



SGSSS-SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT INTERNSHIP SCHEME PROJECTS STARTING SEPTEMBER 2026

The Scottish Government is the devolved government for Scotland and has a range of responsibilities that include: the economy, education, health, justice, rural affairs, housing, environment, equal opportunities, consumer advocacy and advice, transport and taxation.

Government social science research aims to provide high quality evidence and advice for Ministers and Scottish Government officials to inform policy development, implementation and evaluation. Analysts in government help generate new ideas and open debate, challenge assumptions, beliefs and attitudes, test policy ideas and develop a deeper understanding of issues as they affect Scotland.

The core functions of researchers in government include:

- the interpretation of evidence and the provision of research based advice
- engaging with the academic and wider research community to bring expert knowledge into the policy making process
- commissioning external research projects
- undertaking research such as reviews of the existing evidence base
- disseminating research findings and encouraging their wider use

There are internships available with social research, economist, statistician or mixed teams. Which all tend to work alongside each other in 'Analytical Services Divisions' in the Scottish Government.

The Office of the Chief Researcher (OCR) in the Scottish Government is responsible for central co-ordination of this internship scheme.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND HOW TO APPLY

What is an Internship?

An internship is a non-salaried work placement. The Scottish Graduate School of Social Science (SGSSS)-Scottish Government Internship Programme gives current SGSSS students (all students registered for a PhD degree in Scotland, however funded) the opportunity to apply to undertake an internship within an external organisation as a part of their studies. An extension of students stipend is awarded during the length of placement. The placement offers a voluntary opportunity for students to develop themselves in ways not offered by their PhD.

Intern projects are stand-alone, exploratory pieces of work that are specifically developed for the student. We offer ongoing support and mentoring to students; as well as membership of a cohort network during their placement and tailored events, students can gain transferrable skills and use their experience gained on application forms for future jobs. These placements offer the opportunity to gain knowledge of a sector and expand professional networks as well as a chance to decide if a career in applied research at the Scottish Government is a career they'd wish to pursue.

We strongly encourage students to apply to a project out-with their current field of study, which is consistent with the SGSSS placement policy. We feel this gives a better indication of how social researchers work in the Scottish Government. SG recruit their researchers to be placed within any policy area: it is their expert research skills rather than their subject expertise that is assessed on entry. Once recruited, SG researchers are encouraged to rotate to different policy area's every 2-3 years to help develop a wide range of knowledge and experience. As a result interns will get the most authentic experience of being a researcher in government if they are placed within a project out-with their current field. Feedback from interns also suggests that having a complete break away from the PhD topic area helped them to get the most from the internship and gave them a renewed energy when returning to their studies after the internship concluded.

Working arrangements

Internships can be on a full-time or part-time working basis for **three months** (13 weeks) or longer if a part-time student (up to 26 weeks). The available working hour arrangements will be highlighted in each project. A monthly stipend equivalent to the ESRC standard maintenance stipend will be paid to students on internships.

All internships will be based in core Scottish Government Directorates or their agencies we hope that most roles will be able to offer hybrid working with some "in office" days throughout the internship, projects with this flexibility will be highlighted. **Please note** that whilst some internships may be advertised as remote working only, we require that all interns for any roles are living within the UK for the full duration of their internship.

Please see the SGSSS Internships FAQs and Travel and Expenses Policy for information on travel and accommodation reimbursement.

Successful applicants and their University supervisor/HEI leads will be asked to sign an agreement document prior to commencing their internship, covering administrative details such as procedures for annual leave, etc.

Eligibility

All SGSSS postgraduate students registered for a PhD in Scotland (however funded) are invited to apply for the projects described below provided they:

- meet civil service nationality criteria (see below for further details);
- have the right to work in the UK
- are undertaking their PhD in a social science discipline*;
- are in the second or third year of their PhD;

*Please check the SGSSS website for [Pathway information](#) which specifies the disciplines we cover. Students studying on health pathway can apply even if funded by MRC/CSO as health is one of our interdisciplinary pathways

If successful all students (except international students holding a Student Visa) will take an interruption of studies so that they are not eligible for fees during the internship. Please note that students holding a Student Visa can only undertake a placement part-time alongside full-time study due to UK visa regulations. Research supervisors need to give permission for

students to apply for these opportunities. Successful applicants will receive the equivalent of a standard ESRC maintenance stipend for the three months (or part time equivalent) while on internship

All provisionally selected candidates will be required to undergo pre-employment checks as a condition of taking up the Internship. This requires having a valid Disclosure Certificate. Obtaining a Disclosure Certificate can take several weeks. Successful candidates should apply for a certificate as soon as possible. The cost of a certificate can later be claimed back via the SG Internship Scheme Manager once you commence your placement.

In order to work for the civil service, including as part of an internship, an individual must meet **nationality criteria** set out in the Civil Service Nationality Rules. Detailed guidance is available on the Civil Service web pages at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nationality-rules>. All applicants must ensure that they can meet these criteria in order to be eligible to undertake internships with the Scottish Government. Please clearly state your nationality/dual nationality on the application form.

Unfortunately, due to the nature of the scheme and UKBA regulations, students on Tier 2 visa are not eligible to apply for internships.

How to apply

Applicants should submit via an **online application** available on the SGSSS website by the deadline set by SGSSS

Applicants are free to apply **for up to four preferred project choices** with the Scottish Government, and it is helpful to rank them in order of preference. Students may also apply for inclusion in a **'pool'** if they wish to be considered for other unfilled advertised projects or others which may later arise in any area of the Scottish Government, to maximise chances of obtaining an internship. Including as much information as possible about their social science skills set will help to match those students unsuccessful with their initial choices with possible alternative placements.

You should clearly indicate whether the application is for a specific project and/or for inclusion in the general pool. Although you can apply for more than one internship, candidates can only undertake one internship. Past SGSSS interns may still be eligible to undertake a further internship.

