Welsh Government
Research in Practice Project Placement Proposal

Evidence synthesis to support Wales' shift to becoming a Circular Economy: electrical and electronic equipment

Summary of project

This is an exciting opportunity to do a placement on a project for the Welsh Government. The successful applicant will work closely with policy and research colleagues to develop a varied range of research outputs, supporting the Welsh Government research process and contributing to policy decisions.

The applicant will have the opportunity to apply research skills in a policy environment, further develop general academic skills and to enhance their knowledge of research outside academia.

The placement will be located within the Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Research branch within the Social Research and Information Division and will support the Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy policy area.

Focusing on electrical and electronic equipment, the project will involve an evidence synthesis to examine the opportunities to Wales from introducing an Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme including the development of and current market for reuse, refurbishment and repair, with a particular focus on cost-of-living considerations. [1]

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

[1] An Extended Producer Responsibility scheme aims to reduce waste and support a circular economy by placing responsibility for the environmental impacts of products onto producers.

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

Evidence synthesis to support Wales' shift to becoming a Circular Economy: electrical and electronic equipment

The Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy Division promotes and champions resource efficiency and development of a circular economy across the whole of Wales, providing information, policy direction, funding and a delivery infrastructure to bring businesses, third and public sectors, communities and the whole of the Welsh public along with us.

How we manage the resources we use is crucial in tackling climate change and biodiversity loss. Making the change to a circular economy is vital to address the climate and nature emergencies. In 2021 the Welsh Government published the 'Beyond Recycling' strategy with the aim of making the circular economy in Wales a reality: Beyond recycling | GOV.WALES.

Key actions in the strategy include introducing an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme for packaging and considering EPR for additional products which are difficult to recycle such as batteries, Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and textiles.

Alongside addressing the climate and nature emergencies, circular economy practices such as repair and reuse can help households manage the cost-of-living crisis and deliver economic benefits. This internship will explore cost-of-living implications as well as offering the opportunity to understand the rise in repair and reuse within electrical items[2][3], for instance online resale platforms, manufacturer refurbishment programmes and emerging 'right to repair' initiatives across the EU. The scale of the increase in this pattern of market behaviours around refurbished and reused electronic equipment is important because understanding the extent to

[2] 25% of UK Mobile Phones Sold in 2023 Were Refurbished
[3] From Sofas to Smartphones: Second-Hand Shopping Surges

which these trends are evident in Wales and any barriers and opportunities for growth will be crucial for informing next steps for Welsh Government circular economy policies.

To support the development of effective policy interventions and take advantage of the potential opportunities for Wales in this area, this internship would involve evidence synthesis to examine the development and current state of the market for refurbished and repaired electrical items, and consideration of the social, economic and environmental opportunities to Wales from the introduction of an EPR for electronics.

The internship is likely to involve:

- Engagement with policy officials to understand evidence gaps, requirements, and develop research questions.
- Reviews of existing evidence from both Welsh Government and wider research, including evaluations of projects/policy interventions, as well as statistical outputs with links to the topic of interest.
- May also involve discussions with external stakeholders to explore evidence gaps and experiences.

This project is likely to involve engagement with a wide range of other policy teams in addition to Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy, such as Economy, Climate Change, Environmental Protection, reflecting its cross-cutting nature. It will therefore be important to consider the evidence gathered in terms of how it relates to current policy priorities and the broader context of the Beyond Recycling Strategy, the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, Climate Change etc., as appropriate.

Anticipated project outcomes:

- A report reviewing existing evidence focusing on the development and current state of the repair and refurbishment market for electrical items in Wales, and opportunities for Wales from introducing an EPR scheme for electrical items.
- A presentation of the findings to relevant policy teams.
- Publication of a research report on the Welsh Government website.

What skills do we need

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

- The ability to quickly understand Welsh Government's priorities in this area and to lead effective discussions with policy teams to understand their needs.
- Strong literature review and evidence appraisal skills, including the ability to synthesise a wide range of evidence and carry out desk research.
- Ability to evaluate research findings and apply them to a Welsh policy context.
- Ability to produce concise, well written documents, presenting complex evidence in an accessible format.

Placement timescales

The placement will be for a period of 3 months. The placement is expected to start between November 2026 and January 2027.

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:
Cecilia Kumar, Senior Research Officer, Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Research Team
Email: Cecilia.kumar@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
james.carey@gov.wales

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