

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Stepping Out: An Evaluation of the ESRC Public Policy Fellows 2021

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the project's purpose?

This research project aims to evaluate the first phase of the ESRC Public Policy Fellowships to generate knowledge, evidence, and insight about effective collaboration across the research-policy nexus which can then be used to inform the design and delivery of future mobility-focused knowledge exchange initiatives. The project will run from October 2023 to May 2024.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been invited to take part in the research as you were involved in the first phase of the scheme as either a fellow or a member of staff at a host department. The research aims to recruit up to thirty participants to interview. Alongside this, all fellows and hosts involved in the 2021 fellowships will be invited to take part in an online survey.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. You will still be able to withdraw from the research any time before the interview, and for a week after the interview. You do not have to give a reason. If you wish to withdraw from the research, please contact Research Associate, Jessica Benson-Egginton (j.benson-egginton@sheffield.ac.uk). Please note that by choosing to participate in this research, this will not create a legally binding agreement, nor is it intended to create an employment relationship between you and the University of Sheffield.

What will happen to me if I take part? What do I have to do?

If you decide to participate in the research, you will be contacted to arrange a time and date to take part in a single, semi-structured, virtual interview. The interview will be carried out online using Google Meet and last up to one hour. The interview will be conducted one-to-one with Research Associate, Jessica Benson-Egginton. To facilitate analysis, the interview will be automatically transcribed using the platform's built-in functions and audio recorded using a separate recording device or native app. The recording will be used only for the purposes of manually improving the transcript and will not be shared outside of the project team. The transcript will be analysed, and this analysis will be used to write up the research into a final report. Findings may also be shared in other formats, for example academic publications, conference presentations, and blog posts.

The interview will ask you about your experiences of, and perspectives on, the fellowships. Questions will address topics including: expectations entering into the scheme and the extent to which these were met; the main challenges experienced and how these were overcome; how fellows were embedded within hosts and ways this may be improved; experiences of the three-phase structure of the fellowships and ways this might be adapted; the adequacy of approaches to recruitment, training and support and ways these might be improved; impact of the scheme on fellows' professional development, skills and understanding; impact of the scheme on hosts' development and understanding; legacy effects arising from the initiative.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

The possibility of this research disadvantaging or causing a risk to participants is considered to be low. However, while a number of steps will be taken to protect your identity, given the size and nature of the project there is always a small chance that participants could be recognisable to someone who knows them. However, to counter this, participants will be given final approval of any direct questions.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will improve future iterations of this fellowship scheme as well as informing the design and delivery of other UKRI investments in boundary-spanning activities to facilitate knowledge exchange.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research (including interview recordings and transcripts created from these) will be kept strictly confidential and will only be accessible to members of the research team. To protect your identity, a pseudonym will be used instead of your real name and details which may identify you (e.g. specific names of organisations and places) will also be pseudonymised or generalised. Identifiable data needed to administer your participation in the research will be stored separately to data collected through the interviews, in a password protected file. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications unless you have given your explicit consent for this. Where use of a direct quote could identify you indirectly, we will ask your permission to include the quote.

What is the legal basis for processing my personal data?

According to data protection legislation, we are required to inform you that the legal basis we are applying in order to process your personal data is that 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest' (Article 6(1)(e)). Further information can be found in the University's Privacy Notice <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>.'

What will happen to the data collected, and the results of the research project?

Interview recordings and pseudonymised transcripts will be stored on secure university file storage and only accessible to the research team. Identifiable data needed to administer your participant in the research will be stored separately to data collected through the interviews, in a password protected file.

The results of the research will initially be published as a report, and this will be shared with participants. Findings may also be presented in other formats, such as journal articles, conference presentations, or blog posts.

Interview recordings and identifiable data used to administer the project will be destroyed within 12 months of the project start (i.e. by end of October 2024). Pseudonymised interview transcripts and consent forms will be destroyed within 24 months.

Who is organising and funding the research?

This research has received funding from the Economic and Social Research Council.

Who is the Data Controller?

The University of Sheffield will act as the Data Controller for this study. This means that the University is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by the Politics and International Relations Department.

What if something goes wrong and I wish to complain about the research or report a concern or incident?

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of the research and wish to make a complaint, please contact Professor Mathew Flinders (m.flinders@sheffield.ac.uk) in the first instance. If you feel your complaint has not been handled in a satisfactory way you can contact the Head of the Department of Politics and International Relations, Professor Charlotte Burns (charlotte.burns@sheffield.ac.uk). If the complaint relates to how your personal data has been handled, you can find information about how to raise a complaint in the University's Privacy Notice:

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>.

If you wish to make a report of a concern or incident relating to potential exploitation, abuse or harm resulting from your involvement in this project, please contact the project's Designated Safeguarding Contact Professor Matthew Flinders (m.flinders@sheffield.ac.uk). If the concern or incident relates to the Designated Safeguarding Contact, or if you feel a report you have made to this Contact has not been handled in a satisfactory way, please contact the Head of the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Sheffield, Professor Charlotte Burns (charlotte.burns@sheffield.ac.uk) and/or the University's Research Ethics & Integrity Manager (Lindsay Unwin; l.v.unwin@sheffield.ac.uk).

Contact for further information

For more information about the project, please feel free to contact a member of the research team:

- Jessica Benson-Egglenton, Research Associate, j.benson-egglenton@sheffield.ac.uk, Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Sheffield, Modular Teaching Village, Northumberland Road, Sheffield, S10 1AJ.
- Matthew Flinders, Professor of Politics, m.flinders@sheffield.ac.uk, Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Sheffield, Modular Teaching Village, Northumberland Road, Sheffield, S10 1AJ.

Participants will be given a copy of this information sheet and a signed copy of the consent form to keep. Thank you for taking part in the project.