Students are encouraged to carefully consider the information requested in the application form and pay particular attention to setting out their expertise in particular research methods to address the desired skills listed. Applicants are usually not required to have academic experience in the policy area of the internship unless specified in the project description. As stated above, SGSSS strongly encourages students to choose opportunities to work *outside* the area of their PhD topic in order to gain wider experience.

Selection process

Interns will be selected on the basis of their written application. An informal telephone discussion with applicants may also be held before final allocation of internships. It can take some time to place applicants so we may not be in touch for approximately 6 weeks after the deadline. SGSSS will inform of unsuccessful applications and if successful the Scottish Government host will contact you to offer you a place and/or to seek further information from you. If you have not heard back from us within 6 weeks of the deadline then please contact Alana Devlin on the email below.

Additional information

The Scottish Government Internship Scheme Manager is Alana Devlin, Office of the Chief Researcher, email Socialresearchinterns@gov.scot and the SGSSS contact can be contacted via email on team@sgsss.ac.uk

For more information about analytical services in the Scottish Government see:

- <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Economy>
- <https://www.gov.scot/statistics-and-research/>
- <https://www.gov.scot/publications/about-social-research/>

See also the UK Government sites for the analytical professions: [Government Economic Service](#), [Government Statistical Service](#) and [Government Social Research](#).

Reporting Requirements

Once the internship has finished, students are required to submit to the SGSSS (within 8 weeks) an End of Internship Report outlining the project in which they were involved and providing feedback on their experience of working in the Scottish Government. We also expect that interns are willing to take up opportunities to speak to other students about their experience e.g. at the SGSSS Summer School

THE INTERNSHIPS

There are 13 advertised internship projects available, in addition to the 'pool'. See table below. **Please note some projects may slightly change in scope from what is listed below, but any changes will be communicated to the student as early as possible**

No	Host Area	Internship Title	Contact
	Any	Analyst Pool	Alana.Devlin@gov.scot
1	Learning	R24-01 Monitoring support for children and young people regarding their rights	dafni.dima@gov.scot
2	Directorate for Chief Medical Officer	R24-02 Professional motivation for, and understanding of delivering value-based health and care in Scotland's health and care system	silvia.soriano-rivera@gov.scot / Craig.bell@gov.scot
3	Safer Communities	R24-03 Pathways into Perpetration of Technology Facilitated Violence Against Women and Girls	tamsyn.wilson@gov.scot / kim.barker@gov.scot
4	Children and Families Directorate	R24-04 Equity in the Early Days: A Review of Targeted Breastfeeding Support in Pregnancy and Early Postnatal Life	Lee.Urquhart@gov.scot
5	Tackling Child Poverty and Social Justice	R24-05 Supporting analytical work to reduce and prevent child poverty in Scotland	Kathryn.Ray@gov.scot
6	Chief Medical Officer Directorate	R24-06 Identifying and tackling unwarranted variation in support of Value Based Health and Care - understanding the perspectives of health and social care professionals	silvia.soriano-rivera@gov.scot / Craig.bell@gov.scot
7	Local Government	R24-07 Homes, Taxes and Choices: What the evidence tells us about Property Tax and Housing Behaviour	evelyn.bowes@gov.scot
8	Local Government	R24-08 Reforming Council Tax: International Lessons on Property Tax Discounts and Exemptions	evelyn.bowes@gov.scot
9	Scottish Prison Service	R24-09 Understanding the use of Separation and Reintegration Units in Scottish prisons.	samantha.reekie@prisons.gov.scot
10	Performance and Delivery	R24-10 Improving health services by understanding the drivers of performance	stephen.smith@gov.scot
11	Performance and Delivery	R24-11 Improving the performance and delivery of health services through data analysis	stephen.smith@gov.scot
12	Transport Scotland	R24-12 Creative options for supporting island businesses and consumers	Ewan.Walker@transport.gov.scot
13	Environment and Forestry (EnFor)	R24-13 Evidence and analysis to underpin climate and nature actions on farms and crofts	minna.liinpaa@gov.scot

POOL APPLICATIONS

Internship: Pool Applications

Policy Context:

The Scottish Government is always in the position of having to respond to changing demands and emerging events. As a result it is frequently the case that new opportunities for internships arise between the time when the call for projects closes and the appointment of interns. It is not possible to advertise these opportunities, but as and when they arise we like to be able to place interns into these exciting or fast-moving areas.

This option should also be selected if you would be willing to be placed in any of the advertised projects, should your preferred options not be available.

Project details:

Interns who are prepared to apply for the pool can be offered placements and projects in any area of the Scottish Government for which their skill set is relevant. Some of these may include unfilled projects that have been advertised above in the general advertisement, but others will be new or substantially changed projects where new demands for analysis are only beginning to be identified.

The intern will usually supported by a senior social researcher and/or economic advisor who will help and guide with project planning and management.

There will be opportunities for the intern to present their work within the Scottish Government if desired.

Skills required:

For pool placements we will look to match skills interns have identified with new placement opportunities. It is therefore really important that interns explain what their core skills are – whether those skills are qualitative/quantitative and/or economic or social. On top of that we will always need people who are/have:

- Strong organisational skills and self-motivated
- Excellent communication skills
- Critical thinking/analysis

Timing:

The timing of the internship will be agreed with the successful applicant.

