UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

OPEN
OXFORD POLICY
ENGAGEMENT NETWORK

2026
VISITING FELLOWSHIPS
For Policy Professionals

FOREWORD

Thank you for your interest in the Oxford Policy Engagement Network (OPEN) Visiting Fellowship – an opportunity for UK-based policy professionals to connect and collaborate with research professionals across the University and gain fresh perspectives on longstanding and emerging policy challenges.

Ten academic departments and units – including those in the medical, physical and social sciences, as well as the humanities – are looking to host policy professionals as OPEN Visiting Fellows between January and July 2026. On the following pages you can find out more about our hosts, their research and policy interests, and what they'd like to work on with a Visiting Fellow. You'll also find information about eligibility, what Fellows can expect to put into and get out of their Fellowship, and how to express interest, as well as answers to other frequently asked questions.

You may be surprised at the extraordinary range of our Host Departments' policy interests, which range from artificial intelligence to net zero. So, if you're a UK-based policy professional who shares any of these, please take a moment to check out the opportunities in this short prospectus and consider expressing interest.

If you'd like to be among the first to hear of other such opportunities, you can subscribe to The Oxford Briefing, our monthly round-up of all the latest policy-relevant research, news and opportunities from across the University.

Will Pryor
Head of Policy Engagement

ABOUT OPEN

The Oxford Policy Engagement Network (OPEN) enables research and policy professionals to join forces in shaping public policy that protects what is valuable and changes the world for the better. Since its launch in 2020, the network has grown to include research professionals and students in more than 50 departments and faculties, as well as policy professionals in Oxford, across Whitehall and the UK, and around the world, who share our vision of public policy powered by the world's best available research evidence and expertise. We are committed to making more of policy professionals' expertise and to creating new ways, such as the OPEN Visiting Fellowship, for policy professionals to engage with the University.

You can find out more about our work at www.ox.ac.uk/open.

CONTENTS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the OPEN Visiting Fellowship?

The OPEN Visiting Fellowship is a mutual learning and development opportunity for research and policy professionals. Each Fellowship is unique and is shaped primarily by pursuit of mutual interests identified at the outset by the Academic Lead for each Host Department and the Visiting Fellow. As Visiting Fellows, policy professionals have opportunities to explore policy questions and challenges with research professionals in their Host Department and with others across the University; to co-convene workshops and other events of interest to them, their colleagues and their Host Department, contributing to longer-term, institutional relationships; and to advise research professionals in their Host Department on approaches to policy engagement.

What can policy professionals expect from a Visiting Fellowship?

The Visiting Fellowship offers policy professionals:

- facilitated access to researchers in and outside Host Departments, and to other policy professionals involved in OPEN programming, enabling them to broaden their networks;
- new ideas and fresh perspectives on longstanding and emerging policy challenges;
- a better understanding of how research evidence is generated, and what different academic disciplines have to offer;

- greater confidence in using research methods to model, test and improve policy, and in commissioning, understanding and using data, evidence, and advice from academia; and
- the opportunity and resources to co-convene workshops and other events of mutual interest to them, their colleagues and their Host Department.

Who is eligible for this Fellowship?

The Visiting Fellow must be a UK-based policy professional, with at least 7 years of relevant experience and a contract of employment lasting until at least September 2026. They may be employed by a policymaking organisation, such as Parliament, devolved assembly, the Civil Service, or a statutory body. In some cases, a policy professional employed by a think-tank or other civil society organisation may be more appropriate.

What is the time commitment?

Visiting Fellows should expect to be in Oxford at least one day per month during their Fellowship and may visit more frequently by mutual agreement with their Host Department. They should expect to spend approximately one additional day per month (in Oxford, or working remotely) on activities such as scoping work, planning events, and online 1:1 meetings (e.g., with researchers that cannot be conveniently scheduled in person).

What is the timeline of the Visiting Fellowship?

21 November 2025 | Deadline for expressions of interest

12 December 2025 | Outcomes communicated

2 January 2026 | Visiting Fellowships start

15 January 2026 | Orientation meeting in Oxford for Academic Leads and Visiting Fellows

31 July 2026 | Visiting Fellowships end

The Policy Engagement Team will also host cohort gatherings near the mid-point and end of the Fellowship, which will be confirmed in due course.

How are Fellows matched with a Host Department?

Fellows will be matched with Host Departments based on expertise, experience, and extent of mutual interest. In some cases, brief 'chemistry calls' may be arranged for Academic Leads and those who have expressed interest to clarify relevant aspects of these criteria.

How are Fellowship expectations and objectives set?

The Policy Engagement Team will support Fellows and Academic Leads to agree the goal, objectives, outputs and activities and outputs, which must be provisionally identified by 30 January 2026.

What support is provided to Visiting Fellows?

The Academic Lead and their colleagues will:

- support the Visiting Fellow's induction in the Host Department;
- work with the Visiting Fellow to agree the overall goal of the Fellowship, shared and individual objectives, outputs and activities; and
- schedule meetings with other departmental colleagues to enable the Fellow to expand their network.

The Policy Engagement Team will:

- support each Visiting Fellow by
  - identifying researchers outside their Host Department, as well as other policy professionals involved in OPEN programming, who may have expertise that may be relevant to their Fellowship objectives, and brokering introductions;
  - identifying seminars and other events outside their Host Department that may be relevant to their Fellowship objectives; and
- support the Visiting Fellows as a cohort by providing opportunities for them to connect with each other, identify shared interests, and share learning.

Are there any costs associated with the Fellowship?

The OPEN Visiting Fellowship is funded from the University's allocation from Research England's Policy Support Fund. A small amount of funding will be allocated to each Academic Lead to cover directly incurred costs of workshops and other meetings co-convened by the Academic Lead and Visiting Fellow.

Visiting Fellows are responsible for covering costs associated with travel to, from, and within Oxford, as well as subsistence and accommodation, if required. Visiting Fellows must have approval from their line manager to undertake the Fellowship, enabling them to maximise their participation and benefits to them, their colleagues, and Host Departments.

How can I express interest?

Policy professionals interested in any of the opportunities are invited to **submit an expression of interest** no later than **23:59 GMT on 21 November 2025**. Should you have any questions about the OPEN Visiting Fellowship in general or specific opportunities that are not answered elsewhere in this prospectus, please contact the Policy Engagement Team at researchandpublicpolicy@admin.ox.ac.uk.

Bodleian Libraries

About the Bodleian

The Bodleian Libraries is the largest university library system in the United Kingdom. It includes the principal University library – the Bodleian Library – which has been a legal deposit library for 400 years, as well as major research libraries and faculty, department and institute libraries across Oxford. These hold more than 14 million printed items, over 80,000 e-journals and outstanding special collections, among them one of the largest concentrations of modern British political manuscripts and archives, which include the papers of numerous prime ministers, cabinet ministers, diplomats, and other public servants.

Policy themes

artificial intelligence; information management; information security; copyright; open scholarship; data management

What we've been working on

Libraries have been collecting, managing, preserving and making information and knowledge available for centuries – at the Bodleian we've been doing this since 1602. In recent decades we've worked to digitise our collections, from Shakespeare's First Folio to the latest research from Oxford researchers, and to make them digitally available. In the age of AI, we are asking ourselves and those who share our mission some far-reaching questions about how we can best use new technologies, and how AI use affects the services we provide to our users within and beyond the University. These include:

- How is AI shaping the future of research and the type of information that the library should hold in its archives?
- How do we balance our University and Library mission of open access with the intellectual property rights of authors?
- Should we provide our collections data to commercial companies for commercial use for free, and what are the legal and licensing implications of this?
- As a library, if we use generative AI, what does this mean for our reputation as a trusted repository of knowledge and expertise?
- How do we build robust and sustainable systems that allow human readers and computational access to our collections?
- What can we do to quantify and minimise the environmental impact of AI and new technologies used by our library staff and users?
- Which, if any, AI tools and technologies could we use in our library work, and how reliable are they?
- How can we equip our readers, researchers, and staff to be AI literate?

Our policy engagement in the last year has included leading a University-wide response to the UK government's consultation on copyright and AI, highlighting the need for a flexible copyright regime that will enable innovation in research and access to knowledge, while supporting human creativity through appropriate remuneration mechanisms.

