



PhD Policy Secondment Opportunity

Strategy, Policy & Analysis Group | Department for Work & Pensions

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has a 3-month secondment opportunity for a suitably qualified and experienced doctoral student to lead on a high-priority project within a policy analysis team. The objectives of this secondment are twofold:

- 1) To offer the opportunity for a student to gain direct experience of working at the evidence/policy interface, in the heart of a high-profile policy analysis team.
- 2) To offer the opportunity for a student to lead on a priority evidence review project to inform policy: *Exploring the reasons and triggers for carers leaving the labour market and barriers to re-engagement with employment.*

There is no restriction on discipline with applications welcome from a broad range of disciplinary backgrounds including economics, sociology, social policy, geography, statistics, psychology, epidemiology or other related subjects.

Analysis in DWP

- The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is responsible for welfare, pensions and child maintenance policy. As the UK's biggest public service department it administers the State Pension and a range of working age, disability and ill health benefits to over 22 million claimants and customers.
- The Department is a large employer and offers many opportunities for graduate and post graduate analysts who are employed as government specialists.
- Analysts in government work closely with policy makers at all levels including government ministers. Therefore their work has a great deal of influence over policy and can have a substantial impact on the lives of large numbers of people. This is especially true of DWP analysts who work in the evaluation and analysis of very large programmes impacting on labour market policy, poverty reduction, disability, ageing society and welfare reform.
- **The analytical community in DWP is large and multi-disciplinary with over 400 members** split between four core professions; Social Researchers, Economists, Operational Researchers and Statisticians. The Department also employs a growing number of data scientists; and expert advisers in Behavioural Science, Psychology and Medicine. Many analysts join the Department having completed postgraduate degrees and doctorates, attracted by the excellent opportunities for professional development and promotion within the Civil Service.
- Analysts in DWP are split between four main sites: **Leeds, London, Newcastle and Sheffield**. Analysts at these sites can work on a variety of topics and areas of work are not restricted by site.

The Role

The successful applicant will lead on a secondary evidence review of the labour market experience of carers, exploring the reasons behind labour market exit and barriers to re-engagement with employment. The work will offer a range of opportunities to enhance research and analytical skills, including evidence synthesis and policy translation.

Alongside leading on this high-priority project, the post will offer the successful applicant the opportunity to inform the development of policy at a senior level in government. The post-holder will work within a busy policy analysis team, offering the opportunity to directly experience the generation and use of evidence in the policy-making process. The student will also benefit from development opportunities offered centrally by the DWP Analytical Community, including spot mentoring, shadowing and peer support.

Essential skills

We are looking for current PhD students who have the following skills/experience:

- Experience of conducting literature reviews and awareness of systematic reviews
- Evidence assimilation and synthesis
- Research project planning
- Secondary data analysis skills
- Strong drafting and writing skills
- Strong presentation and communication skills

Whilst not essential to the post, some understanding of the labour market and employment policy would be beneficial.

Project Description

In addition to gaining experience and insights into the evidence translation and policy-making processes in government, the post-holder will lead on a high-priority project. The research objective of the secondment is to carry out a systematic review of literature on the potential triggers for informal carers leaving the labour market to provide care.

The systematic review will aim to answer the following questions:

- *What causes carers to experience a change in labour market status from employed to either unemployed or economically inactive as a result of caring responsibilities.*
- *When does this labour market transition occur in the individual's caring journey?*

Available literature includes published research reports, conference proceedings, journal articles, government papers, lobby and interest group papers and reports and any other documentation that is relevant and robust. This research will understand triggers for carers leaving the labour market. This has been highlighted as a significant and priority evidence gap for policy development around informal care as part of a programme of analysis and research across Government on this topic. The results of this research will feed into identifying areas for policy development and potential groups and areas to test and learn from.

The project output will consist of:

- 1) a drafted paper for senior policy and analytical colleagues
- 2) a presentation to policy and analytical colleagues in DWP, feeding directly into the policy generating process.
- 3) Documentation of the evidence base and research gathered, and expertise exchange and knowledge transfer with government analysts and policy-makers.

The review would summarise the existing evidence base around triggers for informal carers leaving the labour market and inform policy in this area.

Secondment Details

Duration and timing of secondment: 3 months duration. Starting as soon as possible but with potential for flexibility.

Location and travel: Interviews will take place at DWP offices in Sheffield or over the telephone. The DWP analytical community relies on flexible and inclusive working practices, as all teams are cross-site and multi-location. The successful candidate will be able to work flexibly between their home location and in DWP offices in London, Leeds, Sheffield or Newcastle. Some travel to Sheffield for face-to-face meetings would be expected. However, all team meetings are conducted in a geographically inclusive way using videoconferencing and teleconferencing to facilitate flexible working. Travel and related expenses, whilst in post, will be covered by DWP.

How will applicants be assessed?

Candidates will be shortlisted on the basis of information provided within the application form. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an informal telephone interview.

Within the application form and if invited to interview, applicants will need to demonstrate a detailed understanding of approaches to reviewing and assimilating evidence from different sources.

Candidates will be expected to be able to provide examples of where they have demonstrated these skills sets both at application and at interview stage.

Interviews will focus on the candidate's skills and experience in research and evidence assimilation. Candidates will not be asked to give a presentation.

How to apply

Please submit CV, completed application form and completed permissions form by email to evidence.strategyteam@dpw.gsi.gov.uk. Please also use this email address for any enquiries related to the secondment.

Deadline for applications: Midday, Monday 12th March