

# Innovation Fellowships Scheme 2026-27, Route B Policy-led Scope Summary - Resilient Communities

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Last review date	March 2026
Next review date	March 2027

**Please read the scheme notes carefully. Incorrectly submitted applications will not be considered.**

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## 1 Introduction to Resilient Communities

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- 1.1 This call will enable researchers to work with a policy partner for 12 months. Successful applicants will work within specific policy areas set out by their chosen partner, which will correlate to areas of work in the British Academy's Resilient Communities policy programme. This programme builds upon the work of the Academy's [Social and Cultural Infrastructure](#) policy programme, which has run since 2022. All collaborators have outlined scopes falling within this theme, which are detailed below.
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## 2 Features of the Scheme

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- 2.1 Route B Innovation Fellows work with policy partners specified by the British Academy. For this round, the partners under the heading of 'Resilient Communities' are:
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)
  - Ministry of Justice (MoJ)
  - Local Policy Innovation Partnerships (LPIP) Hub, City-REDI, University of Birmingham
  - Government Office for Science (GO Science)
- 2.2 Applicants should note that the Fellow would finalise the outline of a work programme with the partner after being awarded the Fellowship, and therefore applicants are not required to submit a research proposal as part of the application.
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## 3 Fellowship with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)

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- 3.1 The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is the government department that supports initiatives that enrich everyday life: funding museums, galleries, cinemas and theatres; enhancing youth facilities and backing charities that make an incredible impact; all of which bring pride to local communities and provide substantial health and wellbeing benefits for the people DCMS serve.

- 3.2 The UK's cultural sectors deliver a wide range of cultural, economic and social benefits that help shape our economy, communities and showcase our energy and creativity to the rest of the world. However, there is currently no agreed method for fully valuing cultural and heritage assets for use within social cost-benefit analysis beyond standard economic measures. This means these assets are often undervalued or implicitly valued at zero, potentially leading to suboptimal decisions around whether to invest in or preserve them.
- 3.3 Therefore, DCMS is developing a formal approach to valuation called Cultural and Heritage Capital (CHC), to address this gap in the evidence to measure the full social and economic impact of culture and heritage.
- 3.4 In December 2024, DCMS published an updated [CHC Framework](#), setting out our approach to valuing the benefits provided by culture and heritage assets. Eventually, DCMS will publish supplementary guidance in the Green Book following the example of the environment sector and the natural capital approach, as well as a set of national culture and heritage capital accounts.
- 3.5 The Fellow in DCMS will work on research on cultural infrastructure, tying it to the department's work on CHC and to the British Academy's Resilient Communities programme. This is an exciting opportunity for a fellow to work on a cross-cutting policy programme that offers exposure to teams across the Department. The fellow will be based in the Chief Scientific Adviser's Office and will have an important role in contributing to the evidence base of the CHC programme.
- 3.6 Fellows will conduct research and analysis in one or more areas of work, to address a specified set of policy-driven research question(s), which are agreed at the outset of the Fellowship.
- 3.7 The British Academy is also partnering with the AHRC-funded 'Locally Unlocking Culture through Inclusive Access' (LUCIA) programme for this Fellowship, so that the Fellow working with DCMS will be provided with a curated programme of network benefits and support opportunities from both the British Academy and LUCIA.
- 3.8 The Locally Unlocking Culture through Inclusive Access (LUCIA) programme funds research networks which will empower communities across the UK to have the agency and opportunity to enable growth and address equitable access through a culture of policy design. The LUCIA programme aims to bring researchers, policy leaders, local and regional authorities, and community members together to empower those communities to understand and address key urban cultural challenges which are obstacles to community cohesion and civic discourse. The British Academy and LUCIA programme teams will work together to connect the funded project with LUCIA's funded researchers and offer the Fellow access to relevant network activities.