What we want to work on

Potential Visiting Fellows are encouraged to suggest topics of particular interest to them. For our part, we are particularly keen to host a Fellow interested in one (or both) of the following challenges, bringing to bear their understanding of the wider policy context, dynamics, and trade-offs relating to each:

How might AI affect public trust in information available online? Do UK citizens trust AI-generated online content? What are the implications for public policy and how can libraries best inform policy responses?

Libraries are trusted repositories of information and knowledge, and librarians as custodians of that knowledge often score highly in terms of public trust in a world where public trust is in decline. As professionals with skills in information collection, curation, preservation and access, we know the risks that loss of information, or loss of access to information, can pose to national security. There is a reason why libraries, along with archives and museums, are often targets in wars, and conversely some of the first institutions created in new nations. Libraries matter in the fight against disinformation and misinformation, especially in the age of digital literacy and AI, and in a world of commodified data access.

What are the risks and opportunities to creative business growth posed by new technology, including automation such as the use of AI?

Libraries have vast collections of artistic and creative works including novels, academic writing, artworks, spoken word and music. These are available to the digital world as text, images, audio and as data, often for free and open access. Turning analogue collections into digital data makes the world's knowledge more accessible, but it also costs libraries money to digitise. At the Bodleian, we want to balance our dual roles as custodians of the intellectual property of the creators of these works, along with our mission to share knowledge. In the world of AI and automation we have a new challenge – how to balance these functions with a need to offer sources for new business opportunities, but also to consider funding models for our digitisation work.

Academic lead

Dr Megan Gooch
Head of the Centre for Digital Scholarship

Opportunities for the Visiting Fellow

Access to Oxford's research environment and Bodleian's collections
The Visiting Fellow would be invited to feel part of the Centre for Digital Scholarship team and participate in discussions around the future of AI in the Bodleian, and use the Weston Library in the heart of Oxford as a base to connect with other Bodleian team, the wider University, and the libraries sector more broadly. They would have the opportunity to meet with a range of library professionals and explore in depth the differing needs and challenges in the diverse research libraries sector, at formal events as well as regular research coffee mornings. They would also be introduced to AI researchers across the University.

Visibility
The Visiting Fellow would have the opportunity to present their own work to key internal stakeholder groups at different levels within the organisation, and to present their work to academics and students or to a public audience as part of the Centre for Digital Scholarship's termly programme or the Open Scholarship Support Department's annual programme of events.

Interdisciplinary exchange
Access to high quality information is part of every service in government, and our collections and staff cover arts and humanities, social sciences, medical and natural sciences. The Bodleian's perspectives could help shape new services, ethical frameworks, or policy initiatives.

Professional growth
The Visiting Fellow would have space to think strategically about AI and misinformation in a new and inspiring environment, and a base in the vibrant environment of the Centre for Digital Scholarship in the Weston Library at the heart of Oxford.

Shaping strategy
The Visiting Fellow would have the opportunity to shape our strategy and plans, and to help ensure these reckon with the interests of policy professionals, as well as those of our other stakeholders.

Department of Experimental Psychology

About the Department

The [Department of Experimental Psychology](#) conducts world-leading research to understand the psychological and neural mechanisms supporting human behaviour, translating findings into evidence-based public benefits in mental health and wellbeing, education, industry, and policy. Led by Professor Matthew Rushworth, the Department comprises over 40 research groups spanning behavioural neuroscience, perception and cognition, developmental psychology, social psychology, and clinical psychology. Multiple groups cluster into the newly formed Oxford Centre for Emerging Minds.

The Fellowship opportunity would expand beyond the Oxford Centre for Emerging Minds and the Department of Experimental Psychology to include other close collaborators undertaking developmental research across Oxford Neuroscience, including the Department of Psychiatry, and Nuffield Department Clinical Neuroscience. The team connects with cognitive neuroscientists at the world-leading Oxford Centre for Integrative Neuroimaging. It also has active collaborations with the Department of Education and the Social Policy and Intervention Institute.

Policy themes

best start in life; reducing barriers to opportunities; numeracy and executive functions; language and literacy; children's mental health and wellbeing; special educational needs and disabilities

What we've been working on

The team have a track record of contributing research to a number of consultations and briefings led by a variety of government departments. These include:

- reporting on the impact of early years educational intervention, in collaboration with the Department of Education (DfE) Stronger Practice Hub's (Covid Recovery Fund) input on the consultation for the Department of Education Curriculum and Assessment review for neurotypical and neurodivergent children, via Economic and Social Research Council Centre for Early Mathematics Learning;
- contributing to the Policy lab on Covid and youth mental health and the advisory board for the Centre for Young Lives (a think tank);
- co-authoring the DfE-funded International Public Policy Observatory review of the impact of the lockdown on parents;
- contributing to the MQ/All Party Parliamentary Group Report entitled 'The COVID generation'
- detailing the policy impact of ending "the reading wars" on literacy instruction ; and
- fostering changes in policy that will promote young children's wellbeing from the early years into adolescence and young adulthood, via the newly funded Oxford Centre for Emerging Minds, of which Visiting Fellows will become part.

What we want to work on

Our key research areas investigating numeracy and executive functions (Professor Gaia Scerif); language and literacy (Professor Kate Nation); and mental wellbeing (Professor Cathy Creswell) directly address the UK government mission to "Break down barriers to Opportunity - Giving children the best start in life". As we have learnt via the impact of COVID, difficulties across any of these key skills, particularly for vulnerable young children can compromise future outcomes. Simultaneously, the early years offer a window of opportunity, when interventions and adjustments can turn this "vicious triangle" into a virtuous one.

Our research aims to improve educational outcomes in the early years by working on communication, numeracy, and wellbeing in synergy, rather than in isolation, in particular for the benefit of children with special educational needs, children who grow up in disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds and those who experience early childhood mental health difficulties.

We are keen to collaborate with the Visiting Fellow to help us help us identify and consolidate pathways to policy impact in terms of supporting young vulnerable children (children with special educational needs, children growing up in the context of socio-economic disadvantage, children with multiple vulnerabilities) in the "triangle" of key skills (numeracy and executive functions, language and literacy, mental wellbeing).
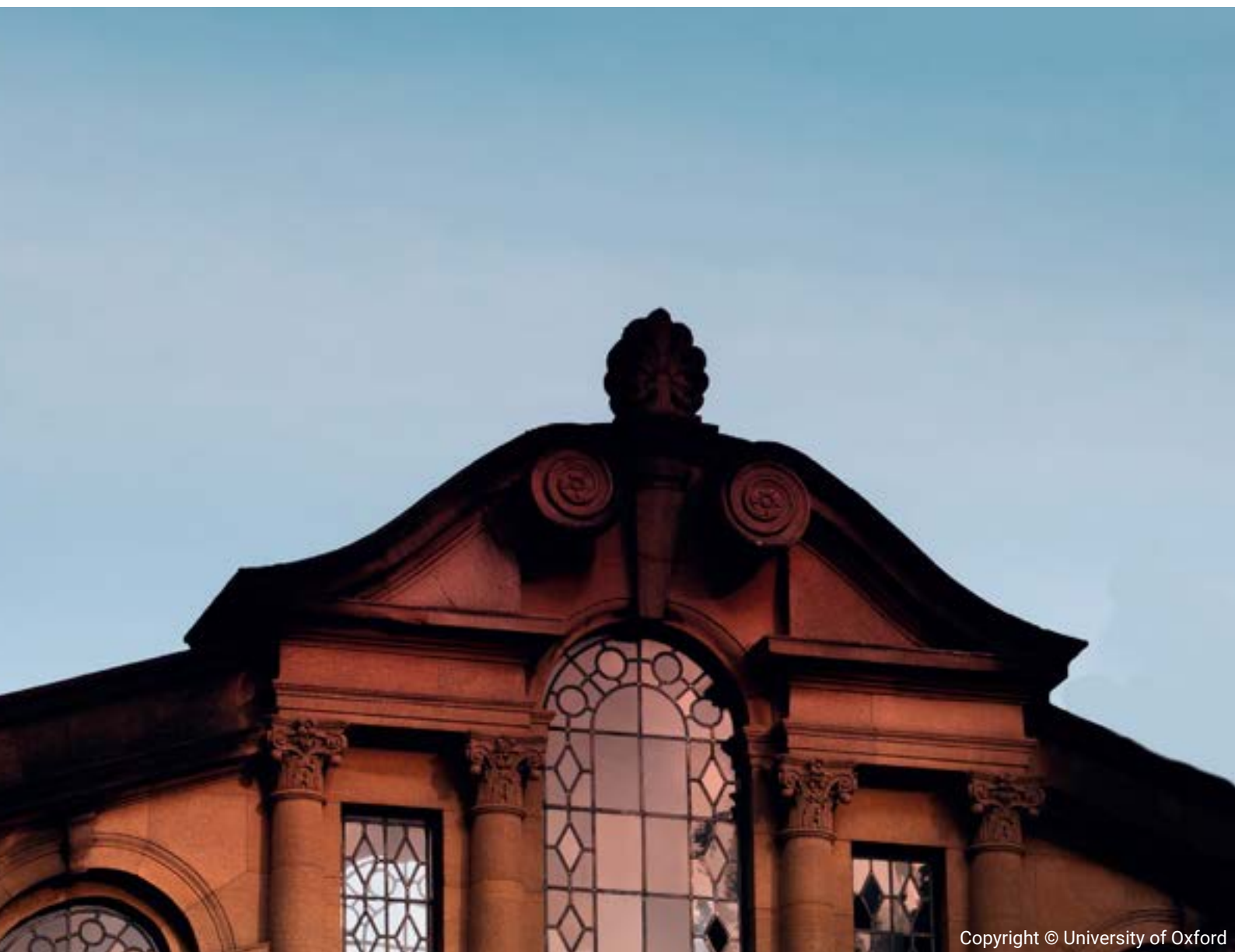
Academic lead