Queries:

SG Analytical Sponsor: co-ordinated by the Office of the Chief Researcher

Enquiries to email: SocialResearchInterns@gov.scot

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Internship title	R24-01 Monitoring support for children and young people regarding their rights
Directorate General	Education and Justice
Directorate	Learning
Division/team	Children and Families Analysis
Primary Location	Edinburgh
SG analytical sponsor name and email	Dafni Dima; email: dafni.dima@gov.scot
Is post flexible (hybrid or remote)?	Hybrid
Full time, part time or both?	Full time
Policy Context	<p>This internship offers the opportunity to work within the Children and Families Wellbeing Research team, a team of social researchers working within the supportive and collegiate Children and Families Analysis Team . The intern will contribute directly to the evidence base that shapes national policy by providing research and analytical input to the Children’s Rights Unit. The Children’s Right Unit leads on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024. This Act aims to deliver a proactive culture of everyday accountability for children’s rights across public authorities in Scotland.</p> <p>A key priority is ensuring that children, young people, and their families feel empowered to raise concerns about their rights with services that can support them in finding resolution. To achieve that, the Scottish Government works closely with third sector organisations, such as those who provide independent provision of legal information and children’s advocacy services, to ensure children and young people have appropriate access to support.</p>
Project details	<p>The main focus of the project is to analyse and report quantitative and qualitative aggregated data gathered through an online survey of third sector organisations. This evidence will provide national level insight into how these organisations support children and young people regarding their rights, including identifying gaps, barriers and successes in the sector. The intern will carry out descriptive quantitative analysis and thematic qualitative analysis and produce a concise report for a policy and stakeholder audience.</p> <p>If capacity allows, the intern will also look to identify and compile relevant information on children and young people’s rights support from other organisations, such as local authorities, law centres and Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to contextualise the third sector findings within this border landscape. The intern may also make recommendations for future data development.</p>

	The project offers the opportunity to work closely with the Children's Right Unit and a highly engaged network of stakeholders. The intern's insights will directly inform policy and practice development on children's rights.
Timing	No restrictions. Timing can be agreed with the intern.
Challenge-Led Pathway (s) this project aligns to	Health, Wellbeing and Communities;Governance and Institutions;Social Inequalities
The expected impacts of this placement	to inform Policy development
The skills the intern will develop throughout the placement	Presentation to policymakers;Presentation to stakeholders;Report for internal audience;Report for external stakeholders
The skills the intern is required to already have to be successful in this placement	Communication and writing skills;Engagement and impact;Skills in working with others;Professional conduct

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Internship title	R24-02 Professional motivation for, and understanding of delivering value-based health and care in Scotland's health and care system
Directorate General	Health and Social Care
Directorate	Directorate for Chief Medical Officer
Division/team	Chief Medical Officer Policy Division / Realistic Medicine Team
Primary Location	Edinburgh
SG analytical sponsor name and email	SG analytical sponsor: Silvia Soriano Rivera / manager of intern: Craig Bell silvia.soriano-rivera@gov.scot / Craig.bell@gov.scot
Is post flexible (hybrid or remote)?	Hybrid
Full time, part time or both?	Full time
Policy Context	Value-Based Health and Care (VBHC), and Realistic Medicine, sit at the heart of Scottish Government policy, aiming to improve health and care outcomes for people while ensuring responsible and sustainable use of collective resources. Despite the good progress being made with supporting professionals to practise Realistic Medicine and deliver value based health and care, there remains more to do. Evidence points to variation in how VBHC is understood, interpreted, and translated into day-to-day practice across the health and care system.
Project details	This qualitative research project will explore how Value Based Health and Care (VBHC) and Realistic Medicine are understood, interpreted and enabled by the multiple professions involved in the planning and delivery of care – not just those who provide care, but all professionals including managers, financial and procurement professionals across Scotland's health and social care system. In

	<p>addition to examining how VBHC is conceptualised, the project will focus on what motivates (or discourages) individuals from delivering value-based care in practice. Attention will be given to how variation in understanding, motivation and perceived constraints shape everyday decision-making, and leadership behaviours.</p> <p>The intern will work within the Scottish Government's Realistic Medicine Policy team, contributing to a wider programme of work aimed at strengthening the practise of Realistic Medicine and delivery of VBHC and across the system. The primary research method will involve semi-structured interviews with senior leaders and health and care professionals (Grade 8a and above) across the NHS and social care in Scotland, reflecting the critical yet under-researched role that this workforce plays in enabling or resisting change. Findings will inform practical recommendations relating to leadership and ways of embedding Realistic medicine and VBHC within existing practice, with the aim of fostering shared understanding and inform the next steps that will further implementation.</p>
Timing	No restrictions.
Challenge-Led Pathway (s) this project aligns to	Governance and Institutions;Health, Wellbeing and Communities;Social Inequalities
The expected impacts of this placement	to inform Policy development;to inform Strategy development
The skills the intern will develop throughout the placement	Presentation to stakeholders;Report for internal audience;Presentation to policymakers;Report for external stakeholders
The skills the intern is required to already have to be successful in this placement	Academic research management skills;Communication and writing skills;Engagement and impact;Professional conduct;Professional management;Skills in working with others

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Internship title	R24-03 Pathways into Perpetration of Technology Facilitated Violence Against Women and Girls
Directorate General	Education and Justice
Directorate	Safer Communities
Division/team	Justice Analysis and Strategy/Justice Analytical Unit
Primary Location	Edinburgh
SG analytical sponsor name and email	Sponsor: Tamsyn Wilson tamsyn.wilson@gov.scot / Manager: Prof. Kim Barker kim.barker@gov.scot
Is post flexible (hybrid or remote)?	Hybrid

