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BIG South London funded project leads to policy fellowship win to further support London's homeless

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Leading University of Roehampton academic Dr Melissa Jogie has won a UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) funded Policy Fellowship hosted by the [Centre for Homelessness Impact](#), with support from [The College of Policing](#), to evaluate and develop interventions on 'how policing can add value to street outreach activities'.

Melissa's work with homelessness started in 2021 when she was awarded a BIG South London [Innovation Voucher](#) and partnered with [Sutton Night Watch Homeless Charity](#) on 'Making the 360-degree Charity', a project that improved Sutton's efficiency with service management. This highly successful initiative went on to receive a BIG South London 'Outstanding Collaboration in Community Innovation Award' at the Innovation Summit in 2022. Since then, Melissa and Sutton Night Watch have continued to partner on several other successfully funded research awards like [Homelessness and Modern Slavery](#), funded by the [Modern Slavery Policy & Evidence Centre](#), and a second BIG South London Innovation Voucher scheme focusing on [Violence and Abuse against Homeless Women](#).

Stian Westlake, Executive Chair of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) said the Policy Fellowships “represents a major increase of UKRI’s investment in connecting research and policy. It will put some of the UK’s brightest researchers at the heart of government to help inform the way policy is made.”

Dr Jogie’s work focuses on tackling policy change to address groups that experience multiple deprivation in society (homeless, violence and abuse of women and girls, looked after children and the elderly). For this fellowship, she will collate interventions which advocate for the police forces playing a key role in helping reduce rough sleeping. Her work will shed light on concerns that involvement of the police might result in the criminalisation of people sleeping out versus the views that it can improve the effectiveness of street outreach responses. Dr Jogie’s work will help evidence and trial bespoke interventions that can potentially add value in joint approaches between police and homelessness services.

Dr Jogie commented: “The University of Roehampton is proud to be the only post-1992 London university to receive an award alongside 28 other HEIs and Think Tanks. As an institution, this is a wonderful opportunity for us to further strengthen our ability to make policy-informed impact for vulnerable groups in our society like the homeless.”

Matthew Hamilton, Director of the South London Partnership, the organisation which supported BIG South London, said: “We’re incredibly proud of the positive impact that Dr Jogie’s work is having on one of South London’s most vulnerable communities. This is exactly what we set out to achieve through BIG South London – to make connections between universities and South London’s business and charitable sectors – to create growth and better services. The seed funding we were able to provide through the Innovation Vouchers has led to long-lasting partnerships that have now attracted significant funding. We can’t wait to see the outcomes of this significant Fellowship and are thrilled to have played a small part in this success.”

What is a Policy Fellowship?

The UKRI Policy Fellowships provide opportunities to do cutting-edge research and inform decision-making on the most pressing policy problems of our time by working within the bedrock of policy making. The fellowship provides an opportunity for policymakers to engage with academic research and expertise. This helps to bridge the gap between academic research and policy development, ensuring that policies are informed by the latest research evidence. It also offers researchers a chance to understand the policy-making process better, the challenges faced by policymakers, and how research can be best utilised in the policymaking environment.

This year [44 Policy Fellowships](#) have been awarded across 21 government departments and 5 What Works Centres (6 awardees) across the UK. The Fellowship scheme was piloted last year with 22 successful fellows. All successful fellows can be located on directly on [UKRI’s policy fellow page](#). Fellows from the pilot have positively reviewed their experiences to gain firsthand experience and insight into the policy-making process while contributing their academic knowledge and expertise to real-world challenges.

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