



WALES POLICY GROUP

BRITISH ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY

2023 BES Policy Fellowship with Natural Resources Wales

The British Ecological Society (BES) is committed to making the best scientific evidence available to decisionmakers and supporting members to build their policy engagement skills and enhance the impact of their work. The BES Policy Fellowship offers an ecologist the chance to conduct a placement in a government department or agency, applying their scientific expertise to a practical policy challenge. The 2023 Fellowship will be hosted by Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

The Fellowship will provide a prestigious opportunity for BES members to gain first-hand experience of working within a statutory conservation agency, improve their policy knowledge and awareness, develop their science - communication skills, and build their professional networks at an exciting and crucial time for environmental policy. The Fellowship will also help to foster wider links between the ecological and policy communities, and support policy development informed by outstanding science.

Nature of the Fellowship

Eligibility

Applications to the BES Policy Fellowship are open to any BES member who has a PhD and will be affiliated with a Welsh institution (university, research organisation or otherwise) for the entire duration of the Fellowship as a post-doctoral researcher, lecturer or in any other academic position. The applicant does not have to be affiliated with the institution when they submit their application, but if they are not then the letter they submit from a Head of Department/School, as detailed in the Application Procedure section, must explicitly state that the institution agrees to host the applicant as an employee for the duration of the Fellowship. The Fellowship is only open to those who have UK Citizenship or an existing visa to work in the UK for the duration of the Fellowship.

Activities

The focus of the Fellowship will depend on prevailing policy needs as well as the interests and experience of the successful candidate. Applicants should state an area of environmental policy they would be particularly interested in, and they know is relevant in Wales, in their application. This Fellowship will take place during a crucial period of environmental policy development and decision making in Wales. Important aspects of this include the Agriculture (Wales) Bill, the Sustainable

Farming Scheme and the redesign of the Nature Recovery action plan following the Convention on Biological Diversity COP15. The exact topic will be agreed following discussions between the successful candidate and NRW.

The Fellow will work with specialist policy and operational experts within NRW and Welsh Government to produce the desired outputs, which will be set out at the start of the Fellowship. Possible activities that could be included in the Fellow's work are:

- Synthesising the evidence base for the benefits and disbenefits of a particular practice or land management
- Using a system approach to map the benefits and disbenefits (and dynamics/feedback loops) of a particular practice or land management
- Reporting on the investment needed for the implementation of a particular practice
- Producing user-specific outputs, such as a brief for policy makers or a practical guide for farmers, to communicate the evidence to stakeholder groups including policy makers, landowners, farmers and NGOs
- Gathering a set of case studies relevant to Wales
- Providing a worked example of how organisations like NRW can inform decision making on a specific topic.

NRW will provide a line manager for the Fellow, who will be appointed following the choice of the topic. The Fellow will be expected to work on their own computer and to work from home with potential travel to attend meetings and events in NRW offices in Wales. If needed, the candidate will be able to use a desk in one of NRW's offices. If access to IT resources would be a problem, please get in touch with daniela@britishecologicalsociety.org.

The Fellow will remain employed by their home institution for the duration of the placement.

Duration

The precise duration of the placement to be agreed between NRW, the Fellow and the Fellow's home institution. The placement can be full-time or part-time.

Start Date

The Fellowship will start no later than in June 2023, with the exact start date to be agreed between NRW, the Fellow, and the Fellow's home institution. The fellowship will need to be finalised no later December 2023.

Other Requirements

The Fellow will:

- Complete a project for NRW within the agreed deadline.
- Contribute to related work on evidence management, analysis and policy development as a member of NRW.
- Actively share the knowledge and experience gained through the Fellowship with the wider BES membership (e.g. through articles on the BES website or in the Niche).
- Ensure all communications, outputs and products are approved by NRW before publication.

- Submit a mid-placement progress report to the BES and NRW, outlining progress against agreed objectives.

The Fellow may:

- Support external academic engagement activities undertaken by NRW, for example assisting with seminars and workshops with external stakeholders and representing NRW work at external academic meetings.
- With support from the BES and NRW, arrange at least one knowledge exchange event (to be held at NRW/BES/host institution as appropriate) to discuss the outputs and learning from the project with a wider policy and/or scientific audience.

The host organisation (NRW) will:

- Provide a line manager for the Fellow for the duration of the placement.
- Identify a defined project for the Fellow, with clear objectives and success criteria, and an appropriate scope and timeframe.
- Provide a suitable induction programme for the Fellow and opportunities to engage in policy development.
- Provide feedback at the end of the placement in line with standard practice in the host organisation.
- Where full publication of the work undertaken by the Fellow is not possible, provide an impact report outlining how the results have been used.

The BES will:

- Identify and offer opportunities to engage more widely with the BES's policy work during the Fellowship e.g. through the activities of the BES' Welsh Policy Group.
- Provide funding for the duration of the placement as outlined below.

Conditions of work

The Fellow must adhere to their employer's and NRW's requirements of independence from political or commercial interest through the placement. The Fellow must sign a placement agreement, a legal agreement and undergo a DBS check before starting the Fellowship. The Fellow will need to give undertakings to respect a confidentiality agreement, specifying that information on policy advice and internal debate will not be disclosed without prior written agreement of the host organisation. Insurance for the Fellow will be covered by the Fellow's institution.

Funding

A maximum of £20,000 is available from the BES to support the Fellowship. Applicants are asked to specify and justify the amount of funding requested and how it would be spent.

Eligible expenditure includes:

- Salary costs for the applicant, including national insurance and superannuation, but not estates or indirect costs.
- Travel and subsistence, including accommodation.

- Other factors

The payment process is done via the fellow's employing institution (the BES does not fund fellows directly).

Application Procedure

Applications will open in March 2023. Applications will be via the grants portal on the BES website. You will need to register into our online grants system, complete your contact details, and navigate to 'Your Applications'.

<https://bes.flexigrant.com/>

Alongside the application form, candidates will be asked to provide:

- A CV
- A letter of support from the Head of Department/School at the applicant's home institution, or an institution that agrees to host the applicant during the fellowship. This should indicate that they agree to the applicant taking time away from their normal duties to complete the Fellowship and/or that they agree to host the applicant as an employee for the duration of the Fellowship, according to the requirements and conditions set out above
- An equality and diversity monitoring form

Initial shortlisting will be conducted by a review panel consisting of a representative of the BES' Welsh Policy Group, one representative of NRW, the BES Senior Policy Manager and the BES Policy Officer supporting the BES work in Wales. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview, with the interview panel comprising the one representative of the BES, one representative of NRW and one member of the BES Welsh Policy Group

Applicants will be scored against the following criteria:

- Motivation for and interest in the Fellowship
- Science communication, collaboration and team working skills relevant to policy engagement
- Scientific expertise relevant to the placement project
- Skills necessary to widely share the outputs and learning of the Fellowship
- Strong research record.

Contact Details

If you have any questions about the Fellowship or application process, please get in touch with Daniela Russi, BES Senior Policy Manager, daniela@britishecologicalsociety.org