

OPPORTUNITY FOR NERC POLICY PLACEMENT FELLOWSHIP IN THE SCOTTISH ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY

TITLE OF PROJECT: Promoting SEPA's engagement in Environment & Human Health research.

The Appointment

The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), welcome applications for a temporary specialist Fellow to work with SEPA within its Science and Strategy Directorate based in Stirling (Erskine Court, Castle Business Park) for a period of approximately six months on a full time basis (although part time working will be considered). The Fellow would be expected to spend some time (one day per month on average) at other SEPA offices in central Scotland.

The post is being offered as part of the NERC [policy placement fellowship scheme](#) aimed at supporting the science to policy processes between government departments and NERC. The post-holder will interact on a regular basis with NERC Science & Innovation Managers, theme leader for Environment Pollution and Human Health theme and the NERC Knowledge Exchange Team.

Closing date for applications: Monday 28th February 2011

Indicative date for interviews: w/b Monday 7th March 2011

For application form and guidance notes please see:
<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/using/publicsector/fellowship.asp>

For further information contact Anne Conrad, Environmental Futures & trends Unit (e-mail: anne.conrad@sepa.org.uk Tel: +44 (0)1786 452531), or Lesley Aspinall, Science to Policy Facilitator at NERC (e-mail laa@nerc.ac.uk Tel:+44 (0)1793 411536)

Such placements have proved most valuable, significantly enhancing links between NERC science and science evidence and policy teams in government and regulatory bodies, enabling improved science evidence for UK policy. The value to post-holders has also been high. The scheme encourages environmental science researchers and managers to spend time with a partner organisation to undertake policy relevant research and to develop the research skills of partner employees. The placement will be jointly funded by NERC and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and will be based at SEPA.

The Fellow will remain employed by their present employer. The fellowship will cover salary costs (see guidance notes for details) and arrangements will be made to cover travel and subsistence expenses on a case-by-case basis.

The successful applicant will be asked to provide a number of pre-employment checks including a Basic Disclosure Scotland Certificate and submit a pre-employment health check

Job Purpose and Description:

The natural environment contributes to people's health through the quality of air we breathe, the food we eat and the water we drink. It offers health enhancing economic and recreational opportunities on the one hand but is threatened by many activities such as transport, industrial processes, agricultural and waste management practices on the other.

SEPA recognises that it needs to develop a better understanding of the relationships between the environment and human health so that it can apply this improved understanding to its day-to-day duties of environmental assessment and regulation. It also recognises that its research needs will best be addressed through collaboration with the external research community.

In conjunction with SEPA's Human Health Working Group, the appointee will strive to;

- Promote SEPA's understanding of the Environment and Human Health (E&HH) research 'landscape' in the UK;
- Build strong and effective working relationships with academics, NERC, and other environmental regulators as a foundation for future E&HH research;
- Investigate and secure opportunities for collaboration in E&HH research programmes and associated projects and pursue these where appropriate
- Contribute to the dissemination of research outputs (e.g. via stakeholder events) and to the translation of the evidence into robust environmental policy and regulatory practice; and
- Test and evaluate the feasibility and cost-benefits of this approach to SEPA engagement with the wider research community.

The successful applicant will work within SEPA's Science and Strategy Directorate. We are seeking to work with the very best research groups and to produce world-class scientific evidence to inform future regulatory policy and practice.

Skills required

The successful applicant should ideally have a strong scientific and policy background and will be expected to have relevant qualifications and experience in the area of Environment and Human Health. The following skills are expected:

- Knowledge and research experience in a relevant field is essential, as well as an understanding of NERC and SEPA remits and responsibilities.
- Good communication, networking and presentation skills.
- Ability to work strategically across disciplines and an appreciation of the policy and regulatory context of research.
- Good project management skills, and an ability to work independently as required.
- Good written communication skills and experience in writing and assessing research proposals.
- Ability to build, maintain and promote effective partnerships
- Willingness to undertake frequent (UK) travel to external meetings.

Background

The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) is Scotland's environmental regulator. SEPA's main role is to protect the environment and human health. This is achieved by regulating activities that cause pollution and by monitoring the quality of Scotland's air, land and water. SEPA is a non-departmental public body, accountable through Scottish Ministers to the Scottish Parliament. SEPA has been advising Scottish ministers, regulated businesses, industry and the public on environmental best practice for over a decade.

SEPA staff monitor and report on the state of Scotland's environment and use scientific evidence to inform independent regulation of activities that may affect its quality, as well as publishing a wide range of publications and environmental reports. SEPA are also responsible for delivering Scotland's flood warning system, helping to implement Scotland's National Waste Strategy and controlling, with the Health and Safety Executive, the risk of major accidents at industrial sites.

It is essential that SEPA has a sound science and knowledge base. By continually improving understanding and the decision-making processes, responses and interventions SEPA can ensure that Scotland's environmental capacity is managed sustainably. SEPA has published a "[Research strategy 2008–2012](#)", which defines its aims, needs and interests in research and development.

The successful applicant will work within the Environmental Strategy Department. This directorate draws together SEPA's scientific, strategic policy, future planning, business reporting and communication activities. The directorate is responsible for setting SEPA's future strategic direction, identifying, assimilating and prioritising environmental issues. As the organisation's main focus for data and evidence gathering it brings together both internally and externally sourced data & information, prioritising areas for action and developing our understanding of Scotland's environment. Science and Strategy also communicates expert knowledge to promote positive environmental and economic outcomes for Scotland integrating strategic corporate reporting across SEPA and providing the framework for ongoing operational business reporting and improvement.

NERC funds world-class science in universities and research centres that increases knowledge and understanding of the natural world, through independent research and training in the environmental sciences. NERC's current strategy defines seven themes under which its science will be delivered: climate system, biodiversity, sustainable use of natural resources, earth system science, natural hazards, environment pollution and human health, and technologies. NERC interacts and works regularly with a wide range of stakeholders, including policy-makers, to support the science to policy process and help develop appropriate ways to address environment issues.