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| **Project:** | |
| **Title: PhD student placement opportunity –** *“Property Flood Resilience Research ”* | |
| The Water, Flood and Coal Tips Safety Division of Welsh Government is seeking a PhD student for a placement opportunity within one of its teams.  Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) is a politically high-profile area that delivers significant benefits across Wales. Flooding and coastal erosion are two of the biggest natural hazards affecting Welsh communities. The FCERM team helps to raise awareness, build resilience and reduce the consequences of those risks.  Wales will, in future, see more flooding as climate change takes effect. 20 years ago, UK administrations’ approach to flood risk management was “defence” orientated. This approach was typified by interventions such as embankments, flood walls and dredging. Over time, the negative side effects of such practices, such as the ecological impacts and the effect of “passing the flood risk downstream”, have become better understood. In recent years, the increasing risks associated with climate change has prompted UK administrations to shift towards a more flexible “Risk Management” approach, where Risk Management Authorities adopt more innovative ways to reduce the consequences of flooding.  One of the key measures we will use to manage the risk associated with flooding is Property Flood Resilience (PFR). PFR refers to a broad pallet of interventions which help to stop the ingress of floodwater into a property, or aid rapid recovery following a flood event. “Resistance” measures such as flood gates and air brick covers reduce the likelihood and consequence of internal flooding. “Recoverability” measures such as hard flooring, raised sockets and sumps significantly reduce clean up times.  Political interest in PFR has increased significantly since the February storms of 2020. Thousands of homes in Wales were flooded, leading to calls for ‘flood gates’ to be made readily available to all properties throughout Wales. Opinions on PFR vary, with some seeing it as a panacea for all flood risk, while others consider it a less effective substitute for more traditional engineering. As such, the Welsh Government’s PFR policy has been under increased scrutiny.  **Purpose of the Post**  The student will be required to gather evidence and deliver a SWOT (Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis of Wales’ PFR policy. An objective analysis of the current policy will help guide how Risk Management Authorities in Wales utilise PFR measures in the future.  PFR policy in England and Wales has started to diverge. In England, PFR measures installed by Risk Management Authorities must be demonstrated to be a cost-effective, long term solution to reduce flood risk to communities. In Wales, PFR can be installed on properties as an interim measure, prior to the development of a formal scheme, without adversely impacting the economic viability of a formal scheme.  In England, flooded homeowners can claim a £5k grant towards the cost of installing property flood resilience measures at their home. In Wales, funding is only available to Risk Management Authorities (Local Authorities and Natural Resources Wales), who are expected to deliver schemes which benefit whole communities, rather than just homes which apply for grant.  Our new [**National Strategy for FCERM in Wales**](https://gov.wales/national-strategy-flood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-management-wales) sets out our approach in this field: **Objective B: Preparedness and Building Resilience**  We intend to encourage the use of PFR, whenever it is an appropriate cost effective measures to improve community resilience to flood risk. This post will therefore very much focus on how we can improve our PFR policy so we can increase the resilience of our communities to flooding.  **Key Tasks**  The successful candidate will be required to review the existing policies and guidance for PFR in Wales and the other UK administrations. They will likely have the opportunity to become involved in other work areas where they have a specific interest.   * Collation and review of relevant research and data sources * Undertaking a review of existing literature on methodologies for coastal adaptation * Evidence co-ordination and quality assurance - by working with policy teams to identify evidence needs and ensuring appropriate methodologies, analysis and findings * Engagement with internal and external stakeholders * Drafting of briefing papers * Development of policy recommendations * Development of longer-term policy direction | |
| **Details** | |
| **Skills required:** | **Key Skills**   * Excellent research skills and the ability to analyse complex information and data * Ability to write clearly and concisely * Strong data analysis and presentation skills * Creative thinking with the ability to apply an innovative approach * Establish relationships with a range of stakeholders to support delivery of business outcomes * Facilitating discussion and collecting opinions from RMAs with support from the Flood Branch Technical Team * Make effective use of project management skills and techniques to deliver outcomes, including identifying risks and mitigating actions * Identify a broad range of relevant and credible information sources and recognise the need to collect new data when necessary from internal and external sources. * Contributing towards meeting Objective B of the National strategy: Preparedness and Building Resilience |
| **Outputs:** | As agreed with line manager and in relation to the above priorities |
| **Host Organisation:** | Welsh Government |
| **Placement Start Date** | ASAP |
| **Development Opportunities** | The placement provides an opportunity to gain insight into the functioning of Welsh Government and evidence-based policy development at the highest level. The post-holder will work in an interesting and diverse team, contributing to the shaping of a future policy direction. The post-holder will be expected to work independently within parameters and guidelines provided by the Welsh Government. Working closely with a wide range of colleagues the successful candidate will build valuable working relationships, broaden their knowledge of public policy-making and enhance their existing transferable skills.  The student will join an analytical team managing a diverse evidence-base and delivering technical and advisory support to the FCERMprogramme. This is an interesting and diverse role, working on a high-profile programme across Welsh Government portfolios, which will allow the student to gain a broad knowledge and understanding of Welsh Government policy work. With support from their WG supervisor, the student will be expected to take responsibility for managing and delivery of work commitments during the placement period. |
| **Duration, location, working arrangements and environment:** | The role will be full-time and would normally have been based within the Cathays Park (Cardiff) or Aberystwyth offices of Welsh Government. The current situation, however, means that all staff in the Division are working at home. The technology we have has allowed an impressive and engaging system of online meetings and these have provided a robust method of communication with the team and wider internal and external partners.  Regular team meetings are held and students will be encouraged to join these meetings to develop their understanding of the policy work – and how it interacts with other policy areas.  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 will endeavour to ensure that the placement is as close to the in-team office-based experience as possible.  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 if it is compatible with the post-holder’s university research schedule and DTP/CDT arrangements.  The Welsh Government is a bilingual organisation and Welsh language skills are considered an asset to the organisation. We encourage and support staff to use their Welsh language skills during a placement.  Start date will be agreed following successful Welsh Government security clearance. |
| **Application criteria** | **Welsh Government can only accept applications to the PhD student placement programme from registered students**.  **All applicants must seek approval from their academic supervisor before applying** |
| **Funding** | |
| The placement will be funded by Welsh Government and will match the current UKRI PhD stipend rate, payable in one sum at the beginning of the placement (to minimise financial administration).  The payment process aims to compliment PhD student university stipend payment structures, i.e. WG pay the university and the funds are passed-on to the student’s account. To avoid delays to students receiving payments, it is preferable that the student’s PhD stipend is not paused during the placement and that, instead, it continues and that WG reimburse the university for the time the student is not undertaking research.  **Please note:  we do not pay students directly** | |
| **Contact** | |
| **Name:** | Caroline Fallone (Research & Academic Engagement Manager)  [caroline.fallone@gov.wales](mailto:caroline.fallone@gov.wales) |
| **Application process** | |
| Please submit CV and covering letter to Caroline Fallone. **NOTE: All applicants must confirm that they have received authorisation to take an interruption of studies from their academic supervisor**  We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding  If you have an impairment or health condition, or use British Sign Language and need to discuss reasonable adjustments for any part of the placement programme, or wish to discuss how we will support you if you are to be successful, please contact [caroline.fallone@gov.wales](mailto:caroline.fallone@gov.wales) as soon as possible to discuss your requirements and any questions you may have. | |