

ESRC Welsh Graduate School for Social Sciences Research in Practice Placement Opportunity	
<p>The following information has been provided by the Host Organisation and outlines the opportunity available. Any queries about this placement should be addressed to the host organisation in the details provided below.</p> <p>This placement is aimed at Postgraduate Researchers who have funding through the ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership from October 2024 onwards, who must complete a Research in Practice placement as part of their award.</p>	
Name of Host Organisation	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Registered Address	Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry CF63 4RU
Website	www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk
Brief description of the Host organisation:	The Vale of Glamorgan Council (Cyngor Bro Morgannwg) is the local authority for the Vale of Glamorgan in South Wales, managing services for over 130,000 residents, including education, social services, waste management, and planning. Based in Barry, it operates under a Cabinet-led system with 54 elected councillors and focuses on "Strong Communities with a Bright Future".
Company registration Number	Not applicable.

PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITY	
Placement role title: <i>e.g Policy officer</i>	Research Assistant
Background/expected impact of the project:	Participation in Democratic Decision Making
Outline of duties/description of opportunity	The Council has undertaken an ambitious review of its decision-making arrangements, with the key strand being entitled "Reshaping Scrutiny". As many will be aware, there is an ambivalence towards political instructions, with a previous survey of residents identifying 61% feeling the Council did not consider their views when making a decision.

	<p>As part of the Reshaping Scrutiny changes, to complement the Council's Public Participation Strategy, the Council has a number of arrangements to facilitate involvement in formal democratic functions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making written representations • Speaking at Committees on items • Suggesting topics for consideration • Being involved in Task and Finish Scrutiny as an expert witness • Supporting e-petitions <p>Details of these arrangements are on the Council's website and regularly shared via Social Media channels.</p> <p>However, we would like to explore a number of sub-themes reflecting upon democratic participation including (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the effectiveness of the current arrangements (outlined above) • Understanding barriers for residents to participate in democratic functions • Understanding how we can broaden approaches to facilitate wider involvement in decision making, representing the diversity of our population • Reviewing how we demonstrate the impact of resident voice in decision making and democratic processes • Understanding how best to navigate communication approaches to seek to bridge the disconnect between democratic processes and residents' perception of democracy (with particular consideration of social media). <p>These themes would be explored further with interested applicants.</p>
<p>Expected output(s)/deliverable(s)</p>	<p>Analysing qualitative and quantitative data from a range of sources.</p> <p>Writing a report including a series of recommendations reviewing the effectiveness of participation in Democratic processes.</p> <p>Co-ordinating editorial, design and distribution timelines.</p>

	<p>Supporting the development of a subsequent response to the recommendations.</p> <p>Assisting the Democratic Services team with any other duties.</p>
Skills and experience required for the role	<p>Ability to interpret and analyse qualitative and quantitative data</p> <p>Awareness of difference between public policy language/writing style and academic writing</p> <p>Interest in public services.</p> <p>Interested in working with a wide range of stakeholders from across the public sector, including Elected Members and the Public.</p> <p>Interest in understanding devolved policy areas</p> <p>Ability to work as part of a team, whether remotely or in-person</p>
Please indicate which of the following skills could be developed or applied during the placement, you may select more than one.	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Research skills</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Communication skills</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project management</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy understanding or engagement</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaboration / teamwork</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Data collection</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Specific methodologies (please specify):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Software skills (please specify):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Professional and transferable skills</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):</p>
What support will be provided for the Postgraduate Researcher e.g necessary resources, training, support and equipment for the student to undertake their placement	<p>The researcher will be provided with a full induction during their first week of work at Vale of Glamorgan Council.</p> <p>There will also be a role-specific induction carried out by the Head of Democratic Services, focusing on an overview of the Vale of Glamorgan's overall priorities. The researcher will be supplied with a work laptop and headphones as standard.</p>

KEY INFORMATION	
Number of placements available:	1
Location of placement	Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry CF63 4RU
Placement duration:	6 months

Full time or part-time	Part Time (September – March)
Working hours or core hours	Vale of Glamorgan works on a hybrid basis and encourages flexible working arrangements. Due to the nature of the work, there may be a requirement for some evening meetings to be agreed with the postholder.
In-person, online or hybrid:	Hybrid
Anticipated start date:	September 2026 (to be agreed with postholder)
Security/health and safety restrictions (if relevant)	Post holders will be needed to ensure they are compliant with GDPR and undertake an enhanced DBS.
Language requirements (if relevant)	Not Applicable

HOW TO APPLY	
Closing date and time for applications	Applications must be submitted by 17:00 on 1 st May 2026.
How to submit an application	<p>Please send your CV and a covering letter explaining how you meet the criteria for this role and why you would like to work with Vale of Glamorgan Council. Your application will not be considered without the covering letter.</p> <p>If your application is successful, you will also be required to provide a reference before starting work. Please email your CV and covering letter to jlانgridge-thomas@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk</p> <p>We welcome applications in Welsh and English, applications submitted in Welsh will not be treated less favourably than applications submitted in English.</p>
Recruitment process	<p>The application period for this role will close at 17:00 on 1st May 2026.</p> <p>Interviews will take place on Microsoft Teams during the week of 8th May 2026.</p> <p>Candidates are welcome to request an in person interview if they wish.</p>

	The role will then commence on an agreed date with the successful applicant.
Contact name and email for any queries related to the placement:	James Langridge-Thomas Head of Democratic Services jlangridge- thomas@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION	
<i>Equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace is about valuing all people equally, fairly and with respect, avoiding all forms of unlawful discrimination irrespective of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.</i>	
Do you agree to uphold the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout the placement process and experience.	Yes
Does your organisation have an EDI policy?	Vale of Glamorgan Council is an Equal Opportunities employer and positively encourages 5 applications from suitably qualified and eligible candidates, regardless of age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, marital/civil partnership status or pregnancy and maternity.
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE	
<i>WGSSS Postgraduate Researchers receive their studentship stipend whilst attending their Research in Practice placement/opportunity.</i>	
<i>It is expected that any travel expenses incurred during the course of the placement i.e. travelling to business meetings or placement events, will be covered by the placement host.</i>	
Please confirm if your organisation would be willing to contribute towards additional expenses	Vale of Glamorgan Council is able to provide reasonable reimbursement for travel and accommodation expenses for work events. This does not include commuting to/from work.