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| **Project:**  |
| **Title: PhD student placement opportunity – Supporting Policy Development for the National Forest for Wales Programme** |
| The EU Exit and Strategy division of the Welsh Government (WG) is seeking a PhD student for a placement within its team. The student will work with the Modelling, Geospatial and Monitoring branch, which is responsible for delivering robust, quality evidence, analysis and monitoring to policy teams across the Environment and Rural Affairs department, such as Wales’ future farming scheme – the Sustainable Farming Scheme - and a National Forest for Wales.**Background**The Welsh Government are developing an ambitious programme of work to take forward the vision of a National Forest for Wales. To inform policy design our branch has commissioned the Environment and Rural and Rural Affairs Modelling and Monitoring Programme (ERAMMP)[[1]](#footnote-1) to produce a National Forest Evidence Pack which identifies the economic, social and environmental benefits which woodlands and forestry can deliver while also identifying where there is a weakness in the evidence base. The Evidence Pack was published in early September[[2]](#footnote-2).TheERAMMP National Forest Evidence Pack is an independent product. It draws evidence from across the scientific community and was co-authored by 41 respected experts from 8 research organisations. Key areas identified included:* Biodiversity;
* Managing Undermanaged Woodland;
* Future-proofing our Woodland;
* Climate Change Mitigation;
* Ecosystem Services;
* Economics and Natural Capital Accounting.

Although accepted as being a comprehensive review of the available evidence on woodland in Wales, a review of the evidence pack has highlighted that further evidence is required for social benefits aspects. The report the student will produce will partially contribute to the social benefits evidence base.**Purpose of Post***Key Task* The main purpose of this post is to aid policy development for the National Forest for Wales Programme:* Desk based research – Identify examples of woodland / natural initiatives across UK and Europe. Examples include the National Forest (England), Red Rose Forest, Mersey Forest, Neighbourwood (Ireland), urban forest initiatives in the UK and Europe as well as Welsh specific examples.
* Draft an evidence review – Identify the social benefits of the initiatives, as well as the valuable lessons learned from the initiatives explored.
* Analysis to aid policy development - Explore how natural programmes can be economically viable, while still focussing on providing a social benefit to its population, and how the successes and failures of the initiatives translate to Welsh landscapes and the National Forest for Wales programme. The report would also identify how these natural initiatives have successfully and/or unsuccessfully conducted themselves (e.g. branding).

*Other Tasks*These could include:* Working on products produced by ERAMMP
* Projects on the development of Welsh Government’s Geospatial and Earth Observation activity
* Liaison with Welsh Government policy teams
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| **Details**  |
| **Skills required:** | Essential Skills* Academic literature review and evidence synthesis
* Critical thinking/analysis
* Ability to produce concise well-written documents presenting complex and widespread material in an accessible format

Desirable SkillsKnowledge of environmental science and the Welsh environmental landscape |
| **Outputs:** | As agreed with line manager and in relation to the above priorities |
| **Host organisation:**  | Welsh Government |
| **Duration:**  | The placement will be for a 3 month period and will focus on delivering the objectives set out in the job specification. The option to extend for a further 3 months is possible if the project team feel there is merit in doing so and that it is compatible with the post holder’s university research schedule, academic supervisor(s) agreement and PhD programme arrangements. Start date will be agreed following successful Welsh Government security clearance. |
| **Location and working environment:**  | The role will be full-time and is normally based with the policy team in one of our regional offices. In view of current Covid-19 restrictions, the post holder will be required to work from home, in-line with working arrangements for all Welsh Government employees. It is unlikely that this will change for the foreseeable future. Post holders will be provided with a laptop to facilitate regular contact with the policy team members and line management, other policy teams and external partners. Due to the remote nature of working, the policy team will ensure that the post holder is fully supported during the placement and endeavour to ensure that the placement is as close to the in-team office-based experience as possible. |
| **Funding** |
| The placement will be funded by Welsh Government and will match a student’s UKRI PhD stipend rate, payable in one sum at the beginning of the placement (to minimise financial administration). The payment process compliments PhD student university stipend payment structures, i.e. WG pay the university and the funds are passed-on to the student’s account. **Please note:  we cannot pay students directly** |
| **Contact**  |
| **Name:**  | Caroline Fallone / email :Caroline.Fallone@gov.wales / tel: 07967 303629 |
| **Application process**  |
| **Please submit CV and covering letter and indicate the earliest and latest dates you can take-up a 3 month placement.** |

1. <https://erammp.wales/en> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://erammp.wales/en/r-forest-evidence> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)