



The Andrew Miller Prize: COVID-19 science in policy

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THE ANDREW MILLER PRIZE

We're offering the Andrew Miller Prize in honour of Andrew Miller, a former Member of Parliament (MP) and valued Trustee of Newton's Apple who, sadly, died in 2019. Andrew served as MP for Ellesmere Port and Neston from 1992 - 2015. He was the first Chair of the House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee to be elected by all members of the House, a position in which he served for over a decade.

Andrew made numerous contributions to science policy over and above his role as an MP. He was the chair of the Grantham Institute for Sustainable Futures engagement board. He chaired the University of Chester's Thornton Science Park Advisory Board and was a director of Thornton research. Such were his contributions, that Andrew was recognized by the Science Council as one of the UK's 100 leading practicing scientists in 2014.

In honour of Andrew's work championing the use of scientific evidence in policy making, and given the importance of science during the current COVID-19 pandemic, we seek to fund research on the use of scientific evidence in policy responses to COVID-19. In line with the ethos of our Newton's Heirs programme, which aims to engage early career scientists with science policy, the prize is directed at early career researchers.

GRANT SCOPE

We seek to award the prize to an early career researcher to provide funding for up to three months starting after June 2021, to carry out an analysis on the use of scientific evidence in UK policy responses to COVID-19.

Clearly, there has been a need for medical and scientific expertise in relation to COVID-19 itself. However, it has also been necessary to understand the wider impacts of the pandemic on society and the economy. Ideally, a broad range of evidence from the physical and social sciences should be considered in the formation of policy responses to COVID-19. However, it is not currently clear how and when the available evidence has been used in policy formation, or what the consequences have been. By March 2021, we will have been living with the pandemic in the UK for more than a year. We expect that a number of lessons will have been learned about the application of science in public policy during this time. We therefore seek to offer funding for a short study that would address the use of science in UK policies on COVID-19. The study might address questions including, but not limited to, the following:

- To what extent has scientific evidence been adopted in policy around the Covid-19 pandemic?
How has scientific information provided by outside sources been handled by the policy makers?
- What scientific evidence was used in forming specific measures, such as the 10pm closure of pubs?

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- What have been the evidence and information successes in dealing with the pandemic? Where have there been failures? To what extent have these been due to a failure to adopt expertise and evidence in policy-making, and to what extent has this been due simply to a lack of evidence?
- What can we learn from this pandemic, in terms of how scientific evidence is used in policy-making? Going forwards, what systems can be put in place to enable ready responses to subsequent crises?

It is not necessary that your study should address all of the above questions. Neither does it need to address the exact questions we have listed. These questions are only examples of questions we consider interesting. You may prefer to focus on other, related, questions. However, please make sure that your proposal contains a clearly stated research question.

OFFER & TERMS

We're offering an award of £8,000, to be used over a period of up to 3 months (full time – although part-time may also be considered), starting in June 2021. This can be spent flexibly and may cover a researcher's salary, or necessary expenses or materials for the completion of the project, although we do expect that the project will be largely desk-based, therefore entailing minimal expenses. We're a charity and are therefore unable to cover full economic costing (FEC).

In return for funding the project we ask for the following, which should be delivered by the end of 2021:

- That any academic publications arising from the grant be published as open access articles (this can include "green" open access), and that post-print copies be made available on our [website](#).
- That, should findings *not* be published in an academic journal, the grant holder provide a report of approximately 10,000 words, to be published by Newton's Apple. Should the project findings be published in an academic journal, the grant holder will only be asked to compose a short briefing (up to 2,000 words), summarising their findings, to be published on our [website](#).
- That the grant holder presents their findings to other scientists and policy makers in a special webinar, hosted by Newton's Apple, upon completion of the work.

ELIGIBILITY

Any early career academic researcher with a PhD in a relevant subject area, who will work with one of the research units listed below, is eligible to apply. Applicants can have any number of years of postdoctoral experience. However, those with a permanent academic post will not be considered eligible.

Applicants must have the full support of their sponsoring University, including guaranteed access to any necessary equipment, data, materials and mentorship. Applications must be accompanied by a

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letter of support from the applicant's Head of Department, guaranteeing that the applicant will receive appropriate support for the duration of the project, and that the University would be willing to receive the funds on the applicant's behalf.

We invite early career researchers affiliated with the following organisations to apply:

Department of Science, Technology, Engineering and Public Policy (STeAPP) - UCL

Faculty of Public Health and Policy - LSHTM

Fuse – The Centre for Translational Research in Public Health

Health Policy Research Unit - De Montfort University

Public Health Policy Evaluation Unit – Imperial College London

The Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU) – University of Sussex

The Department of Health Policy – LSE

Applicants may be asked to demonstrate their affiliation with one of these research units.

HOW TO APPLY

All applications should include the following documents:

- **A proposal.** A one-page proposal, in size 12 font, which explains your proposed research question(s), your planned research methods, and the expected impact of answering the research question(s). You should also propose a target journal in which you will aim to publish your findings, and give a brief timetable for the work.
- **A CV**, including a list of your key publications, which should be no more than two pages long in total.
- **A letter of support** from the relevant Head of Department at your host university, guaranteeing that you will have access to sufficient support to carry out your work, for the whole period of the project.
- **A brief budget (1 page max)**, justifying your planned expenditure. Given the desk-based nature of the research, **we anticipate that the bulk of the funds will be spent on the researcher's salary.** However, we will be better able to assess the application if anticipated project expenditure is given.

These documents should be emailed to: newtonsapplecontact@gmail.com with the subject line "COVID-19 science in policy project application" by 5pm on April 30th, 2021.

Applicants will be notified of our decision by the end of June 2021 and we expect funding to be transferred to the recipient's host institution as soon as possible thereafter.

Questions should be emailed to newtonsapplecontact@gmail.com, FAO Dr Gillian Pepper.