Professor Gaia Scerif
Professor of Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience

Opportunities for the Visiting Fellow

The fellow would be embedded into our teams and the broader Oxford Centre for Emerging Minds, of which we are all part. They will have access to/be involved with/shadow data collection and better understand the scientific process.

The Visiting Fellow would:

- gain in-depth insight into the scientific process, from how research is often funded to timelines and pace of evidence collection, analysis, and translation;
- have a chance to influence how we do things (e.g., pushing us to be clear about 'good enough' evidence);
- have the opportunity to be at the cutting edge of discovery and help translate research more quickly (good for society, common goal); and
- have the opportunity to combine huge and different data sets to ask questions and guide policy through big data.

Department of Materials

About the Department

The Department of Materials is internationally recognised for advancing the science and engineering of materials critical to global progress and the transition to net zero. Our research portfolio includes:

- nanomaterials for electronics, energy, and sustainable manufacturing;
- sustainable energy solutions including solar, batteries, and hydrogen;
- photonic and quantum technologies for computing, communications, and imaging;
- structural alloys for nuclear and aerospace environments; and
- biomaterials for healthcare applications such as drug delivery and implants.

We pioneer the design and manufacture of next-generation materials by revealing and manipulating the microstructural mechanisms that govern their performance. Collaboration is central to our mission. In recent years we have established particularly strong links with industry and are keen to identify a Visiting Fellow who could work with us to create a step change in our work with policy professionals in, and outside, government.

Policy themes

advanced manufacturing; health and life sciences innovation; infrastructure resilience; national security; net zero; skills and opportunity

What we've been working on

Recent examples of policy engagement by our researchers include:

- response to the UK Advanced Materials Call for Evidence, offering insights into the UK's strengths, gaps, and opportunities, thereby informing the UK Innovation Strategy, which recognises advanced materials as one of seven key technology families driving future economic growth;
- initiatives such as Advanced Materials for Industrial Leadership in Europe, co-led by Professor Nicole Grobert, setting out 14 strategic actions to support the green and digital transitions, including establishing a federated "materials commons," launching an Advanced Materials Academy, and creating a €500M public-private partnership to accelerate safe, sustainable innovation; and
- leading the Scientific Opinion on timely uptake of AI in European research, including Advanced Materials, resulting in a landmark recommendation to establish a European Institute for AI in Science and a European AI in Science Council.

Our researchers also lead or contribute to interdisciplinary initiatives in which materials science has a crucial part to play, such as:

- The **Oxford Advanced Materials Network**, which fosters innovation in fields such as energy systems, medical devices, lightweight composites, autonomous vehicles, and smart materials, in particular through collaboration with industry partners.
- The **Zero Institute**, focused on accelerating the transition to a just and fair zero-carbon energy system.
- The **Oxford EARTH** programme, which takes a systems-level approach to natural resource management, from discovering and sustainably extracting critical raw materials to bioremediating environmental impacts and developing resilient supply chains.

What we want to work on

Our research evidence and expertise is highly relevant to several aspects of the UK government's missions, especially those relating to clean energy, innovation-led growth, and national resilience:

- **Economic Growth:** this is advanced through our strong industrial partnerships, technology transfer, and spin-outs. Provision of advanced materials R&D facilities and highly skilled graduates strengthens the UK's innovation ecosystem and accelerates product development in key industries.
- **Making Britain a Clean Energy Superpower:** research in batteries, sustainable materials, solar technologies, and low-carbon processing directly underpins the transition to renewable energy and circular economies. Initiatives such as the SCHEMA hub highlight leadership in sustainable chemicals and materials manufacturing, positioning Oxford as a driver of clean-tech competitiveness.
- **A Future-fit NHS:** we are determined that our work on biomaterials, medical polymers, and device materials for implants, sensors, and diagnostics can, through collaboration with medical scientists and others, improve health technology and patient care.

- **Safer Streets:** materials science offers enabling technologies, including resilient infrastructure, protective coatings, advanced sensors, and forensic materials analysis. Although less central, these capabilities can support crime prevention and public safety initiatives.
- **Breaking Down Barriers to Opportunity:** through inclusive teaching, outreach, and widening participation, while making advanced facilities accessible to smaller firms. This democratization of expertise fosters both social mobility and broader industrial engagement.
- **Strong Foundations:** Oxford's work in nuclear, structural, and high-integrity materials contributes to national security, infrastructure reliability, and technology sovereignty. Its expertise strengthens resilience in critical supply chains and defence applications.

We would particularly welcome expressions of interest from policy professionals working in any of these areas, and are open to considering others.

Academic lead

Professor Nicole Grobert
Professor of Nanomaterials – Professorial Research Fellow

Opportunities for the Visiting Fellow

The Visiting Fellow will be embedded in the vibrant and inclusive Oxford Materials research community and supported by a dedicated liaison team, that will facilitate introductions, coordinate activities, and ensure alignment with mutual goals. The Visiting Fellow will benefit from:

- introductions to – and potential collaboration with – domain-relevant researchers within and beyond the department, including those involved in strategic national initiatives in advanced materials, such as the Henry Royce Institute, the Rosalind Franklin Institute and the Faraday Institution;
- introductions to some of our industry partners;
- access to some of our research facilities, and to the latest thinking, research, and theories in advanced materials and their relation to policy challenges; and
- participation in departmental scientific meetings and demonstrations of world-leading research facilities.

We are keen for the Visiting Fellow to have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of how research outputs are generated and what materials science and aligned disciplines can offer for policy setting, agendas, and impact, and to shape the department's strategies and plans. We would particularly welcome the opportunity to co-design and convene workshops on topics of mutual interest, including those that are challenge-led as well as more focused on capacity-building.

Faculty of Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics

About the Faculty

The Faculty of Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics (LPP) hosts one of the largest groups of language researchers globally, with expertise in the sounds, structure, social and historical aspects of languages from around the world, plus outstanding resources for experimental and computational approaches to language. LPP sits at the centre of Oxford's broad interdisciplinary expertise in language, which spans fundamental science (from philosophy to neuroscience) and applications in education, technology, and health. The faculty is housed in the state-of-the art Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities.

Also located in the Schwarzman Centre, the Faculty of Medieval and Modern Languages (MML) is one of the leading centres for the study of European language, literature, and culture world-wide. MML research expertise spans a range of languages and themes. This Visiting Fellowship will be led and supported by both faculties.

Policy themes

role of language(s) in government missions; language technology and AI; modern languages and national security; social cohesion; language education policy; multilingualism and global communication

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What we've been working on

The lead applicants, Prof. Colin Phillips and Dr. Charlotte Ryland, have extensive experience working with government departments on language and educational policy in the UK and internationally. Charlotte Ryland works on strategies for building interest in language learning in the UK education sector and writes extensively on opportunities to address language learning decline in the UK, including this recent blog. Charlotte has led nationwide initiatives to engage and empower language teachers and their students. She has led previous OPEN projects on raising the profile of language(s) expertise amongst policymakers and engaging researchers in policy issues, including recent work on how language(s) researchers can engage more effectively with the governmental Areas of Research Interest. Colin Phillips' experience includes working with US government agencies on language data infrastructure and on building interdisciplinary capacity and collaboration in Language Science. Colin is a leading researcher on how humans speak and understand language, drawing on diverse languages and on tools from psychology, neuroscience, and computer science. He played a guiding role in the creation of an award-winning museum of words and language in Washington DC, and he has led multiple initiatives for training students to work across diverse disciplines.