- 3.9 The following is a non-exhaustive list of potential research topics that could be considered for the fellowship. Applicants are encouraged to focus on questions complementary to their skills, and we do not expect applicants to cover all questions. Applicants should focus on areas where their skills and academic background will provide the most impact. Applicants can also suggest linking elements of different questions together. Potential research areas include:
- The role and importance of creative, cultural and heritage assets as foundational/basic infrastructure for the social and economic development across different places.
  - Should all cultural assets be classed as infrastructure? Are some types of cultural and heritage assets more important to social and economic development and therefore fit standard definitions of infrastructure?
  - Further development of DCMS definitions of assets and services which can be defined as infrastructure.
  - What other types of infrastructure (e.g. transport) are needed to support the development of cultural infrastructure?
  - What is the role of cultural infrastructure in supporting wider creative clusters, including which assets have the greatest impact on supporting creative industries' development, innovation and growth?
  - Understanding and developing data sets to map cultural and heritage infrastructure.
  - Expand valuation across creative, cultural and heritage assets to value the impact of cultural infrastructure on economic and social outcomes.
  - Methodological innovations for creative, culture and heritage asset valuation, including the use of machine learning, AI and big data.
- 3.10 Work-planning will centre on the programme of work and analysis agreed at the outset of the fellowship. However, from time to time the fellow may be expected to work with and alongside the CHC team, in addition to conducting independent research and analysis. In addition to the indicative list of tasks specified in the overall programme scheme notes, further tasks the Fellow in DCMS could undertake might include:
- Reviewing, collating and synthesising existing evidence and identifying evidence gaps and recommendations from the literature.
  - Conducting new data analysis including non-market valuation and other economic analysis, including analysis of growth impacts.
  - Producing HMT Green Book compliant analysis that has a direct policy application.
- 3.11 The Fellow working with DCMS will have:

- Expert knowledge of quantitative/qualitative research methods, and/or economic valuation techniques, including monetising market impacts, non-market valuation techniques and econometric analysis.
- Knowledge of the CHC Programme and HM Treasury's Green Book.
- Ability to apply analysis in a policy context.
- Strong knowledge about the cultural and heritage sectors.
- Strong stakeholder engagement skills and an ability to work collaboratively, in both academic and non-academic environments.

3.12 The Fellow will be embedded in the department and would be based at DCMS's London or Manchester offices. The Fellow will be expected to travel into the office; however, the number of days is negotiable and can be discussed with the successful applicant.

3.13 DCMS has a record of successfully hosting placements that have enabled fellows to enhance their knowledge and capacity to inform policy and analysis through their research. DCMS is committed to offering fellows access to a range of professional development during their placement, including:

- Contact with a range of government professions (policy, strategy, analysts) and key stakeholders across government
- The opportunity to influence policy thinking and analysis in a government priority area
- Experience of government ways of working
- Building a network of contacts with officials, as well as building visibility as an academic expert in government
- Access to internally run professional development training sessions
- Subject to agreement and internal clearance processes, there may be an opportunity to publish research on gov.uk

A Fellow working from the DCMS London Office, is required to obtain Counter Terrorism Clearance (CTC). For CTC, we recommend allowing for a minimum of three months processing time. Security clearance required for the Manchester Office is Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS), we recommend allowing a minimum of two months processing time. Please note that vetting may take longer for applicants who have resided outside of the United Kingdom. Please see National security vetting: clearance levels for more information.

This is broadly open to the following groups:

- UK nationals
- Nationals of the Republic of Ireland
- Nationals of Commonwealth countries who have the right to work in the UK
- Nationals of the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein and family members of those nationalities with settled or pre-settled status under the European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS)
- Nationals of the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein and family members of those nationalities who have made a valid application for settled or pre-settled status under the European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS)
- Individuals with limited leave to remain or indefinite leave to remain who were eligible to apply for EUSS on or before 31 December 2020
- Turkish nationals, and certain family members of Turkish nationals, who have accrued the right to work in the Civil Service.

