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| **Project:** | |
| **Title: PhD student placement opportunity –** *“Soils Policy Evidence Programme – soil evidence review and developing future policy ”* | |
| The Welsh Government (WG) Soils Policy and Land Use Team is seeking a PhD student for a placement opportunity. The Soils Policy and Land Use Team is responsible for soil policy, Best and Most Versatile (BMV)**[[1]](#footnote-1)** land protection policy, minerals policy (agricultural after use) and peatland policy.  The Team are responsible for soils research and work in collaboration with Natural Resources Wales (NRW), through the WG/NRW Technical Soils Group, to expand the evidence base for Wales and ensure an evidence-based approach to managing Welsh soils. The Team also has responsibility for both policy and implementing the BMV Land protection policy in Wales to ensure it is conserved as a resource for the future. WG began work last year with NRW to deliver the National Peatland Restoration Plan, a £1million/year budget for capital works to restore over 600ha of peatland a year for the next five years.  The team‘s remit falls under the portfolio of the Minister for Energy, Economy and Rural Affairs which supports delivery objectives identified under primary legislation such as the Environment Act and Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. The team works closely with a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders and representatives of the UK Government and the other Devolved Administrations.  **Purpose of the Post**  Over the last three years the Soils Policy and Land Use Team has commissioned over 40 research reports to better understand climatic and soil conditions in Wales, and the challenges facing Welsh soils and agricultural capacity in the context of biodiversity loss and climate change. The reports include modelling exercises, evidence reviews and scoping studies. With the support of the Soils Policy and Land Use Team, the post holder will familiarise themselves and review this evidence base.  Reports from the Soil Policy Evidence Programme (SPEP) and Capability, Suitability and Climate Programme (CSCP) can be found here: https://gov.wales/assessing-environmental-impact-agriculture and <https://gov.wales/agricultural-land-classification>.  The post holder will undertake a review of these reports, identifying key findings and evidence gaps before synthesizing key information into a review document. There will also be the opportunity to critically consider the effectiveness of current soil protection measures in Wales (both regulatory and voluntary) and how they align with the Environment Act (2016), Well Being of Future Generations Act (2015) and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources. This report will be used to support future WG soils policy position. The post holder will be encouraged to develop their own ideas on an evidence based future Welsh soil policy position statement, supported by the WG Soil Policy Team.  **Key Tasks**  • Review of relevant soil research, incentives & policies; prepare a synthesis of key findings and identify evidence gaps  • Analysis of complex information and data trends.  • Supporting commissioning and managing research projects  • Development of policy recommendations  • Development of longer-term policy direction | |
| **Details** | |
| **Skills required:** | **Key Skills**  Excellent research skills; Ability to analyse complex information and data; Ability to write clearly and concisely; Ability of presenting technical material in an accessible format; Presentation skills; Creative thinking; Ability to apply an innovative approach |
| **Outputs:** | As agreed with line manager and in relation to the above priorities |
| **Host Organisation:** | Welsh Government |
| **Placement Start Date** | May/June 2021 |
| **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 policy team’s programme. 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 is normally based with the policy team in one of Welsh Government’s 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 and 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 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)  The Welsh Government takes the protection of your data seriously. If you contact the Welsh Government then our [**Privacy Notice**](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fgov.wales%2Fabout%2Fwelsh-government-privacy-notice%2F%3Flang%3Den&data=02%7C01%7CCaroline.Fallone%40gov.wales%7C24ae25ebbd28440c42e308d742b5966d%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637051219998434627&sdata=Sg3llOKFBLuxSLlQXQlpg%2Bmxb3dMNeR3Sgjw4Z7HQSY%3D&reserved=0) explains how we use your information and the ways in which we protect your privacy. |
| **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. | |

1. **Planning Policy Wales** 11, paragraphs 3.58 and 3.59. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)