

Welsh Government

Research in Practice Project Placement Proposal

Exploring the concept of housing affordability in Wales

Summary of project

Housing in Wales is a devolved policy area that supports wider government priorities such as improving health, tackling climate change, and reducing poverty. Affordability is a key challenge, but its definition is complex and varies across tenures, social housing, private rental, and home ownership, and is shaped by income, housing costs, and local market dynamics. This project aims to explore how affordability is defined and experienced across different housing pathways in Wales.

About Welsh Government Research in Practice Placements

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

A placement in Welsh Government offers a unique opportunity to work alongside policy officials and researchers, applying your research skills in a live policy environment. You'll have the opportunity to develop a range of research skills while deepening your understanding of how evidence shapes decision-making in Welsh Government.

The placement will be based alongside the members of the [Government Social Research \(GSR\) profession](#). GSR provides high-quality analytical advice and independent evidence to inform key policy decisions. Their work supports the full policy cycle—from understanding and development through to implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Placement students will also contribute to wider efforts to support policy colleagues in shaping and delivering effective policy.

The Project: Exploring housing affordability in Wales

On October 24, 2024, the Welsh Government published a [White Paper on Adequate Housing, Fair Rents and Affordability for consultation](#). Globally affordability is a part of Adequate housing in article 25 of the 1948 [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) and in article 11.1 of the 1966 [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#).

Affordability is a key challenge within this context; however, the concept is complex and contested. It varies across housing tenures and what is considered affordable is shaped by multiple factors, such as household income, housing costs, and local market dynamics, including supply and demand pressures, regional price variations, and broader economic conditions. There are multiple existing methods of assessing or explaining housing affordability. [The ONS \(2025\) reports](#) on affordability using ratios based on earnings estimates on a workplace basis (where people work), or residence basis (where they live) at median and lower quartiles.

Aim: The project seeks to explore how affordability is defined and used across different housing pathways in Wales.

The project is relatively broad and will be scoped further as part of the placement. Specific objectives may include:

- Examining evidence on housing costs in different tenures
- Exploring housing affordability ratios and the rationale for their use

A range of methods may be suitable to deliver the project, depending on the specific objectives agreed. For example:

- Quantitative analysis of housing data, including housing related costs
- Qualitative research through interviews and focus groups
- Evidence review and synthesis of existing research

Anticipated project outcomes:

- Evidence briefing/s
- Presentations to Welsh Government officials

What skills do we need

We're looking for candidates who can bring some of the following skills (the candidate does not need to have them all):

- Quantitative research skills – experience in exploring and presenting existing data sources, strong data analysis skills, and familiarity with tools such as R.
- Qualitative research experience – ability to conduct interviews and focus groups, and to carry out appropriate analysis and reporting.
- Evidence review expertise – capability to synthesise findings and present them clearly for non-technical audiences.

Placement timescales

The placement will be for a period of 3 months. The placement is expected to start no earlier than May 2026.

The start date will be discussed with the successful applicant and there may be some flexibility dependent on individual circumstances.

Funding and expenses

This opportunity is only open to students funded through the WGSSS Studentship scheme (awarded from October 2024 onwards) who are required to complete a Research in Practice placement. The placement is unpaid, however you will continue to receive your ESRC stipend. Welsh Government is not able to cover any relocation costs associated with the placement.

Reasonable travel and subsistence expenses incurred while carrying out placement-related activities may be claimed, subject to prior agreement with your placement supervisor and in line with the Welsh Government's Travel and Subsistence Policy

Working arrangements

Welsh Government working hours are 37 hours per week, 7 hours 24 minutes per day on average. With prior agreement with the placement supervisor, you may be able to work flexible hours in accordance with Welsh Government practices. For students registered on a part-time studentship, this placement may be available on a part-time basis over a longer time frame, this would be negotiated between the Welsh Government 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.

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

Nationality requirements and security vetting

Eligibility for taking up this placement in Welsh Government is dependent on meeting the [Civil Service Nationality rules](#). Please check that you are eligible before applying. Those who do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be able to take up a placement opportunity.

Successful applicants will be required to undergo Welsh Government's vetting procedures (which apply to temporary as well as permanent staff). This will involve

the completion of a Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) application form and a Security Questionnaire.

Contacts

For more information about this placement project, here are the contact details:

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If you require information about Research in Practice placement opportunities in Welsh Government please contact:

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If you have any other queries about Research in Practice Placements please contact:

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