

Project:

Title: PhD student placement opportunity – *“Management and protection of protected sites in Wales”*

Welsh Government is seeking a PhD candidate for a placement opportunity with The Interim Environmental Protection Assessor for Wales (IEPAW). The IEPAW is responsible for reviewing concerns about the functioning of environmental law in Wales; where warranted, the IEPAW may prepare reports on the functioning of the law for the Welsh Ministers. The IEPAW is part of an interim process in Wales until a permanent body to oversee compliance with environmental law is developed. Its focus is on the functioning of environmental law, not on breaches of that law.

Purpose of the Post

The post-holder will be responsible for assisting the IEPAW with preparation of a report on the legislative framework for protected sites in Wales, which will be delivered to Welsh Ministers regarding the functioning of environmental law in Wales.

Concerns about the functioning of environmental law fall into three broad categories:

1. The law no longer delivers its intended objectives and outcomes, either because it is outdated, or it no longer functions in a way which protects the environment
2. Guidance or information about the law is not accessible. The quality and availability of information or guidance impedes deliverability or operability for users.
3. Practical delivery of the law is impeded. Where there are improvements which could be incorporated as a result of advances in science or technology or where barriers exist which frustrate or prevent practical delivery of law.

Key Tasks

Key duties will include:

- Carrying out research on relevant legislation, guidance and information on protected sites, ensuring that all information is documented in a clear, cohesive and concise manner.
- Analysis of data and evidence pertaining to protected sites.
- Assisting with a review of relevant issues, including best practice in other countries and other jurisdictions.
- Analysis of complex information, and evidence and identifying potential evidence gaps.
- Drafting clear, concise summaries of findings which will form the basis of the report which will be presented to the Welsh Ministers.
- Participating in meetings and events with colleagues, including stakeholders from external organisations.
- Assimilation and coordination of expert evidence received, taking notes of evidence provided in oral evidence sessions, workshops, and seminars.

Some of the publications which have been produced from the IEPAW can be found at:

https://www.gov.wales/publications?field_external_organisations%5B50653%5D=50653

In January 2023, the IEPAW issued a call for evidence to statutory bodies and stakeholders. The below is a comprehensive (but not exhaustive) range of themes which the post holder will explore in preparing their report.

1. Should there be a statutory duty to monitor protected sites? If so, as resources are finite, what is the best way for key players to contribute to an integrated monitoring strategy and facilitating a team Wales approach? Is focusing on monitoring features the right approach or should there be more sites-based consideration and a more balanced methodology?
2. Should there be targets on the quality and connectivity of protected sites? If so, what should the targets cover?
3. What changes should be made to the existing legal framework, if any, to ensure there is an improvement in the overall condition and management of protected sites? For example, could any legal mechanisms used for Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) benefit other protected sites categories?

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4. Are there any barriers to agreeing management agreements? If so, how could these be overcome?
5. What, if any, changes to the current enforcement mechanisms would achieve better outcomes for protected sites?
6. Please comment on any current or future legal mechanisms which would enable a more adaptive approach to site management leading to better overall condition of a protected site.

Details

Skills required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic background in law, preferably environmental law • Good legal research, evaluation and analytical skills • Good writing skills and practice, particularly the ability to write accurate and concise reports.
Outputs:	As agreed with line manager and in relation to the above priorities
Host Organisation:	Welsh Government
Placement Start Date	TBC
Development Opportunities	<p>The postholder will join the team which provides the Secretariat for the IEPAW, based within the Landscapes, Nature and Forestry Division in the Welsh Government.</p> <p>This placement will help gain a better understanding of the legislative framework and offer experience of working with interesting, diverse and friendly colleagues in the high profile and exciting environmental arena. With support from Welsh Government supervisors, the postholder will be expected to take responsibility for managing and delivery of work commitments, providing opportunities to develop team working and project management skills.</p> <p>The postholder will have the chance to broaden their knowledge and understanding of producing reports and advice for Government Ministers and the opportunity to identify areas which add value to the delivery of evidence-based policy. There will also be the opportunity to meet stakeholders from a range of organisations and visit sites where you can see the real-world implications of the relevant environmental legislation.</p>
Duration, location, working arrangements and environment:	<p>The placement within the IEPAW Secretariat will be home-based with the opportunity to work in the Welsh Government's Cathays Park offices in central Cardiff, working full-time flexible hours.</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>



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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	
<p>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). 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</p>	
Contact	
Name:	Contact Stephany Aymerich (Research & Academic Engagement Manager) via researchplacements@gov.wales The Welsh Government takes the protection of your data seriously. If you contact the Welsh Government then our Privacy Notice explains how we use your information and the ways in which we protect your privacy.
Application process	
<p>Please submit CV and covering letter to Stephany Aymerich. NOTE: All applicants must confirm that they have received authorisation to undertake a placement from their academic supervisor</p> <p>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</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 Stephany Aymerich as soon as possible to discuss your requirements and any questions you may have.</p>	