

Job description

Job title:	Research Fellow
Accountable to:	Senior Fellow
Salary:	£41,290 per annum plus excellent benefits
Contract type:	9-month Fixed-Term Maternity Cover Contract Secondments are welcome
Hours per week:	7.5 hours per week (core office hours are 9:00am – 5:30pm Monday to Friday)

The Health Foundation

We are an independent charity committed to bringing about better health and health care for people in the UK.

Our aim is a healthier population, supported by high quality health care that can be equitably accessed. We learn what works to make people's lives healthier and improve the health care system. From giving grants to those working at the front line to carrying out research and policy analysis, we shine a light on how to make successful change happen.

We make links between the knowledge we gain from working with those delivering health and health care and our research and analysis. Our aspiration is to create a virtuous circle, using what we know works on the ground to inform effective policymaking and vice versa.

We believe good health and health care are key to a flourishing society. Through sharing what we learn, collaborating with others and building people's skills and knowledge, we aim to make a difference and contribute to a healthier population.

The policy team

The aim of the team is to support more evidence-informed policies on health and social care in the UK, contributing to better population health. We do this by analysing, understanding, and informing national policies on health and care, with a particular focus on the overall direction of the health system and how it is performing. This includes work on national policy

changes and priorities in health and social care (such as collaboration between the NHS and local government, or reforming adult social care services), tracking indicators on health care quality and outcomes, international comparisons, and several other areas. We focus primarily on public policy—that is, health policies made by government or elsewhere in the public sector. And we try to analyse health policy in its political context.

We do this through a mix of approaches, including:

- Generating high quality research and analysis to understand how national policies impact on health and care in the UK, through in-house and commissioned work
- Making sense of and synthesising existing evidence to identify implications for policy
- Providing an independent voice on the direction of national health policy in the UK—including through responsive work and commentary in the media
- Convening policymakers around relevant evidence, analysis, and questions for the future.

Purpose of the role

The research fellow will contribute to all aspects of the policy team’s work, from fast-moving reactive work to longer-term policy analysis and research. The fellow will also help scope and develop ideas for externally commissioned research. Current projects that the research fellow would work on involve analysis of national COVID-19 policies on social care, and research into health care system approaches to addressing social and economic needs.

The research fellow will have experience of carrying out policy analysis and using qualitative or mixed methods to help understand health and social care policy developments. This might include synthesizing qualitative and quantitative research evidence, analysing various policy documents, grey literature, and official reports related to a particular policy area, or carrying out in-depth interviews and coding qualitative data (such as interview transcripts or policy documents). The fellow will write and contribute to external publications, including briefings, blogs, and longer reports. Everybody in the policy team contributes to our written work—so the ability to write with clarity about complex issues is essential.

The policy team, along with colleagues in other Health Foundation teams, also aims to make sense of the overarching direction of health policy in England. The research fellow needs to have good knowledge and curiosity about wider public policy, including how government departments and regulators work, the small ‘p’ politics of actors in the health policy world—the professions, third sector, patients, and a keen eye for developments in politics.

The policy team works closely with other teams in the Health Foundation—for example, with those carrying out more in-depth quantitative analysis—on projects and to exchange ideas. The research fellow must therefore be able to work collaboratively, and value the mix of methods and approaches that are needed to produce effective policy analysis.

The policy team also works closely with the Health Foundation’s communications team, including to respond and react to new policy developments or government announcements. The research fellow will play an important role in supporting this responsive work, such as identifying relevant data or other material to help inform our media statements. They will also play a role in scanning policy developments and identifying areas for responsive work.

Key tasks and responsibilities

1. Assist with a range of high-profile projects across health policy, including the planning, and development of projects, and helping with analysis, writing and publication.
2. Conduct literature reviews and rapid scans of a range of different kinds of evidence and produce summaries of the main findings and implications for policy.
3. Assist with all written output, including research reports for publication by the Health Foundation and external journals, contributing to press releases and consultations, and internal briefings, and other relevant outputs to communicate the findings of our work.
4. Help build and maintain relationships with external stakeholders relevant to our policy portfolio, including academic and NHS policy communities.
5. Assist with the communication of the findings of our work to a range of audiences, including policymakers, academics and the media.
6. Taking advantage of learning opportunities available to employees of the Health Foundation and undertaking all mandatory training as required.
7. Committing to and demonstrating the Health Foundation's key behaviours: Working Together, Achieving Impact and Discovering & Learning.

Wider contribution

As with other staff at the Foundation, the postholder will be expected to contribute to corporate activities and initiatives, such as staff meetings, cross-Foundation leadership and development programmes and other corporate projects as necessary. The postholder will similarly be expected to play a role in supporting and helping to develop the Policy team to enable it to improve its effectiveness.

The post holder will at all times aim to embed our key behaviours - Working together, Achieving impact, Discovering and learning – in all aspects of their day to day delivery in the role.

Person specification

	Criteria	Essential (E) / Desirable (D)
Behaviour	Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion - An understanding of, and commitment to, equal opportunities and diversity.	E
Behaviour	Working together - Experience of (externally or within a single organisation) working on projects in collaboration with a larger team, able to work independently, but also take direction from others.	E
Behaviour	Achieving impact - Evidence of being able to produce high quality written work, for a range of audiences.	E
Behaviour	Discovering and Learning – Good facilitation, networking and project management skills.	E
Education	A first degree in a subject relevant to health policy.	E
Education	A higher research degree (or similar) is highly desirable.	D
Experience / Skills and abilities	Excellent analytical skills and experience of analysing health policy and a good understanding of qualitative and quantitative research methods.	E
Experience	Experience of producing work for print and broadcast media is desirable.	D
Knowledge	Knowledge and understanding of health policy in the UK, including reforms related to service integration and prevention.	E
Knowledge	A good understanding of the politics of health reform – party politics, politics among key stakeholders, and the role of the media is particularly desirable.	D
Skills and abilities	Experience and understanding of how to present and communicate complex issues in health policy to a variety of audiences including to the most senior policymakers.	E
Skills and abilities	Excellent communications skills (in addition to writing), including public speaking, chairing and interviews with broadcast and press media.	E