

Welsh Government

Research in Practice Project Placement Proposal

Strengthening Fair Work Indicators and the Social Partnership Evidence Base

Summary of project

This placement will support Welsh Government (WG) in strengthening the evidence base for Fair Work in Wales. Fair Work is WG's approach to improving conditions at work (see [A guide to fair work | GOV.WALES](#)), while social partnership gives employers, trade unions and government a structured way to work together and solve problems collectively. The two are closely linked, not least because Fair Work includes providing workers with an effective voice at work.

The placement will focus primarily on reviewing and developing the WG's Fair Work indicator framework. The successful applicant will assess the strengths and limitations of the current indicators, consider how workers' voice and social partnership maturity could be better reflected, and make recommendations for future monitoring and reporting.

Subject to capacity, the placement may also include a light-touch review of evidence on how social partnership and trade union engagement support Fair Work outcomes.

This placement offers a unique opportunity to gain experience at the interface of analysis and policy. The successful applicants will gain practical experience of indicator development, evidence reviews, monitoring and evaluation, while working with analysts and policy officials to translate evidence into insights for decision-makers. The placement will provide valuable experience of applying research skills beyond academia and understanding how evidence informs policy.

About Welsh Government Research in Practice Placements

The WG 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 WG offers a unique opportunity to work alongside policy officials and researchers, applying your research skills in a live policy environment while deepening your understanding of how evidence shapes WG decision-making.

The placement will be based within WGs Knowledge and Analytical Services (KAS). KAS provides the collection, analysis and presentation of research and data for policymakers and the public in keeping with professional standards. They offer independent evidence to understand, develop, implement, monitor and evaluate government policies. KAS also supports policy colleagues with the development, implementation and delivery of policy and programmes.

The intern will be supported in their role by a WG Senior Research Officer based in the Social Justice research branch and will work closely with researchers and statisticians in Labour Market Intelligence and Labour Market Statistics.

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.

Interns will benefit from the experience of working within Welsh Government to:

- Gain first-hand experience of how evidence informs policy development, monitoring and evaluation within a national government.
- Increase their employability by gaining or furthering their experience of research work in an applied policy environment
- Apply their research skills to real-world policy challenges.
- Develop transferable skills, including evidence synthesis, indicator development, data analysis, report writing, presentation and stakeholder engagement in alignment with the [GSR Professional Skills Framework](#).
- Increase their understanding of Government Social Research and its role, including gaining experience applying the [GSR Code of Practice](#).
- Link their PhD project to analytical work in Government.
- Gain networking opportunities within the policy arena linked to their research area.

The Project

Fair Work and social partnership are important policy priorities in Wales with the potential to influence a range of outcomes for workers, employers and the wider economy. Understanding how these concepts contribute to outcomes such as productivity, employee well-being and organisational performance, how they can be measured, and what evidence exists to support them, is an important part of developing effective policy and practice.

The [Social Partnership and Public Procurement \(Wales\) Act 2023](#) provides a framework for embedding social partnership, promoting Fair Work and using public procurement as a lever to support wider well-being outcomes. To support implementation of the Act, there is a need for robust evidence, monitoring and evaluation to understand what works, and how policy and practice can be strengthened over time.

Aims and objectives

The aim of this placement is to strengthen the evidence base underpinning Fair Work in Wales, with a particular focus on supporting future monitoring and evaluation activity.

The placement has two objectives:

- Objective 1 (primary objective): Review and further develop the WGs Fair Work indicator framework by assessing the suitability of existing measures, identifying potential alternative or additional indicators, and recommending improvements to the interpretation, reporting and application of Fair Work data. This work will include consideration of how dimensions of Fair Work (including pay, workers voice, job security, workplace inclusion, employer-trade union relationships and social partnership maturity), could be reflected in the framework and support future dashboard development.
- Objective 2 (secondary objective, subject to capacity): Building on evidence mapping activity already underway, undertake a focused, light touch review of evidence on where social partnership approaches and engagement with trade unions have supported Fair Work outcomes.

Project activities

The placement will:

- Review the current suite of WG Fair Work indicators.
- Assess whether existing indicators adequately reflect the concept of Fair Work.
- Consider the strengths, limitations and gaps within the current framework.
- Explore how worker voice, employer-trade union relationships and social partnership maturity could be represented within Fair Work measurement.
- Identify additional or alternative indicators from existing data sources where appropriate.
- Consider relevant approaches to measuring Fair Work in other jurisdictions, including Scotland's Fair Work First model.

- Develop practical recommendations to support future indicator development, monitoring and reporting.
- Subject to capacity, undertake a focused review of evidence on the relationship between social partnership, trade union engagement and Fair Work outcomes.

Anticipated Outputs

Anticipated outputs include:

- an assessment of strengths, limitations and gaps within the current Fair Work indicator framework
- practical recommendations for future indicator development, monitoring and reporting
- advice on how worker voice and social partnership considerations could be incorporated within future Fair Work measurement approaches
- a strengthened indicator evidence base from which trends, gaps and opportunities can be identified and explored
- subject to capacity, short evidence review on how social partnership and trade union engagement can support Fair Work outcomes.

This project's findings will help inform future analytical planning, research priorities, monitoring arrangements and evaluation activity, while supporting engagement with academic experts and key stakeholders.

What skills would we like

We welcome individuals who can bring the following skills and experience to the role:

- Strong analytical skills, including the ability to assess the strengths and limitations of data sources and indicators.
- Confidence working with mixed sources of evidence, including academic literature, policy documents, published statistics and internal analytical material.
- Ability to write clearly for a policy audience, including summarising complex evidence in a concise and accessible way.
- Ability to undertake structured literature reviews and evidence synthesis.

Placement timescales

The placement will be for a period of 3 months. The placement is expected to start no sooner than November 2026 and January 2027. The start date will be discussed with the successful applicant and there can be some flexibility.

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. WG cannot 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 WGs 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 WG 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 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.

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

Nationality requirements and security vetting

Eligibility for taking up this placement in WG 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 WG 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:

- Kate Mulready, Senior Research Officer, Social Partnerships, Welsh Government
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If you require information about Research in Practice placement opportunities in WG please contact:

- James Carey, Head of GSR Workforce Planning and Professional Standards
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If you have any other queries about Research in Practice Placements please contact:

- Sian Shepherd at Wales Graduate School for the Social Sciences
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