Full time, part time or both?	Full time;Part time
Policy Context	<p>The policy context for this internship sits within a rapidly evolving Scottish and international landscape addressing violence against women and girls (VAWG) and tech-facilitated VAWG (TFVAWG), increasingly shaped by digital environments, and technology. In Scotland, the Equally Safe strategy and its delivery plan establish a comprehensive framework for preventing and eradicating VAWG, with a growing recognition that technology-facilitated forms are not peripheral but integral to contemporary patterns of abuse. At the same time, there is heightened concern around the influence of the so-called manosphere and other online ecosystems that normalise misogyny, reinforce harmful gender norms, and may act as pathways into abusive attitudes and behaviours. Despite this, prevention efforts have not fully kept pace with the scale or complexity of these harms, and there remain significant gaps in understanding how individuals—particularly young people—are exposed to and shaped by these online spaces. This creates a pressing need for systematic evidence mapping to inform upstream, preventative policy responses aligned with Scotland’s public health approach to VAWG & TFVAWG.</p> <p>Internationally, emerging standards—particularly from the Council of Europe (CoE), including ongoing work linked to the Istanbul Convention—are sharpening expectations on states to address technology-facilitated VAWG, including through prevention, protection, and accountability measures. These developments intersect with a broader and increasingly consolidated policy focus on children’s online safety, where concerns about exposure to harmful content, algorithmic amplification of misogyny, and cross-platform dynamics are gaining traction across jurisdictions. In Scotland, this convergence creates both an opportunity and a challenge: to integrate TFVAWG more explicitly within existing VAWG frameworks while aligning with wider digital regulation and child protection agendas. However, the evidence base remains fragmented across disciplines and geographies, with limited synthesis of what is known about pathways into TFVAWG and where critical knowledge gaps persist within and beyond Scotland. This internship is therefore situated at the nexus of these policy priorities, supporting more coherent, evidence-informed approaches to prevention and early intervention.</p>
Project details	<p>The aim of this project is to improve our understanding of the data and evidence on, or relevant to, tech-facilitated VAWG and pathways into perpetrating TFVAWG. The project will entail a mapping exercise to provide an understanding of the existing evidence and understandings of evidence in relation to pathways into TFVAWG in Scotland, including, for example, information on identifiable risk factors. The focus will mainly be on publicly available data and academic data / evidence / outputs from within Scotland, but also internationally. It will not involve any statistical analysis of that evidence / data.</p> <p>Key outputs will include producing a spreadsheet to capture relevant sources and information (e.g. the type, quality and characteristics of data/evidence), and a written summary of the</p>

	<p>approach and findings of the review. The intern will be required to not only map the evidence & sources but to also assess them in terms of their strengths, limitations and potential opportunities (e.g. to fill data / knowledge gaps or new data collection). Depending on data/evidence available, there may be the opportunity to produce short policy (evidence) briefings subject to time/capacity.</p> <p>The project will inform future ongoing work in relation to TFVAWG, where the opportunities, gaps and limitations identified will help inform decisions about where evidence on TFVAWG needs to be strengthened.</p> <p>This is an excellent opportunity to work within and across various policy teams in a fast-moving and emerging area, and to gain knowledge of evidence-based policy making in practice. Information about TFVAWG and ongoing work will be provided to help the intern familiarise themselves with the topic before starting the work.</p>
Timing	None
Challenge-Led Pathway (s) this project aligns to	Securities: Justice, Economies and Conflict
The expected impacts of this placement	to inform Policy development
The skills the intern will develop throughout the placement	Presentation to policymakers;Report for internal audience;Presentation to stakeholders
The skills the intern is required to already have to be successful in this placement	Academic research management skills;Communication and writing skills;Engagement and impact;Skills in working with others

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Internship title	R24-04 Equity in the Early Days: A Review of Targeted Breastfeeding Support in Pregnancy and Early Postnatal Life
Directorate General	Education and Justice
Directorate	Children and Families Directorate
Division/team	Early Child Development Division /Maternal and Infant Wellbeing Unit
Primary Location	Edinburgh
SG analytical sponsor name and email	Lee Urquhart : Lee.Urquhart@gov.scot
Is post flexible (hybrid or remote)?	Hybrid
Full time, part time or both?	Part time

Policy Context	This project is a key enabling action within the 5 Year Delivery Plan for the Breastfeeding and Infant Feeding Strategic Framework. Breastfeeding, as a public health intervention, is acknowledged as key foundation to early child development and reducing socio-economic disadvantage associated risk factors such as childhood obesity. This proposal aligns with national commitments to infant and women's health promotion and prevention and informed choice. It aims to address variation in provision and strengthen national approaches to universal proportionate support and progress towards the national stretch aim.
Project details	The intern will engage with NHS Boards, HSCPs and third-sector organisations, which currently receive Scottish Government funding to provide enhanced breastfeeding support (additional to universal support). This would involve a high-level comparison across already established QI projects. The reason this is required is because these projects and pathways of support operate on slightly different models. The purpose of the high-level comparison would be to map out key timelines of support within these models, as well as how the support is provided. This would also include articulating differences, as well as similarities, in particular any "core" aspects within these models of support, making reference to impact, where relevant.
Timing	No
Challenge-Led Pathway (s) this project aligns to	Health, Wellbeing and Communities; Social Inequalities
The expected impacts of this placement	to inform Policy development; to inform Strategy development
The skills the intern will develop throughout the placement	Presentation to policymakers; Report for internal audience; Report for external stakeholders
The skills the intern is required to already have to be successful in this placement	Communication and writing skills; Skills in working with others; Professional conduct; Engagement and impact

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Internship title	R24-05 Supporting analytical work to reduce and prevent child poverty in Scotland
Directorate General	Communities and External Affairs
Directorate	Tackling Child Poverty and Social Justice
Division/team	Equality and Social Justice Analysis / Child Poverty research
Primary Location	Edinburgh or Glasgow

