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| **Project: PhD student placement opportunity** |
| **Title: Assessing data availability to improve decision making on agricultural pollution** |
| **Background:** In 2021 the Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021 (CoAPR) were introduced to address concerns relating pollution to Water and Air from agricultural practice. They include requirements on the spreading and management of organic manures and manufactured fertilisers for all farms in Wales. The statutory review of the regulations chaired by Dr Susannah Bolton was published at the end of March 2025 and recommendations were made for further consideration to be given to improvements for the benefit of farmers and the environment. This included recommendation 4 – *Data collection appropriate to improved decision making on agricultural pollution regulations should be considered as part of any future changes to the regulatory baseline but any increased regulatory burden should be minimised.* Nutrient management is an important process when considering the sustainable use of fertilisers and there are various regulatory requirements, such as for nitrogen within the Control of Agricultural Pollution Regulations as well as non-regulatory reasons such as farm assurance schemes. Nutrient management is supported via tools such as the RB209 nutrient management guide published by AHDB. To inform future policy development and meet the requirements of the review recommendations there is a need to further assess the current data environment around nutrient management. **Purpose of the Post:**Review the relevant types of nutrient management related data which could be collected from farms to improve the decision making of both farms and Welsh Government in relation to CoAPR, looking at: * Existing farm level data collected by the Welsh Government – including farm level data collected via methods such as data required for participation in support schemes
* Existing macro-level farm information such as the Farm Business Survey – which could provide further information of nutrient management of management on different farm types.
* Data collected via 3rd parties – where data is collected by a third party and where it could be utilised to support on-farm decision making e.g. farm assurance schemes
* Data gaps relevant to the other review recommendations, farmer decision making and future policy needs.
* Identify opportunities to minimise the burden of data collection and submission for farms.

**Key tasks*** Stakeholder engagement – support the varied stakeholder engagement both internally within the Welsh Government and externally with stakeholders in a high-profile subject area.
* Evidence gathering – support workshops that are conducted during the evidence gathering stages of target development for example through the development of papers in an accessible format for internal and external stakeholders.
* Desk based research – use appropriate methods to provide evidence reviews (literature or statistical data) on a specific target development task.
* Perform a gap analysis
* Support the development of secondary legislation

The post holder will work extensively with academia, public bodies, non-governmental organisations and across Welsh and UK governments. With support and direction, the post holder will help to build valuable working relationships, broaden their knowledge and understanding of Welsh Government policy work and have the opportunity to identify and develop initiatives to support the effective delivery of evidence-based policy.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
* 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
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| **Outputs:** | As agreed with line manager and in relation to the above priorities. |
| **Host Organisation:**  | Welsh Government |
| **Number of posts available:** | **1** |
| **Placement Start Date** | January 2025 – Start date will be agreed following successful Welsh Government security clearance. *Please note that this process can take up to 8 weeks.*  |
| **Development Opportunities** | 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 policymaking and enhance their existing transferable skills.The student will join a policy development team managing a high profile and controversial work programme which plays a key role in delivering a number of statutory and international obligations and the Programme For Government. This is an interesting and diverse role, working on a high-profile programme which cuts 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. |
| **Duration, location, working arrangements and environment:**  | Placements are available as full-time and part-time roles 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.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.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. 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.  |
| **Application criteria** | **Welsh Government can only accept applications to the PhD student placement programme from registered PhD students living in the UK**. **All applicants must seek approval from their academic supervisors before applying**. **International students with a visa are welcome to apply on a part-time basis due to visa restrictions** – Visa holders must seek approval from their DTPs / programme coordinators.  |
| **Funding** |
| **For PhD students applying for a voluntary placement (Funded – voluntary):** Funding will be provided 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). 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. 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.** **For PhD students with a placement requirement as an essential part of their PhD programme / PIPS (Unpaid – required placement):** Funding for this type of 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. |
| **Contact**  |
| **Name:**  | Contact Clare Dicks (Head of Research & innovation) via researchplacements@gov.wales The Welsh Government takes the protection of your data seriously. If you contact the Welsh Government then our [**Privacy Notice**](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fgov.wales%2Fabout%2Fwelsh-government-privacy-notice%2F%3Flang%3Den&data=02%7C01%7CCaroline.Fallone%40gov.wales%7C24ae25ebbd28440c42e308d742b5966d%7Ca2cc36c592804ae78887d06dab89216b%7C0%7C0%7C637051219998434627&sdata=Sg3llOKFBLuxSLlQXQlpg%2Bmxb3dMNeR3Sgjw4Z7HQSY%3D&reserved=0) explains how we use your information and the ways in which we protect your privacy. |
| **Application process**  |
| Please submit CV and covering letter to Clare Dicks and indicate the type of placement (funded – voluntary or Unpaid – required placement) and the type of role: full or part-time.  **NOTE: All applicants must confirm that they have received authorisation to undertake a placement from their academic supervisor and/or programme coordinator.** 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 respondingIf 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 research and innovation team via the email provided as soon as possible to discuss your requirements and any questions you may have. |