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## 4 Fellowship with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

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- 4.1 The Fellow(s) with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) will work as part of the MoJ Evidence and Partnerships Hub's [impactful academic engagement programme](#), enabled by the departmental Areas of Research Interest (ARI). The Hub, based in the Policy Group's Analysis Directorate, enhances MoJ's strategic research capabilities, to enable evidence-based decisions, by collaborating with academic experts, research networks, and research funders.
- 4.2 The Analytical Community in MoJ consists of multidisciplinary teams embedded throughout the department, providing analysis and research across a diverse and exciting agenda. They provide high quality data, analysis, and research to ensure strategic, policy, finance, corporate and operational decisions are based on robust evidence. Fellows will work alongside policy- and practice-facing analytical teams to co-design and deliver impactful research projects that contribute to the departmental evidence base.
- 4.3 Access to justice is a critical component of social infrastructure. It goes far beyond the Criminal Justice System and covers everyday issues – for example housing, employment, welfare benefits, relationships, and work – that can escalate if not solved early and become matters for the Civil, Family and Tribunal systems. We want to improve the way people are supported to resolve their legal matters in fair and efficient ways, that lead to positive and sustained outcomes.
- 4.4 Legal support – whether via legal aid, advice centres, or other sources – mediation, and other forms of dispute resolution play a key role in this. Better understanding of the effectiveness of legal support and advice, including what works to increase awareness and engagement; costs and benefits of different dispute resolution options; and what works to ensure positive long-term outcomes for users of the justice system, are crucial.
- 4.5 The Fellow(s) will have the opportunity to work on projects that directly address priority evidence gaps in the [2025 Areas of Research Interest \(ARI\) publication](#). A typical project might involve synthesising and translating existing academic research, or designing and delivering cutting edge research, to inform policy and practice decision-making. The area the Fellow will be working on is: **Understanding access to justice for individuals and families**. Specifically, as part of this call, the areas of legal aid, legal support and advice, and family justice, are in scope. Whilst MoJ are interested in applications addressing any ARI evidence gap from these areas, the following areas are the current priority:

- Legal Aid: How do different individuals and groups perceive their experiences of legal aid services? How does this vary by the nature of their legal problem, advice and support received, jurisdiction and outcome? To what extent does the legal aid system adequately meet the needs of individuals with different protected characteristics?
- Legal support and advice: What methodological approaches can we explore to improve our evidence on costs and benefits of different legal support models, including the benefits to individuals, wider society and the economy?
- Family justice: Does mediation, early legal advice or other forms of dispute resolution lead to better and more sustainable outcomes compared to the courts for users of the family justice system?

4.6 Fellows will benefit from wider support, networking opportunities and learning and development available to the Analytical Community, giving them a richer experience during their fellowship. They will be supported by the Evidence and Partnerships Hub in the translation, dissemination and application of their work, including via knowledge exchange opportunities such as seminars, roundtables, and specialist academic advice sessions to maximise the impact of their fellowship.

4.7 MoJ offers hybrid working arrangements that allow fellows to work from different [MoJ offices](#), their university, from home, or a combination – subject to adherence to information security at all times. We anticipate Fellows will attend an MoJ office two times per month or more to meet with relevant colleagues. Further travel will depend on projects or research undertaken; for example, travel would likely be required if primary research were undertaken.

For security reasons, successful applicants will have to be security cleared before the final arrangements for a Fellowship can be confirmed. The Fellow with MoJ will be required to receive security clearance at the Baseline Personnel Security Standard. Please see National security vetting: clearance levels for more information.

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## 5 Fellowship with Local Policy and Innovation Partnerships (LPIP)