SG analytical sponsor name and email	Kathryn Ray, Kathryn.Ray@gov.scot
Is post flexible (hybrid or remote)?	Hybrid
Full time, part time or both?	Full time;Part time
Policy Context	<p>Eradicating child poverty is a key priority of the First Minister, and the 2017 Child Poverty Scotland Act (2017), setting legally binding targets to reduce child poverty by 2030, reflects a national commitment to this ambition. The final Delivery Plan under the Act was published this year, setting out specific actions for 2026-27 and areas where further action is needed over the life of the next Parliament, in order to drive progress on reducing child poverty. It emphasises the need for co-ordinated action, nationally and locally, across the third sector, local government, public sector, and the private sector, and includes a set of measures to reshape the system of family support – so that it is more joined-up, easier to navigate, and shaped around what families need.</p> <p>Since 2017, we have built a strong evidence base about what works to reduce child poverty and have published an updated evaluation strategy to help assess progress made, better understand outstanding challenges, and influence future policy decisions. Over the next year, we will be working to develop further understanding of what package of actions is needed, including the appropriate balance between actions with more immediate impact on poverty reduction and actions that support long-term, sustained impacts for families, including on poverty prevention; and a good understanding of how policies and actions interact together to enable or constrain routes out of poverty for different families and in different places.</p>
Project details	<p>The successful intern will work in the Equalities, Poverty and Social Justice Analysis (ESJA) Unit, in the Tackling Child Poverty and Social Justice Directorate. The unit provides statistics, research and economic analysis and advice to policy makers in relation to creating a fairer and more equal society. It comprises a mix of analytical professions (social researchers, economists and statisticians) and works across a range of policy areas (including child poverty, place-based social justice and equalities). Specifically the intern will be based in the Poverty Research team, which is responsible for assessing progress made, and evaluating and informing the approach taken, to reducing and preventing child poverty. The internship opportunity can be based in either our Edinburgh or Glasgow offices.</p> <p>The internship will involve analytical work to support the Evaluation Strategy for the recent Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, by extending the evidence base on the most effective ways to reduce and prevent poverty for families in Scotland and supporting policy teams and ministers in making effective policy choices. The precise nature of the work will depend on the projects in progress at the time the intern joins the team. Potential areas of focus may</p>

	<p>include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scoping work for a 2027 focused report on child poverty and priority families • Analysis of survey data on the intra-household distribution of resources • Contributing to work on improving impact and value for money evaluations of child poverty interventions • Synthesising insights from local evaluations of whole family support • Reviewing Local Child Poverty Action reports to further our understanding of policy interactions and their impacts at the local level
Timing	We anticipate the internship starting in September 2026, but the precise timing will be agreed with the successful applicant.
Challenge-Led Pathway (s) this project aligns to	Social Inequalities;Health, Wellbeing and Communities
The expected impacts of this placement	to inform Policy development
The skills the intern will develop throughout the placement	Publication;Presentation to policymakers
The skills the intern is required to already have to be successful in this placement	Engagement and impact;Communication and writing skills;Professional conduct;Professional management;Skills in working with others

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Internship title	R24-06 Identifying and tackling unwarranted variation in support of Value Based Health and Care - understanding the perspectives of health and social care professionals
Directorate General	Health & Social Care
Directorate	Chief Medical Officer Directorate
Division/team	CMO Policy Division/Realistic Medicine Policy Unit
Primary Location	St Andrew's House, Edinburgh
SG analytical sponsor name and email	Silvia Soriano Rivera / manager of intern (silvia.soriano-rivera@gov.scot): Craig Bell - policy lead (craig.bell@gov.scot)
Is post flexible (hybrid or remote)?	Hybrid
Full time, part time or both?	Full time
Policy Context	Value-Based Health and Care (VBHC) and Realistic Medicine sit at the heart of Scottish Government policy, aiming to improve health and care outcomes for people while ensuring responsible and sustainable use of collective resources. Reducing unwarranted

	<p>variation (defined as differences in healthcare delivery and outcomes that cannot be explained by patient need, illness severity, or informed patient choice) is a core ambition of Realistic Medicine, leading to improved quality, value, and equity in health and social care.</p> <p>Previous work has resulted in the development of tools (the Scottish Atlas of Variation, Demand optimisation tool, National therapeutic Indicators and whole system dashboards) to identify unwarranted variation across a number of clinical pathways, but a recent pilot project and follow-up survey has identified there is minimal engagement with or understanding of the purpose of the SAoV.</p>
Project details	<p>This qualitative research project will explore how health and social care staff currently perceive, identify, and respond to unwarranted variation in healthcare, and how this aligns with the principles of Realistic Medicine. It will focus on learning from staff experience to inform improvement, capability building, and engagement.</p> <p>In addition to examining how unwarranted variation is currently understood, the project will focus on what motivates (or discourages) individuals from identifying and tackling unwarranted variation. Attention will be given to how differences in understanding, motivation and perceived constraints shape everyday decision-making, and behaviours.</p> <p>The objectives of this project will be to investigate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How staff understand the concept of unwarranted variation within their role and service context. • Staff perceptions of how unwarranted variation affects person-centred care, quality, equity, and value. • Existing actions or improvement activities used by staff to address unwarranted variation. • Perceived barriers and enablers to reducing unwarranted variation. <p>The intern will work within the Scottish Government's Realistic Medicine Policy team, contributing to a wider programme of work aimed at strengthening the practise of Realistic Medicine and delivery of VBHC and across the system. The primary research method will involve semi-structured interviews with health and care professionals across the NHS and social care in Scotland, reflecting the critical yet under-researched role that this workforce plays in enabling or resisting change. Findings will inform practical recommendations relating to the development of effective methods for identifying and tacking unwarranted variation in practice.</p>
Timing	No restrictions
Challenge-Led Pathway (s) this project aligns to	Health, Wellbeing and Communities;Social Inequalities;Governance and Institutions
The expected impacts of this placement	to inform Policy development;to inform Strategy development

The skills the intern can develop throughout the placement	Report for internal audience;Presentation to policymakers
The skills the intern is required to already have to be successful in this placement	Communication and writing skills;Engagement and impact;Skills in working with others;Professional conduct

