



Economic  
and Social  
Research Council



Department  
for Transport

### **ESRC Policy Fellowships 2021: Opportunity description**

**Fellowship Title:** DfT Covid Recovery User Focus

**Host department:** [Department for Transport \(DfT\)](#)

**Host team:** Social and Behavioural Research team

**Summary:** Opportunity to help DfT to better use evidence and analysis to help meet its Strategic Priority to “*Improve Transport for the User*”.

**Policy topic:** Transport, Covid Recovery

**Potentially relevant academic disciplines:** Behavioural Science, Social Science, Sociology/Social Research, Human Geography

**Relevant research career stage:** Mid-career

### **Practical details**

**Start of 3-month inception:** December 2021

**Length of core placement:** 6-12 months

**FTE for core placement (range):** 0.5-1 FTE

**Location requirements:** Flexible, occasional visits to London (in line with government guidelines regarding COVID19) to engage with policy and analytical colleagues.

**Necessary level of security clearance:** [Baseline Personnel Security Standard](#) will be required and may require 4-6 weeks to obtain. See [National security vetting: clearance levels - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

### **Detailed description**

Improving transport for the user is one of DfT’s key priorities. For this we want to build confidence in the transport network as the country recovers from Covid-19 and improve transport users’ experience, ensuring that the network is safe, reliable, and inclusive.

The definition of the role has been kept open for the secondee to scope the tasks and outputs with the social researchers, policy and strategy teams responsible for the DfT Transport User Priority and transport Covid recovery. But there are two key areas of interest which the policy fellow could engage with:

1. What could the Department do to operationalise its priority of putting the user at the heart of transport policy and delivery? How do we build user centred evidence and user centred practice into what we do?
2. How do we apply this in the specific policy area of Covid recovery? For example, how do we build our understanding of the many different user groups (urban vs rural; young vs old; anxious vs not anxious etc) – to ensure that we have a transport system that works for everyone in the context of Covid recovery?

Activities could include:

- Defining and overseeing research projects that cut across policy areas and address the Transport User priority objectives
- Identifying and establishing links with academics working on relevant research and/or behavioural science and developing opportunities for this research and expertise to feed into and influence policy-making
- Reviewing policy-making and/or user evidence-gathering practices in DfT to identify the best opportunities for DfT to be more user-centred
- Developing recommendations for how the Department could better utilise the research and expertise of academic researchers and/or behavioural scientists in order to meet its priority of putting the user at the heart of policy-making

This role is based in DfT's Central Research Team and will engage across a wide range of DfT policy teams and analysts. You will be part of a team of 14 social researchers and behavioural scientists who are experienced in delivering social and behavioural science research and advice to shape the Department's most pressing cross-cutting challenges, including Covid response and recovery, decarbonisation policy and the Future of Transport. This is an opportunity to work at the interface between research and policy as part of a team whose purpose is to ensure that transport policy and delivery is based on an understanding of the people affected by it. Policy is developing in this area, so flexibility and early engagement on topics to cover would be welcomed.

**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:**

- Experience of working on social science research or application of behavioural science
- Understanding of in transport/travel behaviour or related topics