Most recently, both Phillips and Ryland have collaborated with the Cross-Government Languages Group, a cross-departmental group which promotes the value of language skills, including languages for civil servants, and works to build evidence-based cases for language-related policies. You can read more about this here.

What we want to work on

We are interested in hosting an OPEN Visiting Fellow to help explore the following questions:

- How can training and skills in language and languages adapt to be most relevant to the needs of the UK economy, UK security, and UK global leadership?
- In a world transformed by language technology, migration, global markets, and a flood of (mis)information, how can we ensure that the UK has world-leading expertise in language?

Skills in language – from big data analysis to mastery of understudied languages – are essential to successfully delivering the UK Government's Plan for Change and the National AI Strategy. However, language(s) and language skills are not mentioned in missions such as Safer Streets or An NHS Fit for the Future, despite a workforce with high-quality, direct, in-person language capabilities being employed by the police, justice system, security services and the NHS every day. Similarly, skilled workers with the cognitive flexibility to shift between linguistic and cultural contexts will be essential for the sort of creative problem-solving required to support innovation, growth and security in a global economy in which human-machine teaming and an ability to distinguish between authenticity and disinformation become valuable assets. Linguists and language scientists possess many skills and capabilities critical to the workforce of the future and can provide a foundation for growth across government missions and sectors.

Through collaboration with a representative from one or more government departments, an OPEN Visiting Fellowship would help us to better support Government's language capability requirements and shape language(s) teaching and training to better align with these needs.

Academic lead

Professor Colin Phillips
Professor of Linguistics and Faculty Board Chair

Opportunities for the Visiting Fellow

The Visiting Fellow will have access to Oxford's vast expertise in language(s), which is spread across many different parts of the university, from Humanities to Engineering to Medical and Social Sciences. The Visiting Fellow will gain insight into how different areas of language research currently connect, identifying gaps that need to be filled to serve national priorities, and how traditional training approaches can be adapted to serve future workforce needs. The Visiting Fellow will be based at the new Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities, which is a crossroads for students and scholars from diverse disciplines. The Visiting Fellow will have the opportunity to participate in diverse seminars and workshops, and meet with academics and students to understand how current training pathways develop expertise in language and languages.

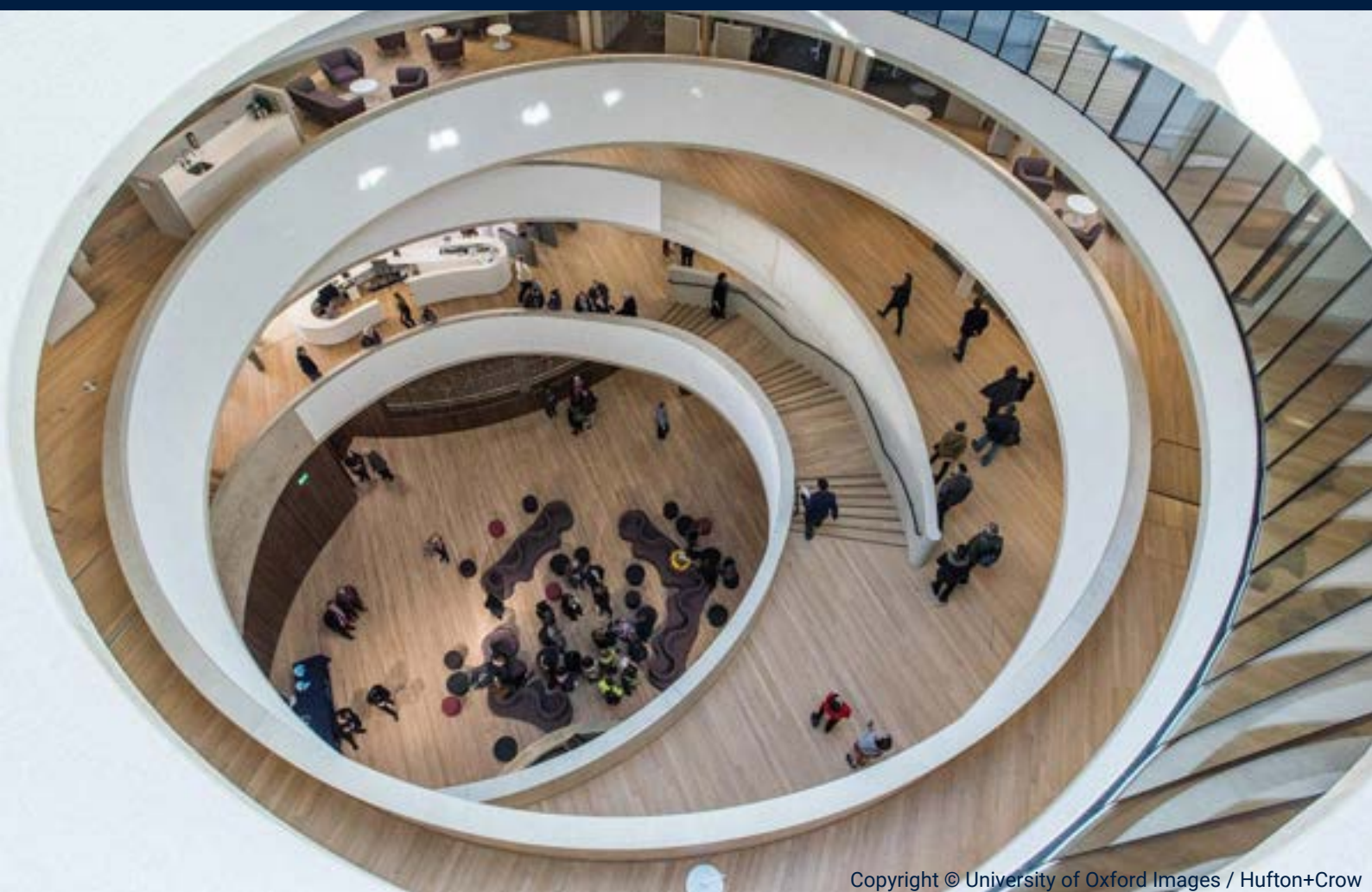# Government Outcomes Lab, Blavatnik School of Government

About the Lab

The Government Outcomes Lab (GO Lab) at the Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford, is a global centre of expertise on outcomes-based partnerships. Established in 2016 through a partnership with the UK Government, GO Lab enables governments worldwide to foster effective cross-sector collaborations for improved social outcomes.

Over the last eight years, GO Lab's interdisciplinary team of researchers and practitioners has developed a distinctive approach to evidence-building and knowledge-sharing, guided by values of excellence, collaboration, inclusivity, and transparency. By integrating research, data, and engagement, the GO Lab's team generates actionable insights to inform and enhance partnership practice.

Policy themes

cross-sector partnerships; local-central government collaboration; public sector reform; impact economy; social impact investment; outcomes-based commissioning

What we've been working on

Research: The GO Lab conducts rigorous, practice-informed research on the design and delivery of cross-sector partnerships (and innovative approaches to public contracting and procurement) aimed at improving social outcomes. Our work examines how governments and their partners can structure relationships to enable responsible iteration and improvement in complex, real-world environments. Through key projects such as our Life Chances Fund evaluation, the Collective Learning Initiative, and our partnership with the UK's Cabinet Office on the new Test-Learn-and-Grow programme, we have advanced the global evidence base on the mechanisms, conditions, and organisational capabilities that underpin successful service reform. Our research outputs, which include independent evaluations, rapid evidence reviews and co-produced frameworks, translate complex findings into practical tools for policymakers and delivery teams.

Data: We curate and maintain the world's most comprehensive, open-access dataset on innovative outcomes-focused partnerships, including projects that test new models of service delivery, financing, and governance. The GO Lab's International Network for Data on Impact and Government Outcomes (INDIGO) data platform, together with tools such as the Systemic Review of Outcomes Contracts Collaboration (SyROCCo), provides critical infrastructure for evidence generation, enabling comparative analysis, shared learning, and data-driven decision making.

