

## Doctoral Training Policy and Evidence Placement

**Project: Development of Soil Policy Statement for Wales – Social Scientist**

**Title: PhD student placement opportunity – “Developing a Soil Policy Statement for Wales: Stakeholder Engagement”**

The Welsh Government (WG) Soils Policy and Land Use Team is seeking a social science PhD student for a placement opportunity. The Soils Policy and Land Use Team is responsible for soil policy, Best and Most Versatile (BMV)<sup>1</sup> land protection policy, minerals policy (agricultural after use) and peatland policy.

The Team is responsible for soils research and work in collaboration with Natural Resources Wales (NRW), through the WG/NRW Soil Evidence and Policy Group (SEPG), to expand the evidence base for Wales and ensure an evidence-based approach to managing Welsh soils. The Team also has responsibility for implementing the Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Land protection policy in Wales to ensure it is conserved as a national natural resource for the future. WG began work in 2020 with NRW to deliver the National Peatland Action Plan (NPAP, [Natural Resources Wales / The National Peatland Action Programme](#)), a £1 million/year budget for capital works to restore over 600 ha of peatland a year between 2020-2025.

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 Well-being 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**

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.

Reports from the Soil Policy Evidence Programme (SPEP) and Capability, Suitability and Climate Programme (CSCP) can be found here: [Soils policy evidence programme | GOV.WALES](#)

In 2022, a synthesis of Welsh relevant soils evidence was produced by a Soil Scientist Research Fellow, supported by two PhD student placements. The synthesis is published and can be found here: <https://gov.wales/review-welsh-soil-evidence>. This synthesis is the foundation for a **Soil Policy Statement (SPS)**, which will represent the Welsh Government’s aim and objectives for sustainable management of agricultural soil in Wales. Through a co-design process this is currently being shared with a variety of soil stakeholders (farmers, unions, NGOs, WG Policy Teams) using facilitated workshops and discussions. Co-design is a different approach for developing policy. The intention is to engage with relevant actors to identify challenges and solutions through sharing experience and knowledge, these findings will then inform the development of the Statement.

WG have contracted an external research agency to run co-design workshops with farmers to gather their feedback on the draft Soils Policy Statement and to explore their knowledge and understanding of the status, challenges and opportunities for Welsh agricultural soil. The workshops will be recorded and transcribed, and the data coded and analysed in NVIVO. The external research agency will then produce a report of their findings.

The post holder will support the WG work with the external research agency. This will be primarily to offer advice on the analysis and reporting of the evidence from the codesign workshops with farmers and other stakeholders that the external research team are undertaking. They will incorporate the findings from the report on the co-design work into the Soil Policy Statement.

A key part of the role will be to undertake qualitative analysis of the workshop transcripts and the wider Welsh Government policy landscape to produce a roadmap for the SPS. The workshops will provide further insights into how stakeholders view and engage with soil and what the next steps might be for the SPS, e.g. priorities for what should be included in the next revision of the statement. The post holder will develop this roadmap to sit

<sup>1</sup> Planning Policy Wales 11, paragraphs 3.58 and 3.59. Also guidance and predictive map at: - [Agricultural land classification | Sub-topic | GOV.WALES](#).

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alongside the SPS, setting out the future direction and development of the statement in response to policy developments and insights from stakeholders.

### **The Policy and Research Team**

The post holder will be embedded within the Soil Policy and Land Use Team alongside the Soil Scientist Research Fellow. They will also be supported by a Behavioural Insight Policy Fellow seconded to WG and there may be the opportunity for collaborative working with a Soil Scientist PhD student placement. The post holder will also be supported by staff in Knowledge and Analytical Services (KAS) who are a central team of social researchers undertaking qualitative and quantitative analysis to support policy teams and ministers across the Welsh Government.

The post holder will also have the opportunity to contribute to a co-authored paper detailing the process and experience of developing the SPS.

The intention is to host the post holder for a 3-month period, although longer placements of up to six months would be considered.

### **Key Tasks**

- Support WG to guide third parties on the analysis of data from co-design workshops.
- Incorporate findings from the workshops into the SPS.
- Identify and explore potential next steps for the SPS to develop a roadmap for the statement.
- Analyse qualitative information and trends.
- Contribute to development of policy recommendations.
- Contribute to development of longer-term policy direction.

The exact tasks required of the post holder will be dependent on the particular focus of the Team at the time of the placement. The post holder could become involved in other work areas where they have a specific interest.

### **Details**

<b>Skills required:</b>	<p><b><u>Key Skills</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to apply an innovative approach</li> <li>• Creative thinking</li> <li>• Excellent research skills</li> <li>• Ability to analyse complex information and qualitative data</li> <li>• Ability to write clearly and concisely for non-technical audiences</li> <li>• Ability of presenting technical material in an accessible format</li> <li>• Good presentation skills</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Desirable</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of stakeholder engagement</li> <li>• Knowledge of Welsh agricultural sector</li> <li>• Knowledge of NVIVO</li> <li>• Welsh speaker</li> </ul>
<b>Outputs:</b>	As agreed with line manager and in relation to the above priorities will broadly include re-drafting of the Statement and a report and presentation of findings/workshop.
<b>Host Organisation:</b>	Welsh Government
<b>Placement Start Date</b>	Early 2023
<b>Development Opportunities</b>	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



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	<p>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 post holder will also be invited to work with organisations outside of Welsh Government whenever possible.</p> <p>The student will join an analytical team managing a diverse evidence-base and delivering technical and advisory support. 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.</p>
<p><b>Duration, location, working arrangements and environment:</b></p>	<p>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.</p> <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><b>Application criteria</b></p>	<p><b>Welsh Government can only accept applications to the PhD student placement programme from registered students.</b></p> <p><b>All applicants must seek approval from their academic supervisor before applying</b></p>
<p><b>Funding</b></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. <b>Please note: we do not pay students directly</b></p>	
<p><b>Contact</b></p>	
<p><b>Name:</b></p>	<p>Caroline Fallone (Academic Engagement Manager) <a href="mailto:caroline.fallone@gov.wales">caroline.fallone@gov.wales</a></p>
<p><b>Application process</b></p>	
<p>Please submit CV and covering letter to Caroline Fallone. <b>NOTE: All applicants must confirm that they have received authorisation to take an interruption of studies from their academic supervisor</b></p>	



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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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.