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- 5.1 The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), Innovate UK, and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) have supported a [£23 million LPIP programme](#), designed to support local and national policymakers in tackling levelling up challenges, driving sustainable and inclusive economic growth, and reducing regional disparities in the UK. The Local Policy Innovation Partnerships (LPIPs) are building cross-sector partnerships that aim to address policy challenges that matter to local people and communities by generating insight and understanding into local challenges and opportunities, and working with stakeholders to implement evidence-informed, actionable solutions. There are four LPIPs across the UK as well as a national LPIP Hub.
- 5.2 The [LPIP Hub](#) is a national consortium, led by the [City-Region Economic Development Institute](#), at the University of Birmingham, convening stakeholders across the research and policy ecosystem. It is concerned with drawing together understanding of local economic, social and environmental challenges, and formulating solutions, across the UK through an innovative and effective service-driven approach to place-based policy making and public service delivery. It is designed to lead to a step-change in the quality and impact of the evidence created by universities and their local place partners. The LPIP Hub also acts as a gateway for national policymakers and government bodies to gain local insights from the LPIPs and interact with them.
- 5.3 According to the [Local Trust](#), research increasingly demonstrates that social infrastructure is fundamental to building communities that are safe, healthy, prosperous, and resilient. There is also growing acknowledgement of its importance in driving improved socioeconomic outcomes in deprived areas and serving as a cornerstone of wider economic development.
- 5.4 The Fellow will work with City-REDI and the LPIP Hub to identify and analyse innovative examples of measuring the impact of social and cultural infrastructure. The Fellowship is designed to respond to the current significant gap in research on the impact of social and cultural infrastructure. While its role in fostering community resilience, belonging, and wellbeing is widely acknowledged, systematic evidence is limited and fragmented. Measuring the impact of social and cultural infrastructure is particularly challenging in the current fiscal context, where pressures on public spending and demands for demonstrable economic returns can easily overshadow the more intangible social benefits these assets provide. It is also complicated by limited evaluation capacity and expertise, which the LPIP Hub and wider City-REDI research has identified.

- 5.5 A [2025 British Academy report](#) conducted by the Bennett Institute warns that without robust measurement frameworks, the value of these assets risks being neglected in policy and investment decisions. It calls for approaches that capture both quantitative outcomes and qualitative lived experiences and develops a framework for measuring assets, facilities and spaces. The Bennett Institute highlights the [conceptual ambiguity around defining social and cultural infrastructure](#), while [research from the University of the Arts London](#) stresses its normatively contested nature – different groups value it for different reasons, complicating evaluation. An article published on [Culture Commons](#) also underlines the need for clearer mapping of tangible and intangible infrastructure to ensure these infrastructures are recognised as essential to social equity and place vitality.
- 5.6 The following is a non-exhaustive list of potential research topics that could be developed by the Fellow:
- How can the framework produced by the Bennett Institute for the British Academy (2025) be put into practice (e.g. through comparative case studies and wider analysis)? How could the framework be developed further? What could a decision-making framework look like?
  - What can we learn from the international evidence base regarding the impact of social and cultural infrastructure? We would be particularly interested in approaches in marginally lower or similar tax-take countries/ countries with similar socio-economic models.
  - How can the framework be operationalised within business cases and funding decisions, at a national and local level?
  - How can local and national government partners collaborate more effectively in the policy ecosystem to identify, develop and better implement existing and new approaches to measuring the impact of social and cultural infrastructure?
- 5.7 It is expected that the project will produce findings that can inform the development of new approaches to measuring the impact of social and cultural infrastructure. There is significant potential for the Fellow to work closely with government partners and develop important policy impact at the local, regional and national scale. The Fellow will need to engage closely with relevant government partners including HM Treasury, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the DCMS as well as sub-regional government to co-develop the project and identify credible, actionable short-term and long-term recommendations.

- 5.8 The Fellow would be attached to the [City-REDI](#) team, working alongside the [LPIP Hub](#) Team based at the [University of Birmingham](#) whilst also working with central and local government partners. This Fellowship will be primarily conducted remotely with attendance at regular virtual meetings (e.g. bi-weekly virtual LPIP Hub Internal meetings, line manager meetings) as well as some in person meetings in Birmingham (e.g. Place Partnerships conference) and across UK (e.g. in person fieldwork meetings/workshops as required). A considerable evidence base regarding current challenges and opportunities to develop more effective place-based funding approaches and partnership working structures has been built up by City-REDI since its establishment 10 years ago. The experience and expertise of the Hub's delivery partners and Board provide further valuable insights into how these approaches can be strengthened in practice. This Fellowship offers the opportunity to build on that work to create considerable policy impact in relation to improved approaches to measuring the impact of social and cultural infrastructure.
- 5.9 Expertise and experience in a variety of qualitative and quantitative methodologies is appropriate for this call in order to capture both the measurable outcomes and the lived experiences of communities shaped by social and cultural infrastructure. These could include, but are not limited to mixed-method approaches that combine quantitative measurement (e.g., surveys, indices, economic impact analysis) with qualitative inquiry (e.g., ethnography, interviews, participatory research). Understanding of evaluation methodologies, cross-national comparative analysis and approaches for business case development are likely to be helpful.

