

Welsh Government

Research in Practice Project Placement Proposal

Understanding High-Value Behaviours in Welsh Tourism

Summary of project

Visit Wales is increasingly interested in understanding the behaviours that contribute most strongly to productivity and economic value. This project will help establish an evidence base for a more behavioural approach to tourism in Wales.

This PhD placement will;

- Conduct a rapid review of evidence on tourism productivity and behaviour change interventions.
- Identify behaviours associated with higher-value outcomes for tourism businesses and destinations.
- Identify and prioritise a series of behavioural hypotheses and research questions that can form the basis of a future research program.

This project offers a rare opportunity to help shape an emerging area of policy and research. The placement will contribute directly to the development of future business support, monitoring and evaluation approaches, while helping define a longer-term research agenda for Welsh hospitality and tourism.

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: Understanding High-Value Behaviours in Hospitality and Tourism in Wales

Summary of Policy Area and Project Context

The Welsh tourism sector faces persistent challenges relating to productivity, seasonality, utilisation of existing capacity and long-term business resilience. Visit Wales is increasingly interested in understanding the behaviours of visitors, residents and businesses that contribute most strongly to economic value and productivity. This project will help establish an evidence base for a more behaviourally informed approach to tourism policy.

Project Aims and Objectives

The placement will:

- Review international evidence on hospitality productivity, tourism behaviour and behavioural science.
- Identify behaviours associated with higher-value outcomes for hospitality businesses and destinations.
- Identify and prioritise a series of behavioural questions and hypotheses relevant to future tourism policy and evidence development.

Methods

The project will use:

- Desk-based review of academic literature, policy reports and international case studies.
- Development of a behavioural “map” of behaviours related to high value tourism.
- Engagement with policy officials and analysts
- Synthesis of findings into a practical set of behavioural hypotheses and policy-relevant insights.

The placement is expected to produce:

- A concise review of evidence relating to tourism productivity and behaviour change.
- A behavioural framework exploring what visitor and business behaviours contribute to high value outcomes.
- A prioritised set of behavioural hypotheses and research questions.

- Recommendations for future evidence development within Visit Wales.

Any Other Pertinent Points

The project sits at the intersection of tourism, behavioural science and economic development. It offers an opportunity to apply behavioural thinking to a live policy challenge. The findings will support Visit Wales in moving towards understanding the high-value behaviours that create value across the Welsh tourism system.

What skills do we need

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

- Strong analytical and research skills, particularly in evidence synthesis or literature review.
- Ability to work with qualitative and/or mixed-methods evidence.
- Clear, structured writing skills for researcher/analyst audiences.
- Confidence in working alongside researchers and non-researchers and managing a self-directed research project.
- An interest in tourism, behaviour change, and behavioural economics (knowledge of these is helpful but not required).

Placement timescales

The placement will be for a period of 3 months. It is anticipated that the placement will start no earlier than December 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:
Phil Nelson, Senior Research Officer, Visit Wales. Email: phil.nelson@gov.wales

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

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