# Supporting communities: How can place-based approaches be used in Wales?

# Summary

This is an exciting opportunity to do a paid work placement on a project for the Welsh Government. The project will involve undertaking a literature review of evidence related to place-based approaches to community engagement and support. The successful applicant will work closely with Welsh Government officials and stakeholders, particularly in relation to third sector and community policy, to research and develop a varied range of research outputs, and support the Welsh Government in their research process. The applicant will have the opportunity to apply research skills in a policy environment, further develop generic skills (such as report writing or making presentations), and to enhance their knowledge of research outside academia.

# The Organisation

The Welsh Government is the devolved Government for Wales with responsibility for the economy, education, health and the Welsh NHS, business, public services and the environment of Wales.

Specifically, the internship will be based within Knowledge and Analytic services (KAS). KAS provides the collection, analysis and presentation of research and data for policymakers and the general public in keeping with professional standards. They offer independent evidence to understand, develop, implement, monitor and evaluate government policies. KAS also supports policy colleagues with policy development, implementation and delivery.

# The Internship

The intern will be part of the Social Justice Research team. The internship will provide an exciting opportunity to work at the heart of Welsh Government. The internship will require working closely with policy officials and researchers, and will provide an opportunity to apply research skills in a policy environment, further develop generic skills (such as report writing or making presentations), and to enhance policy knowledge.

The successful candidate will benefit from development opportunities offered centrally by the Welsh Government, potentially including mentoring, shadowing, peer support and training.

Interns will benefit from the experience of working closely with the Welsh Government:

* Gaining a better understanding of the world outside of academia and increasing employability, using their knowledge and skills to contribute to the work of the Welsh Government.
* The intern’s colleagues at the Welsh Government can offer an insight into the intern’s PhD project that can contribute to the success of their thesis’, as well as networking opportunities within the policy arena linked to their research area
* Transferable skills and knowledge
* Time management skills
* Report writing skills

# The Project

The recent departure of the UK from the EU (Brexit) coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic are both likely to disproportionately affect both people from specific groups and people living in specific areas of Wales (communities of interest and communities of place). These events are not happening in isolation as there is a backdrop of a potential recession and the on-going climate crisis which has resulted in large and frequent floods in some areas. How these macro forces are felt and interact with inequalities is complex, given the multidirectional nature of causal mechanisms.

Despite this complexity, there is a growing evidence base on how place-based approaches can support communities. For example, What Works Scotland have built an evidence base around the ‘[return to place’](http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/topics/place-based-approaches/) in Scottish policy making. It is argued that place-based approaches can have the potential to support community-led initiatives and ensure differentiated support is offered depending on the particular needs of the community. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic has drawn further attention to place-based responses to wider social issues. Research in Wales has demonstrated the extent to which local authorities and civil society organisations responded rapidly to the challenge of providing support to the most vulnerable and isolated people ([Owens et al. 2020](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2020-12/review-of-the-support-for-non-shielding-vulnerable-people-nsv-during-covid-19.pdf)). The third sector in particular has faced unique challenges in continue to support communities with evidence that third sector groups have developed creative initiatives to allow services to continue. The Welsh Government has worked closely with the third sector throughout the pandemic; significant insights have arisen from this experience which are already influencing the development of future policy.

One of the key concepts often drawn upon when exploring successful place-based approaches is ‘co-production’. Co-production is defined as ‘the voluntary or involuntary involvement of public service users in any of the design, management, delivery and/or evaluation of public services’ by Osborne et al. (2016, p.g. 640)[[1]](#footnote-1) and can refer to: co-commissioning, co-design, co-delivery and co-evaluation of services. However, similarly to place based approaches the meaning of co-production can often become ‘woolly’ when not clearly defined, this can lead to difficulties in applying the principles of the approach (Osborne et al. 2016). Nevertheless, demonstrating the utility of the approach, the evaluation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) 2014 has drawn together evidence for the social care sector on co-production as part of the Act ([Andrews et al. 2020](https://gov.wales/evaluation-social-services-and-well-being-wales-act-2014-literature-review)).

This project seeks to build on the emerging evidence base in Wales on place-based approaches to explore: ‘What works’ to support vulnerable communities? The successful candidate will lead an evidence review to examine issues relating to place-based approaches. The aim of the research will be to draw together existing evidence on:

* Defining ‘communities’
* Co-production of community support
* Identification of place based approaches used in Wales

Anticipated project outcomes:

* A presentation to analytical colleagues and policy officials from the Welsh Government on the findings of the evidence review;
* High quality data and analysis to aid an understanding of the evidence on ‘What works’ for place-based approaches and how these may be used in Wales
* Publication of a Government Social Research Report that includes review of the literature on place-based approaches, support for local communities in Wales and beyond, and a discussion of good practice in community engagement and co-production.

# Internship responsibilities and requirements

The internship will last for three months, with the option of extension, during which time the students PhD project will be paused by their home institution. The student will be paid the equivalent of their stipend during their internship. Over and above leave policies, time for existing PhD commitments can be arranged on discussion with line managers. E.g. research groups meetings and conference presentations. Applications are encouraged from part-time students.

It is anticipated that the successful applicant will be working from home during their internship. This is based on our current understanding of the situation and what is possible in terms of research work. This may change as the COVID-19 situation develops. Should the COVID-19 situation develop and allow for a return for a phased return to offices this will be discussed with successful applicants.

The internship will last for a period of three months full-time or the part-time equivalent. For students registered on a part-time studentship, this internship is available on a part-time basis over a longer time frame (no fewer than three days a working week), this would be negotiated between the WG and the successful applicant. If you would like to be considered on a part-time basis, please specify your preferred working hours on the application form.

## The student must have:

* Strong literature review skills including ability to synthesise a wide range of evidence to make it easily understandable to a non-expert audience;
* The ability to produce concise, well-written documents presenting technical material in an accessible format.

# Start date of internship

April 2020 (exact date to be negotiated). There may be some flexibility dependent on individual circumstances.

# Funding and costs

Reasonable travel and accommodation costs for students not normally based in Cardiff can be met. Requests should be consistent with Wales DTP guidelines. Applications from students requiring additional funding for travel and accommodation will not be treated less favourably. For any queries on this please contact Carole Baker at the Wales DTP on: [enquiries@walesdtp.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@walesdtp.ac.uk)

# Security

The Welsh Government’s vetting procedures (which apply to temporary as well as permanent staff) involve the completion of a Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) application form and a Security Questionnaire for the purpose of security vetting.

This process requires the applicant to produce in person three original forms of identification documents, one of which should be photographic (passport, new driving license), one document should showing their current address, plus one of: a utility bill, birth certificate, P45 or P60.

# Queries

Any queries relating to the post or application process should be directed to:

Launa Anderson, Head of Social Justice Research

Launa.anderson@gov.wales

1. Osborne, S. P., Radnor, Z. and Strokosch, K. (2016). Co-Production and the CoCreation of Value in Public Services: A suitable case for treatment?. Public Management Review, 18(5), pp. 639-653. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)