.

The internship will last for a period of 3 months full-time or the part-time equivalent. For students registered on a part-time studentship, this internship is available on a part-time basis over a longer time frame (no fewer than three days a working week), this would be negotiated between the WG and the successful applicant. If you would like to be considered on a part-time basis, please specify your preferred working hours on the application form.

## **Student specification**

The Welsh Government is seeking a highly motivated individual with existing research skills. The ideal candidate will be driven to advance their own skills and experience by undertaking research that will contribute to the advancement of public policy and decision-making in Wales. .

Essential criteria:

- Enrolled in a PhD programme

Research skills:

- Ability to review and collate literature from a range of sources.

Communication:

- Ability to produce analytical outputs and well written documents presenting technical material in an accessible format.
- Ability to present technical information to non-technical audiences.

Time management:

- Effective time management skills to meet project deadlines and ensure all tasks are completed by the end of the internship.

## **Start date of internship**

April/May 2025 (exact date to be negotiated). There may be some flexibility dependent on individual circumstances.

## **Funding and costs**

Reasonable travel and accommodation costs for students not normally based in Cardiff can be met. Requests should be consistent with WGSSS guidelines. Applications from students requiring additional funding for travel and accommodation will not be treated less favourably. For any queries on this please contact Carole Baker at the WGSSS on: [enquiries@wgsss.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@wgsss.ac.uk)

## **Security**

The Welsh Government's vetting procedures (which apply to temporary as well as permanent staff) involve the completion of a Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) application form and a Security Questionnaire for the purpose of security vetting.

This process requires the applicant to produce in person three original forms of identification documents, one of which should be photographic (passport, new driving license), one document should showing their current address, plus one of: a utility bill, birth certificate, P45 or P60.

## **Queries**

Any queries relating to the post or application process should be directed to:

### **Siân Williams**

Principal Research Officer

Sian.Williams50@gov.wales