

## Doctoral Training Policy and Evidence Placement

### Project: PIPS - PhD student placement opportunity

**Title:** Exploring the sources and impact of microplastics in the freshwater environment and their interaction with other pollutants

#### **Background and Purpose of the Post:**

Water is one of Wales' most valuable natural assets and an essential contributor to our economy. It is however under threat from a variety of sources, including point-source and diffuse pollution, and climate change. Emerging contaminants, such as pharmaceuticals and hazardous chemicals also present a great concern for environmental and drinking water quality and require more focus and research to inform future policy development.

Microplastics in the freshwater environment is regarded as an emerging concern for environmental and drinking water quality. Research on microplastics in the marine environment is more advanced and there is a gap in understanding the pathways of microplastics pollution in the freshwater environment, and their potential implications on ecosystems and human health. At present, there is no statutory requirement to monitor microplastics in freshwater and drinking water (raw and treated water) in Wales. It is necessary to develop and understanding on this matter and establish an evidence-base, as well as identify knowledge gaps, in order to assess available policy and legislative options for the future.

The successful candidate will be required to outline the current state of play and collate existing and ongoing research regarding the impact of microplastics in freshwater with specific focus on what is happening in this space in Wales and the UK. Due to the cross-cutting nature of the study, the post holder will need to engage with other policy areas in the Welsh Government, such as marine, agriculture and biodiversity. There will be a need to liaise with academic institutions, researchers and other key stakeholders to ensure all relevant angles have been taken into consideration. The objective of the placement is to establish a clear understanding of current research findings, highlighting key concerns for policy makers and explore available policy solutions and interventions.

The remit of this placement falls under the portfolio of the Minister for Climate Change and supports delivery objectives identified under primary legislation such as the Environment Act and Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

The placement will be in the Water Policy Team which is responsible for developing bespoke policy for Wales to manage its water systems sustainably, 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.

#### **Key Tasks**

- Collation and review of relevant research and data sources in a literature review
- Analysis of complex information and data trends
- Engagement with internal and external stakeholders
- Development of an initial overview report with policy solutions
- Identification of research needs and evidence gaps
- Summary of findings and recommendations

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 information and data

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to write clearly and concisely</li> <li>• Ability of presenting technical material in an accessible format</li> <li>• Presentation skills</li> <li>• Creative thinking</li> <li>• Ability to apply an innovative approach</li> </ul>
<b>Available posts:</b>	1
<b>Host Organisation:</b>	Welsh Government
<b>Placement Start Date</b>	TBC
<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 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.
<b>Duration, location, working arrangements and environment:</b>	<p>The role will be full-time and is normally based with the policy team in one of Welsh Government's regional offices. In line with the flexible working policy, the post-holder will be able to work from home, and office working will also be an option.</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>Exact start date will be agreed following successful Welsh Government security clearance.</p>
<b>Application criteria</b>	<b>Welsh Government can only accept applications to the PhD student placement programme from registered UK based students. All applicants must seek approval from their academic supervisor before applying</b>
<b>Funding</b>	
Funding for this placement is expected to be covered by the research council as per the applicant's programme. Welsh Government will pay the cost of hotel, subsistence, travelling and any other additional expenses incurred by the PhD candidate in connection with the Project Support Services, subject to the limits in Welsh Government's travel and subsistence policy.	
<b>Contact</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	Contact Stephany Aymerich (Research & Academic Engagement Manager) via <a href="mailto:researchplacements@gov.wales">researchplacements@gov.wales</a>



## Doctoral Training Policy and Evidence Placement

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

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 programme manager.**

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 Stephany Aymerich as soon as possible to discuss your requirements and any questions you may have.