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Internship title	R24-07 Homes, Taxes and Choices: What the evidence tells us about Property Tax and Housing Behaviour
Directorate General	DG Communities and External Affairs
Directorate	Local Government
Division/team	Local Government Analytical Unit / Council Tax Policy Team
Primary Location	Edinburgh
SG analytical sponsor name and email	Evelyn Bowes evelyn.bowes@gov.scot
Working arrangements (hybrid or remote)	Hybrid
Full time, part time or both?	Full time;Part time
Policy Context	<p>Economic theory and international research shows that property taxes can have significant behavioural impacts, affecting housing mobility, market efficiency and investment decisions.</p> <p>However, these impacts depend heavily on tax design and context.</p> <p>The Scottish Government is responsible for the design and operation of Scotland’s devolved residential property taxes, including Council Tax (which is administered by local authorities) and Land and Buildings Transaction Tax (LBTT) (which is administered by Revenue Scotland). These taxes play an important role in supporting public services, local government finance, and wider housing and climate objectives.</p> <p>There is growing interest in understanding how property taxes may influence behaviour across the housing system - including decisions to buy, sell, move, remain in a property, rent long-term, or invest in home improvements.</p> <p>These behavioural responses can affect housing supply and demand, the use of existing housing stock, and the extent to which tax systems support or undermine wider policy goals such as fairness, efficiency and the transition to net zero.</p> <p>The Scottish Government has a broad commitment to learn from</p>

	<p>international practice, which is set out in the Scottish Government's Tax Strategy. By anchoring evidence in Scotland's policy environment, this project will help ensure public discussions and future policy decisions regarding residential property taxation are better informed.</p>
	<p>This internship will contribute to the development of an evidence base on how residential property taxation may influence specific housing-related behaviours. The main focus of the internship will involve a desk-based literature review examining evidence from Scotland, and other countries where relevant. It will also involve working closely with policy colleagues in both the Local Government and Tax Directorates to understand the Scottish context and determine the relevancy of existing literature for policy development.</p> <p>The exact project design and process will be designed with the successful candidate. Key elements are likely to involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An initial search of the existing literature to determine which housing-related behavioural responses are best supported by the existing evidence base • Selection of one or two key behaviours for more detailed examination (for example, household mobility, housing tenure decisions, or investment in property improvements). This will involve discussions with policy officials to determine which are most relevant to the Scottish policy context • Explore how Scotland's residential property taxes (including Council Tax and LBTT) are designed and the behavioural incentives they may create in theory and practice, with particular reference to the selected behaviours. International evidence may be used to illustrate theoretical mechanisms, potential lessons and trade-offs. • Assess the strength and limitations of the available evidence relating to the selected behaviours, clearly identifying where findings are robust, where results are mixed or context-dependent, and where evidence gaps remain. <p>The internship will be situated within the Local Government analytical unit, which is a mixed-analytical professions team and includes economists, social researchers and statisticians. The successful intern will have the opportunity to understand how a wide range of analysis supports policy development and implementation. A report published on the Scottish Government website would be the expected output of this project.</p>
Project details	
Timing	Flexible
Challenge-Led Pathway (s) this project aligns to	Governance and Institutions; Health, Wellbeing and Communities; Social Inequalities
The expected impacts of this placement	to inform Policy development; to inform Strategy development
The skills the intern will develop	Publication; Presentation to policymakers; Report for internal audience

throughout the placement	
The skills the intern is required to already have to be successful in this placement	Academic research management skills;Communication and writing skills;Skills in working with others

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Internship title	R24-08 Reforming Council Tax: International Lessons on Property Tax Discounts and Exemptions
Directorate General	Communities and External Affairs
Directorate	Local Government
Division/team	Local Government Analytical Unit / Council Tax Policy Team
Primary Location	Edinburgh
SG analytical sponsor name and email	Evelyn Bowes (evelyn.bowes@gov.scot)
Working arrangements (hybrid or remote)	Hybrid
Full time, part time or both?	Full time;Part time
Policy Context	<p>Council Tax is a core component of Scotland’s system of local government finance and applies to almost all domestic properties. It is a charge based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the value of residential property (which determine the ‘property band’); • discounts, exemptions, and reductions for some households to reflect property characteristics or personal circumstances. <p>Taken together, discounts, exemptions and reductions are integral to the functioning of the Council Tax system. They have important implications for fairness, affordability, transparency and administrative complexity, as well as for the overall size and stability of the tax base. The scale and variety of these reliefs also raise questions about how different policy objectives are balanced within a residential property tax.</p> <p>Internationally, residential property taxes are often accompanied by similar forms of relief, although the scope, design and rationale for discounts, exemptions and reductions vary widely across countries. These differences reflect contrasting approaches to ability to pay, social protection, housing policy and the role of property taxation. Understanding how other jurisdictions design and justify property tax reliefs can help inform future Scottish policy discussions by highlighting alternative approaches and the trade-offs they involve, while recognising Scotland’s distinct legal and institutional context.</p> <p>This internship will contribute to the Scottish Government’s evidence base by exploring international approaches to property</p>

	tax discounts, exemptions and reductions, with particular relevance to Scotland's existing Council Tax framework.
Project details	<p>Interns will gain an insight to policy development and the use of evidence in the Scottish Government. Working as part of the multi-disciplinary Local Government Analytical Unit, the intern will be based in the Local Government and Reform research team, which provides social research support for a wide range of policy areas including local government, third sector, public procurement, and public service reform.</p> <p>This project is intended to enhance the evidence base available to inform the Scottish Government's ongoing work on Council Tax reform, building on a wider programme of work. It will also form part of the delivery of the local government related commitments within the Scottish Government's Tax Strategy – informing future research and policy development.</p> <p>The main focus of the internship will be to conduct a rapid evidence review exploring the design and implementation of Property Tax exemptions, deductions and reduced rates in different countries. Key areas of interest for research would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Study examples of approaches to reductions or exemptions in domestic/residential property taxation systems in other countries • Rationale for different approaches to Property Tax relief <p>An expected output of the project would be a final report to be published on the Scottish Government website. There may also be the opportunity for a presentation to policy teams summarising the evidence from the review.</p>
Timing	Flexible
Challenge-Led Pathway (s) this project aligns to	Governance and Institutions;Health, Wellbeing and Communities;Social Inequalities
The expected impacts of this placement	to inform Policy development;to inform Strategy development
The skills the intern will develop throughout the placement	Presentation to policymakers;Publication;Report for internal audience
The skills the intern is required to already have to be successful in this placement	Academic research management skills;Communication and writing skills;Skills in working with others;Engagement and impact