Engagement: Our engagement work is designed to foster collective learning and capability-building across the ecosystem of public service innovation. Through the GO Lab's Global Knowledge Hub (visited by over 87,000 new users in the past year) and a comprehensive programme of peer learning groups, toolkits, and capacity-building forums, we create spaces for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and mutual support. Our convenings, including the Cross-Whitehall Knowledge Exchange Forum and the annual Social Outcomes Conference, bring together policymakers, practitioners, and researchers to share lessons and co-develop solutions.

What we want to work on

We are keen to anchor our research in the questions that are pressing for policymakers. We also aim to enable our datasets and collaboratively developed toolkits to be more easily accessed and navigated by policy teams. We have live research projects that investigate outcomes-focused ways of working and cross-sector partnerships which could be refined in response to the Fellow's interests and aspirations. Our research and policy engagement spans the UK and beyond, exploring how innovative and collaborative contracting practices and learning-oriented governance can improve social outcomes. These specialties deeply resonate with the Government's shift to a mission-led approach, which places outcomes at the heart of policy delivery. While the GO Lab's research holds relevance across government, it speaks to those who work on outcomes-focused policymaking, public sector reform, devolution, the impact economy, and improving social outcomes.
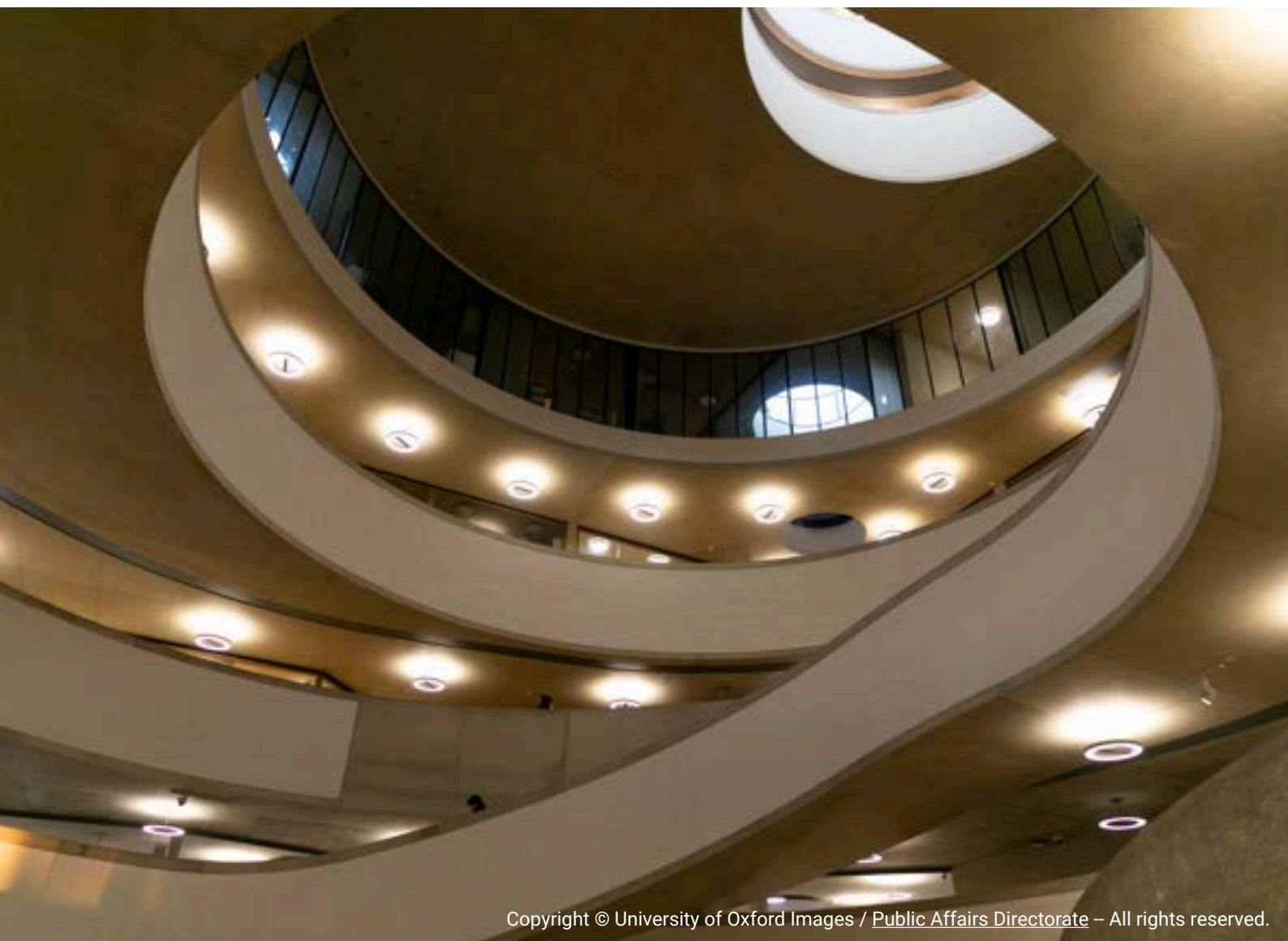
Academic lead

Dr Eleanor Carter
Academic Director

Opportunities for the Visiting Fellow

The Visiting Fellow will join a vibrant and collaborative research and engagement environment, benefitting from close integration with the GO Lab's interdisciplinary team and the wider Blavatnik School community. The Fellow will have access to world-leading researchers and research and our extensive networks of policymakers and practitioners in the UK and globally. The Fellow will have opportunities to share their work and, where relevant, to collaborate with our team on practical tools or briefings, supported by our researchers and Senior Policy Engagement Officer. This combination of intellectual resources, applied research opportunities, and global networks will allow the Fellow to both advance their own understanding and work and make a meaningful contribution to improving outcomes-focused policymaking.

The Migration Observatory

About the Unit

The Migration Observatory provides impartial and independent evidence-based analysis of data on migrants in the UK. Based in the Centre for Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS), one of the UK's top interdisciplinary centres for the study of migration, the Observatory's main role is to inform media, public and policy debate on immigration. Our work focuses on both legal and unauthorised migration. We draw on statistical analysis as well as the academic literature to publish regular briefings on the main topics related to UK immigration, such as work visas or the asylum system. We also produce commentaries on recent developments in UK immigration policy like changes to settlement rules or refugee family reunion. In addition, we host several research projects that collect new data, including on people's experiences with the immigration system or recent arrivals on the British National Overseas (BN(O)) route.

Policy themes

migration; immigration; visas; asylum; refugees; small boats; immigration enforcement; deportation

What we've been working on

Much of our recent work has been focused on providing analysis related to two key issues – government efforts to bring down net migration by reducing legal immigration flows, and measures to address the growing number of unauthorised arrivals by small boat. Our analysis is contained in a series of briefings on these issues, as well as shorter commentaries on specific changes to the UK's immigration system and their potential impact. Examples include the changes to settlement rules announced in the government's White Paper in May, the small boats returns deal with France reached during the summer, or the Home Office's recent policy to restrict refugee family reunion.

To disseminate our research, our team participates in frequent interviews with print and broadcast media, as well as meetings and briefings with civil servants, parliamentarians, local government, and civil society.

