

## **PERSON SPECIFICATION: PARLIAMENTARY THEMATIC RESEARCH LEAD ON CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**13 June 2022**

**To be hosted by POST's Knowledge Exchange Unit, and embedded in the pilot Climate and Environment parliamentary thematic policy hub**

Deadline for submission of application: 11:55pm, Monday 1 August 2022

Apply for the position of Thematic Research Lead on Climate and Environment:

<https://www.parliament.uk/thematic-research-leads>

### **1. About Parliamentary Thematic Research Leads**

For nearly ten years, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) has collaborated with Parliament by investing in the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST). Through the collaboration, the partners have embedded social science research in Parliament, developed a world-leading Knowledge Exchange Unit, and established a culture of knowledge exchange between Parliament and the research community.

Building on the successes of the past decade, POST is now entering into a new phase of collaboration with ESRC that seeks to bring about a step change in the way research feeds into Parliament's scrutiny, legislation and debate.

This autumn, pilot thematic policy hubs will be created to bring together experts from select committees, House of Commons Library staff and POST. These hubs will allow parliamentary staff to share and develop expertise to inform scrutiny, legislation and debate that addresses key economic and societal challenges.

POST and ESRC will pilot the creation of a network of Thematic Research Leads (TRLs) in support of this work.

TRLs will be mid-career researchers embedded part-time in the hubs, bringing their academic expertise and experience of working with research evidence to the policy, research and analysis work that is carried out across Parliament.

These positions, if proven, may ultimately become highly influential and prestigious roles at the heart of Parliament, somewhat akin to the Government's Chief Scientific Advisers, but shaped for a parliamentary context.

The TRLs that POST and ESRC will appoint as part of this pilot will help to shape the development of this new approach to evidence engagement in Parliament. They will help to ensure that:

- thematic policy hubs take a strategic, forward-looking, evidence-informed approach to engaging with policy areas

- the best available research evidence feeds into the committees, libraries and POST
- networks and connections between Parliament and the wider research community are strengthened

TRLs will be mid-career researchers who conduct the role of TRL part-time: three days a week (0.6FTE), whilst retaining their substantive academic post the remaining two days a week.

POST and ESRC will launch this pilot at the end of 2022, with three TRLs appointed to join pilot policy hubs in Parliament in the following areas:

- Climate and Environment
- International Affairs and Defence
- Parliament, Public Administration and Constitution.

Funding for the TRL positions will be provided by ESRC.

Throughout 2023, these three TRLs will establish ways of working and inform the future development of these roles and the policy hubs.

You can [find more information on Thematic Research Leads here](#).

## 2. Guidance information

Please read this Parliamentary Thematic Research Lead Person Specification alongside the [Guidance Notes for Applicants](#), which gives information on:

- Key dates
- Eligibility and security clearance
- Funding
- How to apply
- Assessment and selection process
- Our values
- Reasonable adjustments and workplace adjustments
- Ethics approval
- Thematic Research Lead status
- Terms and conditions
- Contacts and sources of further information

## 3. Role of the Thematic Research Lead

The purpose of the Parliamentary Thematic Research Lead on Climate and Environment is to explore and assess the extent to which this role can bring the research perspective to the work carried out by select committees, libraries and POST in this area, through being embedded in the pilot thematic policy hub.

The list below is intended to give an idea of some of the topics likely to come up in the work done by members of the thematic policy hub on climate and environment. Please note, the Thematic Research Lead on Climate and Environment is **not expected** to have an in-depth knowledge of all these policy areas:

- Biodiversity, ecosystems, fisheries, marine environment, conservation, environmental protection, nature loss, agriculture
- Environment policy, water, climate change, emissions trading, decarbonisation, net zero, green economy, circular economy, sustainable development, energy security
- Sustainability of the built environment, sustainable housing, transport, rail decarbonisation and active travel

Within the hub, the Thematic Research Lead will work closely alongside the hub leader(s) (appointed parliamentary staff) to:

