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| **Project:**  |
| **Title: PhD student placement opportunity –** *“Creating a digital map of outdoor public access in Wales ”* |
| The Landscape, Nature & Forestry Division of the Welsh Government is seeking a PhD student for a placement opportunity within its Landscape & Outdoor Recreation team. The team‘s remit falls under the portfolio of the Minister for Climate Change which supports delivery objectives identified under the Welsh Government’s “Programme for Government” (PfG) and other strategies. The Welsh Government is currently working on a programme of reform proposals for recreational access in Wales based around the public rights of way network (PRoWs) and open access land. This placement would support the development of the proposal to create a single digital map of public access in Wales using DataMapWales’ Geographic Information System (GIS). **Background** There are currently a number of statutory maps covering public access to outdoor spaces, including the definitive maps of public rights of way (PRoW) maintained by local authorities and the map of open access land that Natural Resources Wales is required to produce under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act. As required by legislation, these have traditionally been hard copy maps held locally and made available to the public through authority offices. While a number of authorities have put their maps online, this has been done on an individual authority basis using a range of different software systems. In keeping with the Welsh Government’s commitment to improve access to services through digital delivery, we are examining the merits of creating a single digital map of public access in Wales. Such a map would make use of Welsh Government’s GIS platform, DataMapWales.The intention is that this digital map would: * improve public access to PRoW and open access data for a range of uses (e.g. inform recreational activities, aid planning of commercial events, inform planning applications);
* facilitate the creation of a more efficient system for the management of the PRoW and Open Access networks by creating a universal, digitally-based system; and;
* contribute to the further development of DataMapWales as a source of public GIS data in Wales.

The management of PRoW and open access data is governed by a a range of legislation including National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, Highways Act 1980, and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. These would need to be considered as part of this work.**Purpose of the Post**The Welsh Government recently received a final report from the Access Reform Advisory Group (ARAG) that has outlined recommendations for potential changes to governing and administering recreational access, including the merits of the creation of a single digital map of public access. This post-holder will be required to support policy development of this proposal based on the initial analysis presented in the report. The role will involve engaging/consulting with access authorities to understand: what systems they currently use to maintain their statutory access maps; what (if any) systems they have for publishing information digitally; and, the challenges and opportunities they see in moving towards a new system based around a single digital map. It will also involve working with DataMapWales on the requirements for developing a single digital map of public access within its platform. The aim of the engagement is to better understand the benefits and challenges of developing a single map of public access in Wales. Based on findings, there is scope for the post-holder to consider and present alternative mechanisms, or amend recommendations from those presented in the initial report. With the direction and support of members of the Landscape, Nature & Forestry Division, the post-holder will:* Design and deliver an engagement programme with access authorities to better understand the systems currently used to record and present public access information in Wales
* Evaluate the benefits and costs of creating a single digital map of public access
* Review the ARAG report based on the consultation’s findings and finalise long and short-term policy recommendations
* Identify potential barriers to creating a single digital map and make recommendations to overcome them.
* Brief senior officials on research findings
* Actively support the development of a longer-term policy direction/strategy to take forward these proposals based on their research findings

**Key Tasks** * Engagement with internal and external stakeholders
* Analysis of outcomes from external consultation with key stakeholders
* Drafting of briefing papers for senior officials
* Development of policy recommendations
* Development of longer-term policy and strategic direction

The exact tasks required of the student will be dependent on the particular focus of the team at the time of the placement and the student will likely have the opportunity to become involved in other work areas where they have a specific interest.  |
| **Details**  |
| **Skills required:** | **Key Skills*** Excellent research skills
* Ability to analyse complex spatial and non-spatial information and data
* Understanding of Geographical Information Systems (GIS)
* 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

**Desirable skills*** Understanding of Business Analysis methods and Agile methodology
* Understanding of User Experience (UX) and User Research (UR) methods
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| **Outputs:** | As agreed with line manager and in relation to the above priorities |
| **Host Organisation:**  | Welsh Government |
| **Placement Start Date** | October/November 2021 |
| **Development Opportunities** | The placement provides an opportunity to gain insight into the functioning of Welsh government and evidenced 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 a policy team managing a diverse range of programmes and providing technical and advisory support across the Environment portfolio. This is an interesting and diverse role, that links to other Welsh Government teams, which will allow the student to gain a broad knowledge and understanding of 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. **Please note:  we do not pay students directly** |
| **Contact**  |
| **Name:**  | Caroline Fallone (Research & Academic Engagement Manager) via ResearchPlacements@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** 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 ResearchPlacements@gov.wales as soon as possible to discuss your requirements and any questions you may have. |