What we want to work on

We plan to continue the work described above in the next few months, while also exploring new areas. We will examine the relationship between human rights laws and the immigration system, looking at how human rights legislation affects government policies on migration and enforcement. We will conduct further analysis on the UK's challenges in managing its asylum system and the drivers of asylum-related migration. In addition, we will analyse the effects of changes to indefinite leave to remain (ILR) and citizenship rules on existing and future migrants to the UK – their potential impact on the benefits system, how the UK compares to its European peers, and what the effect of comparable reforms in other countries has been. We are open to exploring other areas of work that may be of interest to the Visiting Fellow and that are important to current policy debates about UK migration.
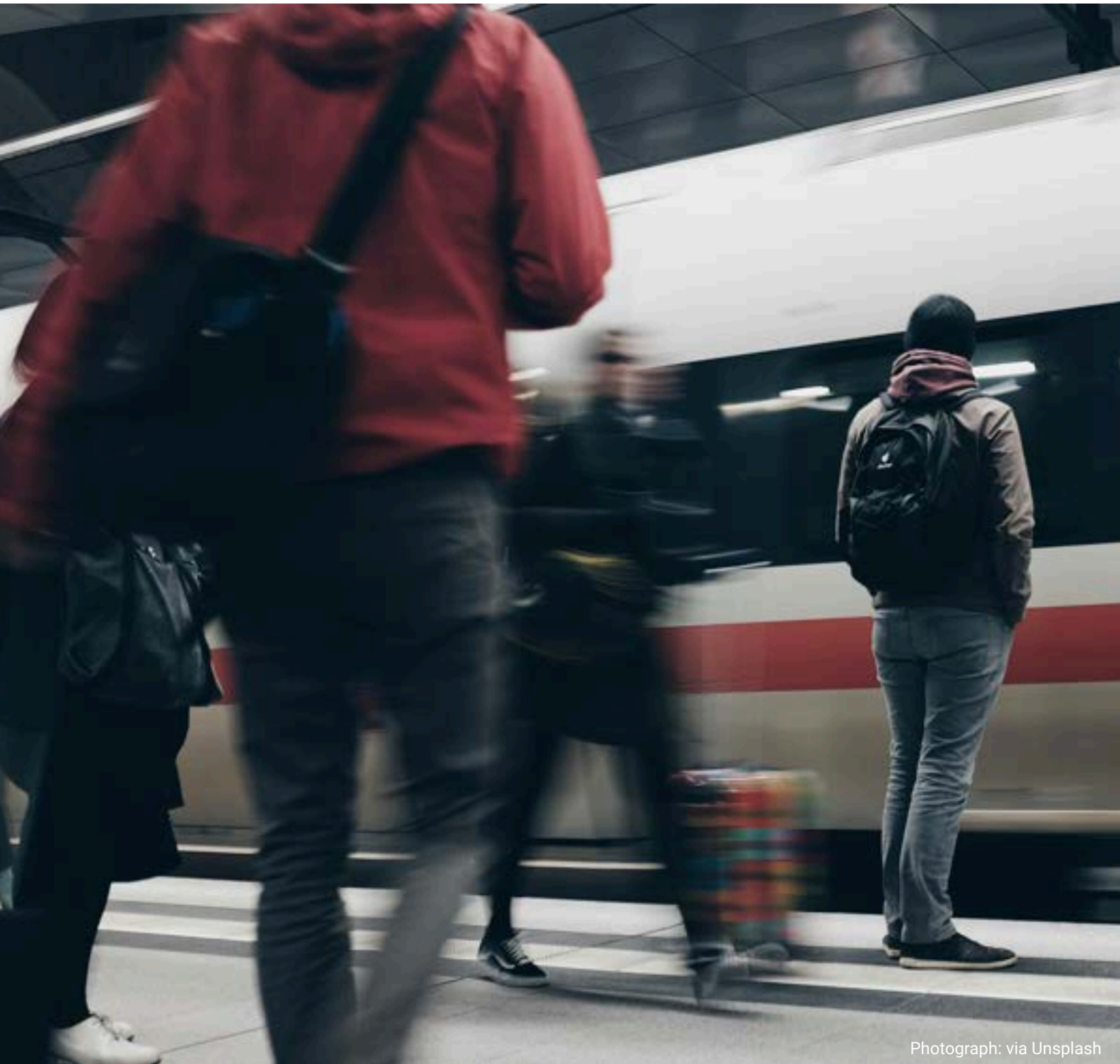
Academic lead

Dr Madeleine Sumption
Director

Opportunities for the Visiting Fellow

The fellow will be embedded into the Migration Observatory team, providing them with insight into how we use data, statistical analysis, and academic evidence to inform public debate. Opportunities for Visiting Fellows can be tailored to their expertise and interest. If there is alignment with one of our ongoing projects, the Fellow may contribute to our publications. Otherwise, the Fellow will have the freedom to pursue their own project, potentially leading to further collaborations. Beyond this, we expect any policy professional to gain a better understanding of how data and policy are perceived outside government, both by academic experts as well as the media.

Access can be arranged to Oxford's vast catalogue of academic resources. We also offer opportunities for the fellow to draw upon the broader multidisciplinary research community in COMPAS – both informally through connections developed during the fellowship and more formally through participation in seminars and the chance to present their work or analysis. The Migration Observatory team has experience previously hosting visitors from outside institutions, including the government.

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Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy Evidence Centre

About the Centre

The Policy and Evidence Centre on Modern Slavery and Human Rights was created in 2019 by UK Research and Innovation's investment of £10 million of funding to bridge the all too wide divide between research and policymaking in a particular area of human rights policy: modern slavery and human trafficking. The Centre works closely with policymakers, both in Whitehall and in each of the Devolved Administrations, to co-create a policy-relevant research agenda and produce a steady stream of independent, innovative, and authoritative outputs. We provide evidence, data and expert analysis and collaboration to drive policy change and transform the effectiveness of the policy response to this global challenge.

The Centre moved to Oxford in April 2024 with three years of continuation funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council. It is the only Policy and Evidence Centre in Oxford and has established a reputation for producing high quality and policy-relevant research, evidence and expert analysis, taking an explicitly human rights-based approach. The Centre puts lived experience at the heart of its work, as part of its distinctive humanities-led approach to it work.

Policy themes

human rights; migration policy (including immigration and asylum); labour exploitation; forced labour; violence against women and girls

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What we've been working on

The Centre works closely with the Modern Slavery Unit in the Home Office to inform its work with high quality evidence that is relevant, accessible and timely, as well as with the Devolved Administrations on their strategic response to modern slavery. We co-convened a parliamentary event with the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery to discuss 'Can the UK Lead the World Again in the Response to Modern Slavery?' The PEC frequently gives evidence to parliamentary committees, for example on the Border Security Bill, and works with a variety of departments on specific aspects of modern slavery policy, including FCDO on forced labour impact bans.

What we want to work on

The Centre recently published a Statement of its Research and Policy Priorities for 2025-27, following an extensive consultation with its key policy partners and other stakeholders, assessing the rapidly changing UK policy landscape and building on findings from its already extensive portfolio of research. A central feature of the Centre's ambitious plans is to broaden its work to other areas of human rights policy, building on its success in the area of modern slavery policy, to become a permanent feature of the human rights research and policy landscape.

This is already underway in the Centre's growing work in complementary areas of human rights policy such as migration, labour exploitation and violence against women and girls. For example, the Government's Safer Street's mission includes the ambition to halve violence against women and girls (VAWG) within a decade. Many of the human rights standards which apply to modern slavery also apply to VAWG, and the Centre therefore has a great deal of expertise in the policy questions that lie at the heart of realising the Government's mission: a more effective approach to prevention, better legal enforcement, and how to ensure that victims participate in the criminal justice system in order to bring perpetrators to account.

The Academic Lead also has a wider interest in the role of human rights as an enabler of the Strong Foundations on which the Government's missions are based: economic security, border security and national security. This requires rethinking the way in which human rights are discussed and framed, as pre-conditions to human security rather than unhelpful limits on the power of the State.

Academic lead

Mr Murray Hunt
Director

Opportunities for the Visiting Fellow

The Visiting Fellow would have the opportunity to work closely with the Academic Lead in developing thinking for policymakers about reframing human rights discourse in a way which is capable of re-legitimating the concept in an age of insecurity – a highly topical subject as Council of Europe member states discuss whether the European Convention on Human Rights is fit for purpose in an age of mass migration or requires modernisation to enable it to deal

with such global challenges. This would include participation in roundtable discussions of leading academics and key policymakers to explore this theme, and introductions to thought leaders from the academy with an interest in the policy world. There is also likely to be the opportunity to contribute to publications if the Fellow wishes to do so. The Visiting Fellow would benefit from direct involvement in a rapidly developing conversation about how to tackle the perceived democratic deficit of human rights and the institutional arrangements for their protection at a time when both national and European discussion and debate about human rights is dominated by these issues.

National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit, Department of Women's and Reproductive Health

About the Unit

Women's health is a key UK and global priority. The Department of Women's and Reproductive Health (WRH) is the largest of its kind in the UK comprising 350+ staff and students, with a broad research portfolio spanning basic, data and clinical science across maternal, fetal and child health, global women's health, reproductive medicine, and cancer.

Within WRH, the National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit (NPEU) conducts multi-disciplinary work including randomised trials through our perinatal Clinical Trials Unit, population-based surveillance, economic evaluations, confidential enquiries (MBRRACE-UK), and epidemiological investigations.

