

UKRI fellowships 2026

Fellowship title: Economic modelling to support effective prevention

Fellowship type: What Works Innovation Fellowship

Host organisation: College of Policing – What Works Centre for Crime Reduction (WWCCR)

Host team: Research Analysis and Knowledge Sharing Team

Summary: The fellow will lead a programme of work delivering economic modelling on interventions designed to prevent domestic abuse perpetration, enabling evidence-informed decisions on when and where to invest for maximum impact. As well as contributing to the What Works Centre for Crime Reduction's work on VAWG, the fellow will play a major role in WWCCR's contribution to the National What Works Programme to tackle VAWG, coordinated by the Cabinet Office and UK Research and Innovation.

Policy topic: Safer Streets – Reducing Violence Against Women and Girls

Academic discipline/s: Economics, econometrics, decision sciences, public policy, criminology, data science/statistics

Research career stage: Open to all career stages

Fellowship structure

Inception phase:

Estimated start date: 4 January 2027

Duration: 3 months

FTE: 0.4 FTE

Main placement phase:

Duration: 12 months

FTE: 0.6-1 FTE

Knowledge exchange phase:

Duration: 3 months

FTE: 0.4 FTE

Work arrangements

Location requirements: Our offices are at Ryton CV8 3EN, Durham DL15 8DS or, London E14 4PU.

Hybrid working: Full-time College of Policing What Work's Centre for Crime Reduction staff can be based at sites in any of Ryton CV8 3EN, Durham DL15 8DS or, London E14 4PU, or could have a homeworking role. Hybrid working opportunities can be discussed. Please note, some travel within the UK will be required. The fellow will be placed in our Research, Analysis and Knowledge Sharing team. Alternate arrangements are possible and can be discussed with the Fellow.

Security clearance: NPPV2 and CTC will be required. *Please note, these checks can take up to 10 weeks.*

Fellowship Description

Background and purpose: The College is developing a Digital Life Course Tool (DLCT) to organise and visualise "what works" evidence across the life course. The VAWG thematic strand focuses on preventing domestic abuse perpetration. This fellowship will deliver the economic modelling needed to cost and estimate the returns on investment (ROI) of domestic abuse perpetrator-focused interventions and to show how ROI varies depending on when, in the life course, an intervention takes effect.

Objectives: (1) Build a transparent, reusable ROI modelling framework aligned to HM Treasury Green Book. (2) Estimate costs and benefits (criminal justice, health, social care, productivity, and victim costs) for priority interventions at primary, secondary and tertiary prevention stages. (3) Quantify how ROI varies by age/stage and risk profile. (4) Produce uncertainty, sensitivity and scenario analyses suitable for policy decisions. (5) Integrate model outputs with the VAWG DLCT for use by analysts and decision-makers.

Key research questions: (a) What are the costs and benefits of leading interventions aimed at preventing domestic abuse perpetration? (b) How do returns change when interventions occur at different points in the life course? (c) What is the expected payback period and distribution of benefits across sectors? (d) How sensitive are results to assumptions about effectiveness, take-up, decay, and unit costs?

Approach and methods: The precise methodology and approach will be developed by the fellow themselves but likely stages could involve (i) estimating the costs of the prevention interventions identified; (ii) identifying and mapping the potential benefits that the interventions might deliver, considering both short term, medium and longer term benefits and where in the system both the costs and the benefits accrue; (iii) developing an approach to monetising those benefits – grounding in existing data sources wherever possible; (vi) documenting methods and assumptions for replication.

Data sources: Administrative data from policing and partners (subject to approvals); published evaluation evidence; official cost estimates (e.g., criminal justice, health and social care unit costs); and parameters elicited transparently from experts where evidence is limited. Data governance will comply with College and UKRI policies.

Core outputs: These will be determined by the methodology and approach taken but are likely to include (1) A technical ROI model; (2) an analyst-facing methods note and coded repository; (3) a decision-maker briefing with clear investment scenarios and “best buys”; (4) datasets and visualisations formatted for the DLCT; (5) a knowledge exchange plan and dissemination materials.

Benefits to host and policy impact: The work will provide an evidence-based economic case for investing in domestic abuse perpetrator prevention at the right time and in the right settings, supporting HMT bids, local commissioning, and cross-government VAWG priorities. The modelling framework will be extendable to other crime types.

The Fellow will also be supported to spend dedicated time participating in the development of a national What Works Programme to tackle violence against women and girls, for example through collaborative activities with the wider What Works Innovation Fellowship cohort, the Cabinet Office Evaluation Task Force, and the UKRI R&D Missions Accelerator Programme’s VAWG Challenge.

Person Specification

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

Essential Criteria:

- Academic background in economics, econometrics, decision sciences, data science/statistics or a closely related quantitative discipline.
- Demonstrable experience/proficiency in economic evaluation and modelling (cost-effectiveness/benefit, ROI, decision-analytic modelling)
- Understanding of the evidence base relating to domestic abuse/VAWG evidence and the UK public sector context (policing, health, social care)
- Familiarity with HM Treasury Green Book, Magenta Book, and What Works standards for evidence
- Excellent communication skills, including report writing/presentation skills and translating technical results into concise briefings for non-technical audiences
- A commitment to, and interest in, the aims of the College of Policing’s What Works Centre for Crime Reduction/What Works Network
- Ability to act on own initiative, with agility and flexibility
- Willingness to collaborate as part of a high-functioning team
- Ability to engage effectively and credibly with a range of stakeholders – both internal and external
- Experience leading, or contributing to, knowledge exchange activities

Shortlisted applicants will also be assessed at the host led interview selection process against the following desirable opportunity-specific requirements.

Desirable Criteria:

- Experience building decision-analytic models (e.g. decision trees, Markov, microsimulation) with uncertainty analysis
- Experience working with administrative data and data governance in the public sector
- Experience of quasi-experimental/causal inference methods to estimate intervention effects

- Experience conducting systematic reviews/evidence synthesis for economic parameters
- Experience producing dashboards/interactive visualisations for decision support
- Awareness of EDI considerations and the ethics of modelling in VAWG contexts
- Experience engaging with policymakers and practitioners to disseminate (e.g., randomised controlled trials, quasi-experimental designs) and/or implementation and process evaluations
- Experience of primary research and the appropriate design and selection of methodologies when conducting evidence generation activities