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Internship title	R24-09 Understanding the use of Separation and Reintegration Units in Scottish prisons.
Directorate General	Scottish Prison Service
Directorate	Scottish Prison Service
Division/team	Operations Division / Office of the Chief Executive
Primary Location	Edinburgh / Hybrid
SG analytical sponsor name and email	Samantha Reekie, samantha.reekie@prisons.gov.scot
Working arrangements (hybrid or remote)	Hybrid
Full time, part time or both?	Full time
Policy Context	<p>The SPS Corporate Plan 2023-28 sets out an ambition to deliver prison services in a way that is more person-centred, inclusive, trauma-informed and rights based. However, it is being delivered in a time of unprecedented challenge including overcrowding and budgetary challenges.</p> <p>Separation and Reintegration Units (SRUs) are used to manage prisoners who cannot be located on normal location due to risk relating to safety, good order, or for their own protection. Whilst necessary in some cases, SRU use carries inherent risks of isolation, deteriorating mental health and disengagement.</p> <p>More recently reviews have been conducted by His Majesty Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland (HMIPS) and the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT). In considering the recommendations that have been highlighted, it is necessary to conduct a review and audit of current procedures and practices ensuring that the management of prisoners in this area is both lawful, proportionate and time limited, as, on occasion, prisoners might spend increased time within the unit.</p>
Project details	<p>The project will focus on SPS's current use of SRUs, contributing to our understanding of whether current practice is lawful, proportionate, consistent and rehabilitative, while contributing to safe and effective prisoner management.</p> <p>Methods will include qualitative research (may include interviews/focus groups) with SPS staff and people in prison to understand experiences of SRUs and decision-making processes, and/or desk-based reviews to examine compliance with relevant policies, regime conditions, risk management and security processes. The intern will help to shape the focus and design of the research, with specific research questions and methods to be agreed at the start of the project, and in support of the key objectives across the wider project.</p> <p>The internship aims to deliver the following high-level outcomes:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SPS has an improved understanding of the use of SRUs across the estate, including decision making processes and experiences of SRUs. - SPS has a well-defined set of recommendations to inform development of policies relating to the use of SRUs.
Timing	No restrictions
Challenge-Led Pathway (s) this project aligns to	Securities: Justice, Economies and Conflict
The expected impacts of this placement	to inform Policy development;to inform operational practice within prisons;to inform Strategy development
The skills the intern will develop throughout the placement	Presentation to policymakers;Presentation to stakeholders;Report for internal audience;Report for research participants (staff/people in prison), if appropriate
The skills the intern is required to already have to be successful in this placement	Communication and writing skills;Engagement and impact;Skills in working with others;Research with vulnerable groups (if appropriate to agreed methods)

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Internship title	R24-10 Improving health services by understanding the drivers of performance
Directorate General	Health and Social Care
Directorate	Performance and Delivery
Division/team	Data and Analysis
Primary Location	Edinburgh
SG analytical sponsor name and email	Stephen Smith - stephen.smith@gov.scot
Working arrangements (hybrid or remote)	Hybrid
Full time, part time or both?	Full time;Part time
Policy Context	<p>Understanding how health services are performing requires going beyond high level trends and looking at the detail of the people using services and their experiences, the interaction of different parts of the service, and variation in how those services are provided.</p> <p>In order to make evidence-based decisions, policy makers and service providers need to better understand and use the data and evidence available to them, and be able to explore the often complex factors at play. Analysis that sheds light on these factors, and presents it in an accessible, impactful way, will allow better decisions to be made and help drive improvements.</p>
Project details	Policy makers use data on health services to make evidence-based decisions on how to improve performance. The drivers of

	<p>performance can often be complex and require detailed analysis of the data available.</p> <p>This project will use existing data sources, that are available internally and through published statistics, to explore the factors driving performance.</p> <p>This project will look at variation in how services are performing, variables that help explain that variation, and make concrete recommendations to policy makers to help improve performance.</p>
Timing	None
Challenge-Led Pathway (s) this project aligns to	Health, Wellbeing and Communities
The expected impacts of this placement	to inform Policy development;to inform Strategy development;Improving performance and delivery
The skills the intern will develop throughout the placement	Presentation to policymakers;Report for internal audience;New analytical tools and products
The skills the intern is required to already have to be successful in this placement	Communication and writing skills;Engagement and impact;Skills in working with others

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Internship title	R24-11 Improving the performance and delivery of health services through data analysis
Directorate General	DG Health and Social Care
Directorate	Performance and Delivery
Division/team	Data and Analysis
Primary Location	Edinburgh
SG analytical sponsor name and email	Stephen Smith - stephen.smith@gov.scot
Working arrangements (hybrid or remote)	Hybrid
Full time, part time or both?	Full time;Part time
Policy Context	<p>Policy makers need to understand a complex range of data sources to deliver high quality health services and to improve performance.</p> <p>In order to make evidence-based decisions, policy makers and service providers need to better understand and use the data and evidence available to them. It is critical that this data is presented in accessible and useful ways, while also pointing to caveats and data gaps.</p>

Project details	<p>This project will improve the impact of data on health services in Scotland. Analysis will be used to help understand how the system is currently performing and used to drive improvements.</p> <p>Analysis will be prioritised where there is a clear link to improving performance and delivery. This will involve reviewing the analytical needs of policy colleagues and co-designing outputs that answer specific requirements.</p> <p>The project may focus on specific areas, like mental health services for example, or may look more widely at how different parts of the system interact with each other.</p> <p>The project will explore different ways of presenting data to meet the needs of different audiences, with a focus on impactful analysis that supports meaningful action to improve services.</p>
Timing	None
Challenge-Led Pathway (s) this project aligns to	Health, Wellbeing and Communities
The expected impacts of this placement	to inform Policy development;to inform Strategy development;Improving performance and delivery
The skills the intern will develop throughout the placement	Presentation to policymakers;Report for internal audience;New analytical products and tools
The skills the intern is required to already have to be successful in this placement	Communication and writing skills;Engagement and impact;Skills in working with others

