

SECONDMENTS TO FULL FACT

The Government Statistical Service has secured an opportunity for staff to gain experience communicating statistics to a varied audience of policy makers, journalists, and the general public through short term secondments to Full Fact.



About Full Fact

Full Fact is the UK's independent factchecking organisation. Since launching in 2010, Full Fact has established a track record for promoting accurate public debate. Its work has been used on all sides of political debates; it has secured the publication of crucial information behind high-profile claims, and has obtained corrections from ministers, government departments, pressure groups and media.

Full Fact pioneered live factchecking with BBC Question Time and was instrumental in the Daily Mail and the Sun setting up corrections columns. During Scotland's referendum, the 2015 election, and the EU referendum, it worked with the BBC, Sky News, ITV, and LBC to provide rapid rebuttal and background information for the public and journalists covering the debates.

Full Fact was a major contributor to the Leveson Inquiry on the role of the press. Its Director appeared at the Public Administration Select Committee to give evidence on the communication of official statistics, and at the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee inquiry to give evidence on public accounts. Full Fact gave evidence to the BBC Trust's 'Making Sense of Statistics' report on how impartially and accurately the BBC reports on statistics.

Last year Full Fact launched the Need to Know project with the UK Statistics Authority, the Economic and Social Research Council, and the House of Commons Library. This aims to identify the big public choices of the coming years and produce an action plan in 2017 for ensuring we have the data and analysis we need, and effective communication to inform decisions.



The opportunity

Full Fact is offering three month secondments in its research and publishing team for GSS members interested in improving the communication and public understanding of statistics.

During the interview process and on arrival, Full Fact's team will learn what skills the secondee wants to focus on, and will then build a programme of work around these priorities. Secondees will be exposed to a wide range of research and publishing tasks that build on their own interests and development ambitions. These are likely to include:

- Researching and producing factchecks and explainers of specific claims and repeatedly misunderstood topics
- Monitoring of claims made by politicians, the national media and pressure groups
- Researching claims accurately and quickly
- Publishing in a variety of formats, potentially including articles, visualisations, videos and on platforms including external media outlets and social media
- Making and debating editorial judgements, with regard to both topicality and neutrality
- Interacting with and engaging new experts in Full Fact's network
- Writing for an audience spanning eminent specialists, policy makers and the general public
- Interacting with users on social media and responding to feedback to improve Full Fact's output
- Supporting the Full Fact team with statistical analysis.

Benefits

Secondments to Full Fact will provide individuals with:

- Richer understanding and awareness of current affairs, the operation of the media and the political landscape
- Practical understanding of how GSS communication of statistics affects public debate
- Experience of communicating statistics in a range of different publishing formats
- Experience of communicating effectively to a varied audience
- Experience of working in a team environment alongside professional journalists and communicators
- Detailed insight into the use and misuse of official statistics by the media and politicians
- Insight into the roles of the Statistics Authority, ONS, GSS and civil society in ensuring that official statistics are used accurately

Criteria and Selection

All candidates must be members of government analytical professions with a minimum of 18 months' experience in grade. One candidate will be chosen per 3 month secondment, but secondments can be arranged in advance. Selection will be based on "best fit" to the criteria below.

This is an opportunity for self-starters with strong interpersonal and team working skills, who have ambitions to be leaders in the civil service. Candidates will be keen to benefit from an outside perspective.

Candidates will have an interest in current affairs, a proven track record of explaining statistical concepts and findings to non-experts, and demonstrated potential in raising the profile of data and analysis to a wide audience.

The selection process will be carried out by Full Fact, who will make the final selection.

Funding and Nominations

The secondments are 3 month opportunities which must be funded and contracted by the parent department. Reporting requirements will be met by Full Fact. Therefore, interested candidates must discuss the opportunity with their HOP to ensure that the secondment would be permitted. This opportunity is supported by the National Statistician and Heads of Analysis. HOPs are invited to discuss the opportunity directly with Will Moy, on william.moy@fullfact.org.

GSS Professional Support are available to offer guidance for setting up placements: please contact Sophia King on sophia.king@ons.gov.uk or 01633 651565.



Previous Secondees

Our previous secondees are Louisa Ashby (Department of Health), Emily Barnett (Ministry of Justice) and Jenny Allan (Home Office), Amelia Ash (ONS), and Charlie Ogilvie (Ofsted). They were closely involved in day-to-day monitoring, research, writing and social media, as well as live-factchecking Question Time, the Scotland referendum debates, and the general election debates with the BBC, LBC radio and Sky News.

Louisa and Emily produced a best practice guide for producing Excel spreadsheets (now being used by the National Statistician's Good Practice Team). Jenny and Amelia explored how to communicate common caveats to statistics more clearly in text, in graphs and in machine readable formats.

Charlie was part of our election centre, training and recruiting official statisticians

for three day secondments where they helped factcheck and monitor key claims made during the campaign.

To find out more about their secondments, please contact them via email:

- Louisa.Ashby@dh.gsi.gov.uk
- Emily.Barnett@justice.gsi.gov.uk
- Jenny.Allan@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk
- amelia.ash@ons.gsi.gov.uk
- charlie.ogilvie@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Location and Timing

The positions are London based, so any applicant must be able to work in central London for a minimum of 3 months. Dates can be flexible.



Our standards and neutrality

Our work is overseen by an exceptional, committed and friendly cross-party board of trustees, with representatives from each of the three main parties in Parliament.

Our funding comes from individual supporters and charitable trusts — including the Nuffield Foundation, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

People and office

Fact is currently based in St James's in central London, in the same building as the Institute for Government. It is a short walk from several tube lines and close to galleries and parks.

Our editorial team consists of four researchers led by our research and impact manager. We have a small communications and impact team and a digital products team.

We are supported by three part time advisers: pre-eminent legal commentator Joshua

Rozenberg; Mike Hughes, the former Director of Policy and ONS, and the policy expert Jill Rutter.

Evaluation

Successful individuals are required to evaluate the experience and provide recommendations for grading/experience of future secondees. Secondees are often invited to present their experience at GSS and external events.

Applications

Applications are invited in the form of an expression of interest. Expressions of interest should be up to 500 words and outline candidates' knowledge, experience and attributes as highlighted in the "criteria and selection" section. Please submit to william.moy@fullfact.org and copy gss.capability@ons.gsi.gov.uk, so that colleagues can keep track of applications.