

Project: PIPS - PhD student placement opportunity

Title: Critical assessment of the Water Framework Directive approach and the evaluation of its implementation in Wales

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. The Welsh Government's objective is to develop effective long-term policies to protect environmental and drinking water quality in Wales.

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) promotes an integrated, holistic approach to water management by river basin, a natural geographical and hydrological unit. There are three river basins in Wales: Western Wales which lies wholly in Wales, and the River Dee and the River Severn which are cross border basins with England. The WFD requirements are implemented via River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) which are developed on a six yearly cycle. We are currently in Cycle 3. Cycle 1 run from 2009 to 2015 and Cycle 2 from 2015 to 2021. RBMPs are the main mechanism for improving water quality.

The integrated catchment-based methodology promoted by the WFD has shown positive results and a gradual improvement in water quality, evidenced by the latest classification results. 40% of Wales' waterbodies are classed as achieving good ecological status (GES) at present. The 2021 data shows 8% improvement in water quality since the first classification released in 2009.

It is necessary to evaluate the success of the WFD approach critically before the end of the third cycle of RBMPs, given that the legally binding and ambitious target to achieve GES for all waterbodies is 2027. The successful candidate will be tasked to complete a desk-based review of how the WFD has been implemented in Wales so far, comparing its delivery to other parts of the UK and Europe. The work will require engagement with key stakeholders such as Natural Resources Wales (NRW), water companies and NGOs for input. The desk-based assessment and collation of feedback will form the basis of developing policy options for the future of WFD in Wales in a final report, outlining advantages and risks associated with the selected approaches.

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 Welsh Government's water policy team. The team 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 desk-based review
- Analysis of complex information and data trends
- Engagement with internal and external stakeholders
- Development of an overview report with policy options
- Identification of risks associated with the selected options
- 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

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Skills required:	Key Skills <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
Available posts:	1
Host Organisation:	Welsh Government
Placement Start Date	TBC
Development Opportunities	<p>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.</p>
Duration, location, working arrangements and environment:	<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>
Application criteria	<p>Welsh Government can only accept applications to the PhD student placement programme from registered students based in the UK. All applicants must seek approval from their academic supervisor before applying</p>
Funding	
<p>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.</p>	
Contact	
Name:	Contact Stephany Aymerich (Research & Academic Engagement Manager) via researchplacements@gov.wales



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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.