The NIHR Policy Research Unit for Maternal and Neonatal Health and Care (PRU-MNHC) is an eight-university collaboration led out of the NPEU. PRU-MNHC research provides evidence to improve the perinatal health and care of mothers, their babies and their families. Topics are agreed with an Oversight Group that includes policymakers from DHSC, and related organisations. WRH also collaborates with the NIHR PRU for Reproductive Health.

Policy themes

maternal and neonatal health and care; women's health; reproductive health; inequalities; big data; artificial intelligence

What we've been working on

WRH research into improving diagnosis and treatment of gynaecological pain, co-designed with sufferers, is frequently highlighted in the media and feeds into policy through the NIHR PRU for Reproductive Health and vehicles such as the APPG on endometriosis.

Evidence from the NPEU-hosted confidential enquiries into maternal deaths (MBRRACE-UK) regularly informs maternal health policy such as vaccination policy for pregnant women and the decision to roll out the Saving Babies Lives care bundle in the NHS. The OPEN Policy Fellow would have the opportunity to work with the Director of the NPEU, Marian Knight, who regularly provides evidence to Parliamentary committees and enquiries; working with a network of policy colleagues to mobilise research findings into policy.

PRU-MNHC research projects are designed with input from government and policy stakeholders to ensure relevance and early buy-in. Several PRU-MNHC projects research teams have embedded policy colleagues to help to shape the direction of the research and to keep the researchers apprised of any changes to policy priorities.

We monitor and respond to parliamentary and governmental calls for evidence, e.g. the First 1000 Days and Parental Leave calls. In addition to our main research projects, we respond to ad hoc requests from policy colleagues for existing evidence, providing advice on methods and feasibility of gathering new evidence in areas of need.

What we want to work on

WRH research is predominantly focused on priority areas defined under the 2022 Women's Health Strategy for England, for example highly prevalent, poorly managed gynaecological conditions such as period pain and endometriosis.

Ongoing NPEU research broadly relates to Sustainable Development Goal 3 ("Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages"), particularly the targets to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality, for example through research into reducing variation and improving outcomes for children who undergo surgery early in life (the CSOR programme). PRISMM will develop a data platform to understand national trends in pregnancy complications by using data captured in patient care records, which supports the NHS 10 Year Plan for England's shift from analogue to digital.

Current PRU-MNHC projects include an economic evaluation of interventions to reduce maternal and neonatal health inequities, which will inform the 10-Year Plan ambition that "people deserve to live in a fairer Britain, where everyone lives well for longer". Our focus on perinatal mental health speaks to the ambition of "fewer lives being lost to the biggest killers", including suicide; while research into the midwifery workforce relates to the National Maternity Safety Ambition and the NHS goal of providing timely access to care.

With this fellowship we aim to strengthen our collaboration with policymakers to further improve women's health in the UK by exploring new approaches to providing scientifically rigorous information that can be rapidly incorporated into decision making.

Academic lead

Professor Fiona Alderdice
PRU-MNHC Co-Director and Senior Social Scientist

Opportunities for the Visiting Fellow

The Policy Fellow would benefit from access to researchers and improved understanding of research rigour, processes, limitations, and possibilities. They would gain awareness of recent and ongoing projects and the growing evidence base in the fields of maternal, perinatal and neonatal health and care; women's health; and reproductive health.

The Fellow would build their understanding of relevant research methodologies. Depending on their individual interests, this could include an improved understanding of: the routinely collected datasets of patients' health information that are available and the types of questions they can answer; AI and machine learning approaches in healthcare; "Big Data" genomics and epidemiological research; randomised controlled trials; national surveillance; confidential enquiries; health economic assessments; qualitative methods including interviews and focus groups; and/or nationally representative patient surveys.

The Fellow would gain better understanding and confidence in how to access, commission, use, and interpret evidence and advice from academic researchers. They would also benefit from improved understanding of the priorities and perspectives of the ultimate beneficiaries of policies through interaction with our well-established parent, patient and public involvement (PPPI) task group and wider PPPI network.

Depending on the Fellow's interests, there may be opportunities to contribute directly to policy briefs and evidence dissemination.

Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences

About the Department

The Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences (NDPCHS) is one of the world's leading centres for academic primary care, ranked first in the UK for research in the field. Our portfolio spans prevention, diagnosis, and management of long-term conditions (e.g. cardiovascular disease, diabetes, respiratory illness), infectious disease, behavioural risk factors, health services research, and digital health. We host one of the UK's largest Clinical Trials Units focused on primary care and work extensively with national datasets including CPRD, OpenSAFELY, and ORCHID. Our interdisciplinary expertise, which combines clinical medicine, epidemiology, health economics, medical sociology, data science, and applied digital health, generates evidence that directly informs policy and practice. We have shaped NHS priorities, contributed to NICE guidelines, and advised the Department of Health and Social Care on service redesign. Alongside research, we deliver a significant share of Oxford's undergraduate medical teaching and run globally recognised postgraduate programmes.

Policy themes

transforming primary and community care systems; prevention, population health, and reducing health inequalities; integration of health and social care; digital transformation and data-driven health innovation; sustainability, productivity, and value in health systems; environmental sustainability and the Net Zero NHS

What we've been working on

The NDPCHS works at the intersection of research, policy, and practice, ensuring that our evidence directly shapes health care delivery in the UK and internationally. Our research has informed NHS policy and practice, from early diagnosis of cancer in primary care to optimising management of long-term conditions such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes, and the design of urgent care and out-of-hours care models.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, NDPCHS provided rapid evidence syntheses and led large community-based trials (e.g. PRINCIPLE and PANORAMIC) that directly shaped UK government vaccination and treatment policies. Our evidence has influenced NICE guidelines on multimorbidity, respiratory conditions, and antibiotic stewardship and informed the Department of Health and Social Care on primary care, data use, and digital innovation.

We collaborate closely with NHS England on digital transformation, remote consultations, and the development of "total triage" models, contributing insights on digital exclusion and equity. We also partner with the NHS, local authorities, and Integrated Care Boards to support the shift towards prevention and community-based care. Our researchers sit on national advisory groups including NHS England's Digital First programme, the National Screening Committee, and policy panels on obesity, tobacco control, and vaccination.

What we want to work on

Looking ahead to 2025–2030, the NDPCHS will pursue policy-relevant research and that supports national and global health system transformation. Our strategy aligns directly with UK Government missions on health and social care, digital transformation, levelling up, and net zero as well as key Areas of Research Interest on NHS efficiency and health inequalities.

We aim to strengthen community-based and prevention-oriented care, generate evidence on integration across primary care, social care, and public health, and expand work on digital health, AI, and data-driven innovation using large-scale datasets such as CPRD, OpenSAFELY, and ORCHID. Our health economics research will inform sustainable workforce models, cost-effectiveness, and resource allocation, which are core to delivering NHS productivity gains.

