

Project:

Title: PhD student placement opportunity – *“The benefits and challenges of increasing the designation of inland bathing waters in Wales”*

The Water and Flood Division of the Welsh Government is seeking a PhD student for a placement opportunity within its Water Policy team. The team’s remit falls under the portfolio of the Minister for Climate Change which supports delivery objectives identified under primary legislation such as the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015. The team works closely with a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders and representatives of the UK Government and the other Devolved Administrations.

Water is one of Wales’ most valuable natural assets and an essential contributor to our economy. The Water team is responsible for developing bespoke policy for Wales for sustainably managing its water systems, including inland waters, estuaries and coastal waters. The team also oversees the effective functioning of Wales’ water industry and safeguards drinking water quality in line with statutory specifications.

Background

There are many challenges facing our inland water bodies, including the quality of rivers and their tributaries, lakes and ponds. These water bodies are under continuing pressure from climate change, extreme weather events, pollution levels and increased demand for water to support population growth.

There is now also increasing public demand for inland waters to be valued as recreational assets, particularly for swimming. The Welsh Government is committed to improving environmental water quality and working to introduce new inland bathing waters to Wales. Wales has 104 coastal bathing water sites and one designated inland bathing water, lake Llyn Padarn. No river sites in Wales are designated as bathing waters. This means people who swim in inland waters across Wales do not currently benefit from a bathing water quality-monitoring regime or have ready access to water quality information.

The [Bathing Water Regulations 2013](#) sets out its main objectives to safeguard public health in both coastal and inland areas from pollution. The Welsh Government’s Programme for Government sets out a commitment to begin to designate Wales’ inland waters for recreation, strengthening water quality monitoring. Designating new inland bathing waters presents the opportunity of enhancing recreational and wellbeing opportunities for local communities and helping increase public health protection for bathers at these sites. Such an approach could also help drive improvements in agricultural practices and sewage pollution management in a similar way in which the identification of beaches as bathing waters has achieved for Wales. This, in turn, would benefit both water quality and the wider environment. Link to the Welsh Government - Programme for Government is available at: [Welsh Government - Programme for Government](#)

Purpose of the Post

A report has recently been written by the Water Policy team within Welsh Government to evaluate the benefits and risks to introducing new inland bathing waters across Wales. By the start of the post, we anticipate a public consultation programme will be underway to understand the views of stakeholders, such as wild swimmers, local authorities and private landowners. This post-holder will be required to build on the report and consultation findings and recommendations to develop a plan of action to take this Programme for Government commitment forward to implementation.

The role will involve maintaining and further developing consultation with a wide range of external stakeholders, including all those with an interest in bathing waters, such as regulatory bodies, delivery bodies, recreational users and those potentially impacted by the proposals. Based on findings, there is scope for the post-holder to consider and present further evidence and well developed mechanisms, or amend recommendations from those presented in the initial report.

The post-holder will:

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- Gain an understanding of Welsh Government structure and processes, with a specific focus on policy development
- Build on a public consultation and communications strategy
- Consider a cost-benefit analysis and impact assessments
- Review the report based on any new findings and finalise long and short-term policy recommendations
- Brief government Ministers on research findings

Key Tasks

- Engagement with internal and external stakeholders
- Analysis of outcomes from external consultation of report findings with key stakeholders
- Drafting of briefing papers for senior officials and the Minister
- 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:	<p><u>Key Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	January 2022
Development Opportunities	<p>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.</p> <p>The student will join an analytical team managing a diverse evidence-base and delivering technical and advisory support across the policy area. 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 Welsh Government supervisor, the student will be expected to take responsibility for managing and delivering work commitments during the placement period.</p>
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 likely be required to work from home, however, office working may be permissible and individual circumstances can be discussed. This is in-line with working arrangements for all Welsh Government employees.

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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Start date will be agreed following successful Welsh Government security clearance.</p>
<p>Application criteria</p>	<p>Welsh Government can only accept applications to the PhD student placement programme from registered students.</p> <p>All applicants must seek approval from their academic supervisor before applying</p>
<p>Funding</p>	
<p>The placement will be funded by Welsh Government; will match the current minimum UKRI PhD stipend rate; will be payable in one sum at the end of the placement; and is in addition to the stipend a student normally receives from their university. 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</p>	
<p>Contact</p>	
<p>Name:</p>	<p>Caroline Fallone (Research & Academic Engagement Manager) via ResearchPlacements@gov.wales</p>
<p>Application process</p>	
<p>Please submit CV and covering letter to the above mailbox. NOTE: All applicants must confirm that they have received authorisation to take an interruption of studies from their academic supervisor</p> <p>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 the above mailbox as soon as possible to discuss your requirements and any questions you may have.</p>	