There are no security clearance or nationality requirements for the LPIP Fellow.

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## 6 Fellowship with the Government Office for Science (GO Science)

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- 6.1 The Government Office for Science (GO-Science) seeks to ensure that government policies and decisions are informed by the best scientific evidence and strategic long-term thinking. GO-Science provides science advice to the UK government and supports the science and engineering profession. Led by the Government Chief Scientific Advisor (GCSA), GO-Science aims to provide expert, timely, and trustworthy science advice both by producing the advice, and by supporting departmental science systems and mechanisms that are efficient, effective, speak truth to power and are embedded irreversibly in government systems.
- 6.2 The fellow will work in the Climate, Society and International (CSI) team, which leads GO-Science work on social sciences (particularly for emergencies), information security (mis/disinformation), and social and behavioural dimensions of novel technology. CSI acts as secretariat for the cross-government Social and Behavioural Science for Emergencies (SBSE) group, working closely with other teams (such as the GO-S National Security and Resilience team and the COBR Directorate in Cabinet Office) to provide social science advice for emergencies.
- 6.3 The role of social and cultural infrastructure in emergency preparedness and response and enabling societal resilience is a key area of interest for GO-Science and the Social and Behavioural Science for Emergencies group. Building on the existing work by the British Academy on [cohesive societies](#) and [social and cultural infrastructure](#), GO-Science is keen for the Fellow to develop briefings for policy teams to set out how the broader research and evidence applies to emergency preparedness and crisis response in policy-friendly outputs.
- 6.4 The following is a non-exhaustive list of potential research topics that could be considered for the fellowship:
- Synthesizing the social science evidence on the role of social and cultural infrastructure in relation to the ability of individuals, households and communities to respond to emergencies and disasters. Potential questions might include:

- What indicators for measuring social and cultural infrastructure are most relevant for understanding community resilience and preparedness in the context of emergencies?
- What indicators can be used to better capture and understand informal or intangible social and cultural infrastructure (such as kinship and care networks) that are critical for communities to withstand or recover from emergencies?
- What is the relation between social cohesion and societal preparedness? Do higher degrees of social cohesion and/or stronger social and cultural infrastructure necessarily lead to better preparedness and resilience across different socioeconomic groups?
- How are the benefits of social and cultural infrastructure likely to be distributed? Who is likely to make use (or have the opportunity to use) social and cultural infrastructure during an emergency? What role does social and cultural infrastructure have in shaping vulnerability as well as resilience?
- How can understanding the role of social and cultural infrastructure in place-based or locally-specific emergency or disaster responses inform more effective, people-centred policy at regional and national levels?

6.5 Work-planning will centre on the programme of work and analysis agreed at the outset of the fellowship. Fellows will work as part of the Climate Society and International team and will be embedded within GO-Science. The Fellow will be based in one of the GO-Science office locations which include Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Darlington, Edinburgh, London, and Salford. This can be discussed with the Fellow.

6.6 Flexible working arrangements will be supported. Support and supervision will be provided by a dedicated line manager, and Fellows will also receive support from other analysts and researchers, work closely with relevant policy teams (attending team meetings, for example) and be encouraged to work with wider stakeholders. The Fellow will be expected to reserve some time for responsive and demand-led analysis.

For security reasons, successful applicants will have to be security cleared before the final arrangements for a Fellowship can be confirmed. The Fellow will be required to receive security clearance at the Baseline Personnel Security Standard. If any candidate is based in London, they will also have to obtain Counter Terrorist Check (CTC) clearance. There are no nationality requirements. Please see [National security vetting: clearance levels](#) for more information.