A Visiting Policy Fellow would provide real-time policy insight and help us align this research with government priorities. Working collaboratively, the Fellow could explore policy levers for scaling integrated, digitally enabled, and sustainable care, co-design engagement activities with policymakers, and test how evidence can better inform national decision-making. This partnership would deepen mutual understanding between academia and policy, ensuring our research delivers timely, practical solutions to the UK's most pressing health system challenges.
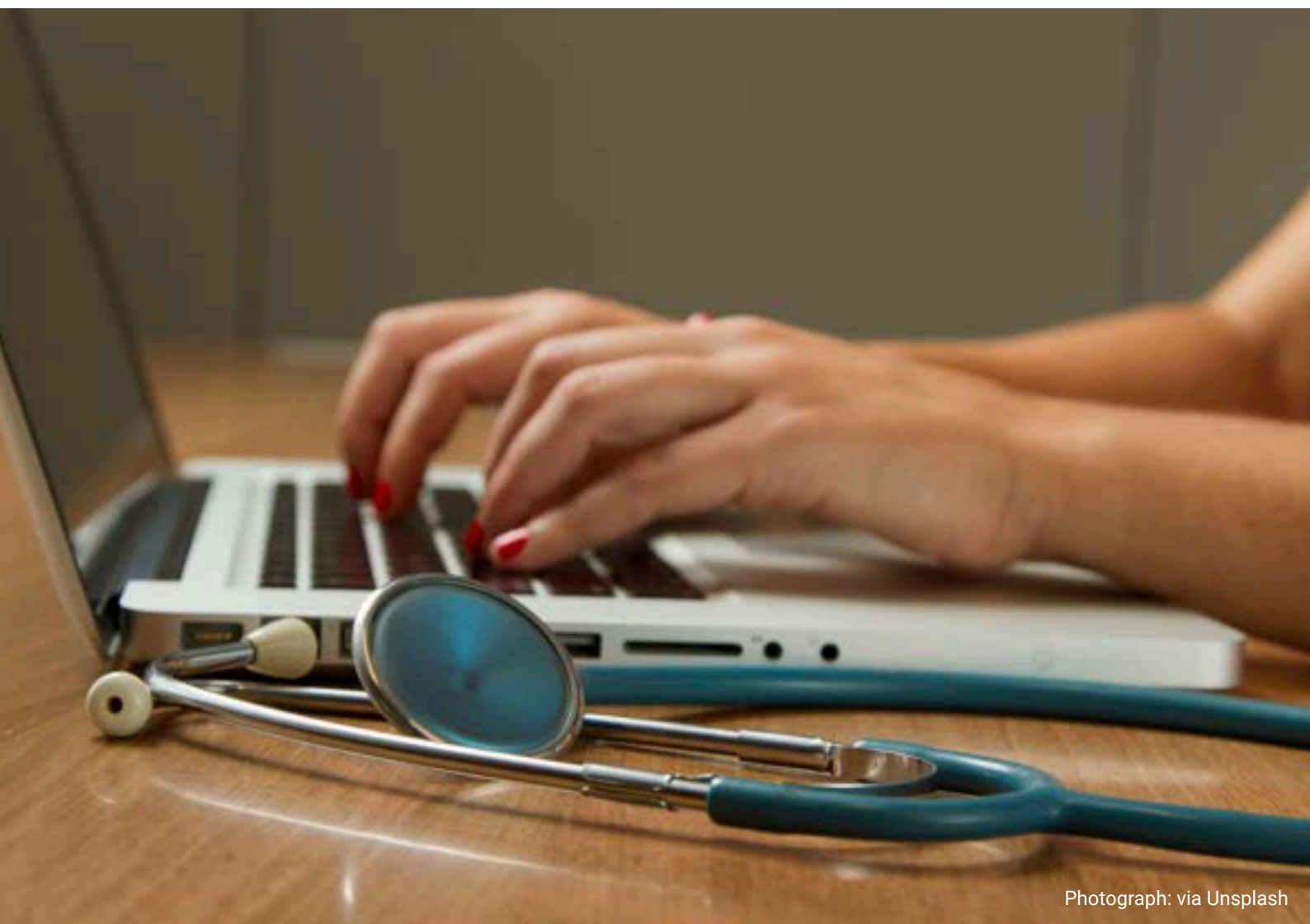
Academic lead

Dr Apostolos Tsiachristas
Associate Professor in Health Economics

Opportunities for the Visiting Fellow

The Visiting Fellow would be embedded in one of the world's leading centres for academic primary care, with access to internationally recognised experts in health economics, primary care, digital health, epidemiology, medical sociology, and clinical trials. They would gain exposure to cutting-edge research programmes, large-scale national datasets (CPRD, OpenSAFELY, ORCHID), and innovative approaches to prevention, community-based care, and health system sustainability.

We would provide the Fellow opportunities to collaborate on research projects, co-develop workshops, and shape our policy engagement strategy. The Fellow would also be invited to participate in departmental seminars and postgraduate teaching.

Through this placement, the Fellow will gain a deeper understanding of how primary care evidence is generated and applied, build relationships with researchers across disciplines, and strengthen their skills in using data and evaluation to inform policy. The Fellowship will provide a unique opportunity to explore shared challenges in health and social care and to co-create practical, evidence-informed solutions with direct impact on policy and practice.

Photograph: via Unsplash

Oxford Net Zero

About the Initiative

The Oxford Net Zero initiative draws on the University of Oxford's world-leading expertise in climate science and policy, addressing the critical issue of how to reach global 'net zero' in time to halt global warming. Leading academics from across the University's disciplines, including Geography, Physics, Economics, Biology, Law and Earth Sciences, have come together to focus on the long-term questions necessary to achieve equitable, science-based solutions. Oxford Net Zero aims to transform policies and practices at multiple scales to co-achieve net zero emissions and sustainable development. We do this through our leading translational research initiative, providing an integrated view of the scientific, ecological, economic and social challenges through sustained engagement with business, civil society and national and international policy makers.

Policy themes

net zero standards and regulations; just climate transition; public procurement for net zero; net zero enablers; advertising sector; legal sector

Photograph: Thomas Richter (via Unsplash)

What we've been working on

Oxford Net Zero's Engagement Team has been advancing a portfolio of projects that combine research, convening, and policy engagement to address critical challenges in net-zero governance and delivery.

We regularly engage with major net-zero standards, including the Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHGP), the ISO Net Zero Standard, and the Science Based Targets Initiative (as technical advisors). These frameworks, as tracked by the Oxford Climate Policy Monitor, inform dozens of climate policies worldwide.

Our Just Transition work (funded by ACCESS, University of Exeter) ensures that youth perspectives and equity considerations are embedded in net-zero standards and frameworks during their revision cycle. We assembled a Youth Advisory Board of 12 young people from around the world, training them on technical standards languages and mobilising their perspectives for public standards consultations.

The Global Youth Climate Training Programme (delivered with the Global Youth Coalition) expands participation in climate governance by equipping young people worldwide with the knowledge to engage in UNFCCC negotiations.

The Oxford Green Approaches to Public Procurement project leads research and engagement to help governments translate climate commitments into procurement policy and practices. The project investigates how public procurement, which drives around 15 % of global emissions, can be a lever for innovation, decarbonised supply chains, and sustainable markets.

Our Serviced Emissions Hub convenes consultancies, law firms, and ad & PR professionals who shape corporate strategies. This programme builds accountability into these "enabler" sectors, ensuring their influence supports, rather than undermines, net zero action. We seek to ensure that net zero standards and frameworks capture this underutilised influence node, much like "financed emissions" has done before.

What we want to work on

Oxford Net Zero's Engagement Team supports the transition from early net-zero ambition to the more technically demanding implementation phase. The UK government's mission to "Make Britain a Clean Energy Superpower" emphasises clean growth, resilience, and fairness – all areas where rigorous standards business alignment, and social equity considerations are vital.

We are investing in research and convening to strengthen the foundations of climate accountability. As standards grow more rigorous, we aim to ensure businesses and other non-state actors receive clear, practical guidance that maintains scientific integrity while aligning with the operational realities of decarbonisation.

Our plans prioritise three policy-relevant challenges:

- **Engaging governments on the use of clear, fair and aligned international standards for the net zero transition across policy tools:** net zero standards grounded in stakeholder feedback and science can help to create a level playing field. Our research on instruments such as net-zero procurement policies identifies barriers to implementation and opportunities for academia support policymakers in the understanding and use of standards, and broader understanding and interpretation of organisational net zero requirements across their policy and guidance documents. In particular, we are convening government leaders working on green public procurement and mandatory transition plans.
- **Equity and indirect impacts:** embedding underrepresented aspects of net-zero governance, including the Just Transition, to ensure equity, labour, and supply-chain considerations are not sidelined.
- **Spotlighting enablers:** convening working groups with consultancies, law firms, and advertisers to highlight their influence on corporate decarbonisation strategies. By encouraging these sectors to take responsibility, we help strengthen the wider ecosystem driving net-zero progress.

Our work bridges technical depth and implementation work. By aligning global standards with decarbonisation realities and amplifying credible stories of progress, we aim to safeguard momentum at the critical implementation stage and contribute directly to national climate and industrial policy objectives.

Academic lead

Professor Sam Fankhauser
Professor of Climate Economics and Policy

Opportunities for the Visiting Fellow

As our work bridges technical depth and implementation work, we are able to offer our Visiting Fellow access to cutting edge research, as well as a direct route to its translation for policy implementation and impact. Our work programme aligns very closely with issues that lie at the heart of government priorities, while also helping to build synergies between civil society, government, and the business sector. Additionally, we envisage being able to offer our Fellow a credible, trusted, and neutral base from which to explore challenges and opportunities around implementing policy in our mutual areas of expertise – including dialogue with our wider civil society and other related networks. The Fellow will gain unparalleled access to a breadth of diverse stakeholders within a short period of time – something which is difficult to achieve within the demands of a full-time policy focused role.

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