



ESRC Policy Fellowships 2021: Opportunity description

Fellowship Title: DEFRA Waste behaviour

Host department: [Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs \(DEFRA\)](#)

Host team: Strategic Behavioural Insights team and relevant evidence and policy teams

Summary: This fellowship will explore behaviour change within product consumption, identifying where consumers would be most amenable to changing the way they consume.

Policy topic: Net Zero, Waste

Potentially relevant academic disciplines: Behavioural science, consumer behaviour

Relevant research career stage: No preference – open to early or mid-career

Practical details

Start of 3-month inception phase: December 2021

Length of core placement: 12 months

FTE for core placement: preferably 1, but negotiable

Location requirements: London office on a weekly or fortnightly basis, ideally. Open to discussing the location; fellow could be based at DEFRA's Bristol or York office.

Necessary level of security clearance: Will need Counter Terrorism Check if London based. Otherwise, [Baseline Personnel Security Standard](#), which may require 4-6 weeks to obtain. See [National security vetting: clearance levels - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Detailed description

Drawing from the [Resources and Waste Strategy for England](#), we are looking for a research fellow to both work in the resources and waste policy area, looking into product consumption habits and behaviour change, and to provide wider behavioural expertise and upskilling to Defra teams. The scope and deliverables, as well as the split between different activities, are to be defined depending on policy needs and expertise of the researcher.

Our initial proposal is for the waste prevention part of the project to focus on the acceptability for changes in consumer consumption habits as a contribution to delivering net zero. Deliverables for this research may include:

- Reviewing and synthesising the existing evidence base on consumer behaviours and behaviour change with respect to product consumption and waste.
- Identifying types of products where consumers would be most amenable to changing the way they consume, e.g. moving from owning products to leasing/service-based approaches, amenability to re-use, or repairing products if it was built into design.
- Considering behaviour change opportunities as part of the product design process. This could include identifying opportunities for behaviour change in new types of product design (e.g. modular phones) and mainstreaming the behaviours.

- Developing and testing interventions, both on producers and consumers, to deliver consumer behaviour change, exploring the effect of interventions across different demographics.

Through the fellowship we seek to gain a deeper understanding of the conditions necessary for uptake of more resource efficient products and business models. We also want to explore the behaviour change required during and at end of use, to maximise the benefit of these products and models, and to identify what the barriers and enablers to behaviour change are.

We will welcome academic publications and knowledge exchange activities as agreed with policy teams.

Opportunity-specific person specification

Applications will be assessed against the following opportunity-specific requirements in addition to the generic eligibility and call criteria.

Skills/ expertise:

- behavioural science knowledge and expertise, ideally in either the area of production, consumption and waste; this could be from research in e.g. psychology, sociology, behavioural economics or related fields of study
- Experience in consumer behaviour change or research expertise on consumption or resources would be a distinct advantage
- Expertise in organisational or business behaviours, regulatory or compliance research would be an asset