- Provide impartial and independent specific policy support to staff in the hub
- Lead horizon scanning and futures work, in collaboration with POST. This will feed into committee, POST and library work
- Support the Commons library, POST and relevant committees to take a strategic approach to planning their work programmes, including supporting development of committee Areas of Research Interest
- Proactively identify upcoming needs for Parliamentary Academic Fellowships
- Identify opportunities for coproduction of briefings between academics and members of hubs, including briefings by academics from key policy-focused ESRC and wider UKRI investments
- Expand and bring in their existing networks (including from research, learned societies, industry) to support parliamentary activities
- Liaise with ESRC and UKRI to increase visibility and accessibility of ESRC and UKRI, therein enabling increased parliamentary impact of ESRC and UKRI investments
- Share insights from Parliament back to ESRC and UKRI, and identify opportunities for Parliament to be better engaged with research funders, as well as with the broader higher education landscape
- Liaise with those in the Government Chief Scientific Adviser Network team – including Deputy Chief Scientific Advisers or officials – as relevant, to support exchange of information and insights across the Thematic Research Leads and CSA Networks.
- Provide support in hubs with identifying the skills and experience needs of members of the hub and help identify development and training opportunities
- Identify opportunities for secondments, placements or people-exchanges both into and out of Parliament

Beyond the hub, the Thematic Research Lead will meet with the other Thematic Research Leads to:

- Identify cross-cutting opportunities or issues and develop strategic responses
- Share information, learning, insights and best practice

As part of their role, Thematic Research Leads will contribute their learning, insights and ways of working to the development of further hubs, and the work of Thematic Research Leads across Parliament.

#### 4. What you will get out of this opportunity

These positions, if proven, may ultimately become highly influential and prestigious roles at the heart of Parliament, somewhat akin to the Government's Chief Scientific Advisers, but shaped for a parliamentary context.

The role presents a unique opportunity for you to shape the development of this position and to work closely with policy, research and analysis staff from across the organisation. It offers an exciting opportunity for you to see first-hand how research feeds into policy, through shaping parliamentary work with your research expertise and participating in core parliamentary processes.

You will be uniquely placed to build connections with parliamentary and government stakeholders to take forward through your career. Participation will provide you with rich and varied experiences to support you on an upward professional trajectory.

#### 5. Expected timeline and working arrangements

- Applications open on Monday 13th June, and close on Monday 1 August, 23:55pm.
- Interviews are expected to take place in early September.
- Onboarding will take place in the last part of 2022, and Thematic Research Leads will take up their substantive, part-time positions from January 2023.

We welcome flexible working to deliver this 0.6FTE role. The expectation would be that the Thematic Research Lead would attend Westminster at least one or two days a month, working most of the time remotely. However, we welcome discussions about this at interview.

You should propose and discuss your working pattern at interview.

We welcome applications from everyone regardless of their ethnicity, race, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, age, marital status or whether or not they have a disability.

#### 6. Skills and experience

We will be appointing Thematic Research Leads using the criteria below. When you respond to the questions on the application form, please demonstrate how you meet these criteria.

##### **Criterion 1: academic expertise**

An established national reputation in your discipline. Broad knowledge of the work and experts in climate and environment to enable you to engage widely with the research community, as well as knowledge of the policy landscape in relation to the broad discipline area.

##### **Criterion 2: ability to acquire and communicate new knowledge**

The ability to quickly get up to speed on areas outside of your specialism and make these understandable for non-specialist audiences, maintaining impartiality at all times. An ability to develop knowledge of research council priorities and investments, including across UKRI.

##### **Criterion 3: communication skills**

Excellent written and oral communication skills, with the ability to synthesise large amounts of information and present it accessibly and impartially to non-specialist audiences. Excellent knowledge exchange skills, or the clear potential to rapidly develop them.

**Criterion 4: Working with others**

Ability to liaise and collaborate impartially with diverse stakeholders at different levels of seniority. Confidence to work independently, coupled with an inclusive approach and demonstrable team player attributes.

**Criterion 5: approach to work**

Ability to work at speed, to tight deadlines, as well as to adapt to changing priorities. Demonstrable experience of working on multiple projects in parallel, with diverse stakeholder groups. Confidence to take initiative and contribute to designing and realising innovative activities.

**7. Contact**

For a confidential, informal conversation about the role, please email Dr Sarah Foxen, Knowledge Exchange Lead, on the Knowledge Exchange Unit's address: [keu@parliament.uk](mailto:keu@parliament.uk)