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Internship title	R24-12 Creative options for supporting island businesses and consumers
Directorate General	DG Net Zero
Directorate	Transport Scotland
Division/team	Ferries and Ports, Strategy Team
Primary Location	Flexible - either Glasgow (177 Bothwell Street) or Edinburgh (Victoria Quay)
SG analytical sponsor name and email	Caroline.Gregory@transport.gov.scot (analytics) & Ewan.Walker@transport.gov.scot (main contact/manager)
Working arrangements (hybrid or remote)	Hybrid
Full time, part time or both?	Full time;Part time

Policy Context	<p>The National Islands Plan (February 2026) states that Scottish Government "will explore options to support island businesses, including alternatives to the current ferry freight fare subsidies, to identify approaches that offer better value for money and respond more directly to business needs, remaining cognisant of the higher costs of doing business on islands."</p> <p>The Islands Connectivity Plan Strategic Approach (May 2025), as published by Transport Scotland, states that "directly subsidising freight fares is one way of reducing cost, but it means that all businesses benefit from that subsidy whether or not they need it. It also does not guarantee that the benefit of reduced ferry costs is not absorbed by the hauliers or businesses and is indeed passed to the consumer. At a time of financial constraint, we seek to consider how support to island businesses, currently provided through subsidising ferry freight fares can be offered more effectively, delivering better Value for Money and financial support to island businesses more directly."</p>
Project details	<p>The intern will join the Ferries Strategy Team, a small and supportive team working closely with Transport Scotland economists and other policy teams across Ferries and Ports division. This role will assist the strategy team undertake a refresh of the 2017 ferry freight fares review, following a re-commitment by the Cabinet Secretary for Transport to do so in March 2025. This work supports wider government priorities set out in the National Islands Plan and Islands Connectivity Plan (as above), which responded to calls from the Scottish Parliament to reconsider how island businesses are supported and whether subsidised freight fares on the CalMac and NorthLink ferry services remain the most effective and fair approach.</p> <p>The intern will help define research objectives, considering island supply chains and any cost premiums faced by particular sectors and review the strengths and weaknesses of current ferry freight pricing before contributing to the development of new policy options.</p> <p>This will involve reviewing a wide range of academic and policy evidence, directly engaging with stakeholders in the public and private sector and applying creative policy thinking to explore alternative approaches, including more targeted business support. The main output will be a long list of options which will be refined into a shortlist of practical, evidence based proposals for consideration by senior policymakers — offering valuable, hands on experience in real world policy making.</p>
Timing	None
Challenge-Led Pathway (s) this project aligns to	Social Inequalities;Health, Wellbeing and Communities;Governance and Institutions
The expected impacts of this placement	to inform Policy development;to inform Strategy development;to Inform Budget development
The skills the intern will develop	Presentation to policymakers;Report for internal audience;Publication

throughout the placement	
The skills the intern is required to already have to be successful in this placement	Communication and writing skills;Engagement and impact;Skills in working with others;Academic research management skills;Grants and research finance

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Internship title	R24-13 Evidence and analysis to underpin climate and nature actions on farms and crofts
Directorate General	DG Net Zero
Directorate	Environment and Forestry (EnFor)
Division/team	Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services (RESAS)
Primary Location	Flexible
SG analytical sponsor name and email	Minna Liinpaa - minna.liinpaa@gov.scot
Working arrangements (hybrid or remote)	Hybrid
Full time, part time or both?	Full time
Policy Context	<p>In Scotland, as in the rest of the world, we face the challenge of how to react to the twin crises of climate change and nature/biodiversity loss. The Scottish Government’s Vision for Agriculture sets out the direction of travel for transforming how we support farming and food production in Scotland to become a global leader in sustainable and regenerative agriculture. The recent publication of the Rural Support Plan, a statutory requirement set out in the Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Act 2024, marks a major milestone in the development of future agricultural support policy and in delivering the Vision for Agriculture.</p> <p>The first Rural Support Plan introduces the Scottish Government’s four-tier framework to deliver support to farmers and crofters. Tiers 1 and 2 (Base and Enhanced, respectively) deliver direct payments, while Tiers 3 and 4 (Elective and Complementary) deliver indirect payments. Tiers 2 (Enhanced) and 3 (Elective) focus on supporting farmers and crofters to undertake actions to support climate friendly farming, and nature regeneration on farms and crofts. The focus of this internship is on these agri-environmental actions.</p>
Project details	<p>This is an exciting time to join colleagues working on Scotland’s future agricultural support, with a specific focus on measures to advance climate change mitigation and adaptation, and nature restoration. Within the context of developing future agricultural support, the internship will focus on strengthening the evidence base for agri-environmental actions that farmers and crofters are supported to undertake through Tiers 2 (Enhanced) and 3 (Elective) of Scotland’s agricultural support. This will involve developing an evidence review by systematically identifying, assessing and</p>

	<p>collating relevant existing evidence on agri-environmental practices to consider what works (or doesn't work), and what barriers and/or challenges exist for these practices. Further opportunities to provide analytical support to strengthen the evidence base for the Enhanced and Elective Tiers may arise, and these will be discussed and agreed as required and capacity permitting.</p> <p>The successful candidate will join a vibrant community of analysts within the Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services (RESAS) Division, and work closely with policy colleagues leading on the development of agricultural support.</p>
Timing	N/A
Challenge-Led Pathway (s) this project aligns to	Environment, Migration and Demographic Change
The expected impacts of this placement	to inform Policy development
The skills the intern will develop throughout the placement	Report for internal audience
The skills the intern is required to already have to be successful in this placement	Academic research management skills;Communication and writing skills;Engagement and impact;Professional conduct;Skills in working with others

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