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# Osborn Research Assistant

## Information for applicants August 2025

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**We are seeking a Research Assistant to support our work on New Towns and Garden Cities.** This short recruitment pack provides information about the Association, the role and how to apply.

### 1 About the TCPA

The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) challenges, inspires and supports people to create healthy, sustainable and resilient places that are fair for everyone. To this end we aim to improve the art and science of planning in the UK and abroad and work to secure fresh perspectives on major issues, including planning policy, housing, regeneration and climate change.

With a Westminster government that is placing an emphasis on the delivery of new homes, including a new generation of New Towns, it is an exciting time for the Association's agenda.

For more information see the 'About' the TCPA pages of our website. Our current strategy was launched in January 2021 and runs until December 2025. For information about current projects see the 'Areas of work' section of the website.

The TCPA embeds social justice in all its activities and promotes diversity, inclusion and representation within the Association. The TCPA is aware that discrimination based on sex, race, age, sexual orientation or other characteristics can consciously or subconsciously be replicated in its undertakings, and is working to eliminate discrimination in its activities, including its recruitment processes. The TCPA's *Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Equity strategy* is implemented through policies in the staff handbook and an internal diversity and inclusion working group that meets regularly to review and improve the TCPA's ways of working.

The TCPA's office is currently in central London in a listed building that, unfortunately, is not accessible by wheelchair. It is expected that the organisation will relocate to a new office within central London, which is accessible, by the end of 2025.

### 2 Job description

We are **seeking a new Assistant with an interest in Garden Cities and New Towns** to help support the TCPA's projects and campaigns on this subject.

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Our current priorities include campaigns on climate change, improving the quality of new homes through our Healthy Homes campaign, the reuniting of planning and health, securing a stronger voice for people in planning and to secure the homes we need in new and renewed places. We do all of this work underpinned by the Garden City principles, which aim to achieve a socially just and sustainable society.

**The purpose of this role is to help ensure the effective delivery of the T CPA's Garden Cities and New Towns work and planning projects by providing technical research support to the Project and Policy and Management Teams.**

The successful candidate will need to have excellent organisational, research and interpersonal skills to support the delivery of a range of projects and policy work within our small but highly motivated team.

We are keen for the successful applicant to start as soon as possible.

This role will require some travel and occasional work outside office hours. Staff can liaise with their line manager about working flexibly but are expected to work in the office at least two days a week and will need to be present at in-person events.

The Osborn Research Assistant will work closely with the T CPA's Director of Communities (FJ Osborn Fellow) and report to a Projects and Policy Manager.

## **2.1 Principal responsibilities:**

The duties and responsibilities of the Osborn Research Assistant include:

- Providing technical research support to the Project and Policy Team on Garden Cities and New Towns, and related planning, built environment and new communities projects.
- Effectively supporting the Project and Policy Team by researching and assembling papers and content for specified subject areas within projects.
- Helping to organise and co-ordinate projects including setting up meetings, site visits and roundtables under the guidance of the Project and Policy Team.
- Undertaking independent research, drafting documents, presentation and administrative activities.
- Other duties as required by the Chief Executive and management team to implement the T CPA work programme, including working with other staff, Trustees and the Policy Council.

This is a full time and permanent post which is currently funded by the Lady Margaret Paterson Osborn Trust (LMPOT). The role supports the work of the T CPA's Osborn Fellow, a role currently held by Katy Lock. The title of the role will be Osborn Research Assistant for the

duration of the LMPOT's support for the role. If further support is not agreed for the role beyond the end of 2027, then the title will be TCPA Project Assistant.

### **3 Person specification**

#### **3.1 Essential**

- Proficient knowledge of the built environment, planning and an interest in Garden Cities and New Towns, social justice, housing and the environment
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Attention to detail and accuracy, including the ability to undertake robust research, draft research papers and take meeting notes
- Proficient in MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint
- Good team working skills
- Good time keeping skills
- Self-motivated and well organised, with the ability to work independently and produce high quality outputs to tight deadlines
- Affinity with the TCPA's aims and objectives

#### **3.2 Desirable:**

- Experience of working in a project-based environment such as a consultancy, charity or think tank
- Experience with WordPress
- Experience with social media communications
- Experience of working in a small team
- Knowledge of the UK's planning systems

The TCPA recognises that skills gained outside work, for example through volunteering or caring responsibilities, can be valuable and encourages candidates to mention these in the application where they are relevant.

### **4 Contract, pay and benefits**

This role is full time although we would consider applicants wishing to work part time on a four day a week basis. The TCPA aims to support its staff to have a good work/ life balance and will consider requests for flexible working where it is possible given the requirements of the role.

The role is offered on a permanent basis, subject to the completion of a three-month probation period.

The annual salary for this role will be between £26,000 and £28,000 depending on experience.

The TCPA operates a defined benefit pension scheme run by NEST and, in line with government policy, new employees are automatically enrolled but can choose to opt out. Employees' payments into their pensions are matched by the TCPA up to a maximum of 6% of salary. This is paid directly into the NEST pension scheme, or another personal pension scheme nominated by the employee.

The TCPA offers holiday entitlement of 25 days paid holiday a year (pro rata for part-time roles) in addition to public holidays. For every complete year of employment, staff gain an additional day's leave (again pro rata for part time roles) up to a maximum of 30 days.

## 5 How to apply

Our aim is to make the application process as easy and as fair as possible.

To avoid unconscious bias, the application form is in two parts: part one is for personal information; part two for details of your experience and why you want the role. Please complete both parts. Please also complete a diversity and inclusion monitoring questionnaire. This will not be seen by the people involved in shortlisting or interviewing.

We ask that **applications are submitted as Word documents** rather than as PDFs. Please email all the **THREE** completed Word documents (two parts of the application form plus the D&I questionnaire) to: [recruitment@tcpa.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@tcpa.org.uk)

Applicants will be emailed to confirm that their application has been received.

References will be requested prior to an appointment being made.

## 6 Deadline for applications

The deadline for applications is **2pm on Monday 1 September**.

**We are aiming to hold interviews for shortlisted candidates virtually in mid-September.** If your availability during this time is limited, please include this as a note in the first part of your application form.

If requested, the TCPA will provide feedback to unsuccessful shortlisted candidates following the interview.

## 7 Further information

For further information about this role or the application process, please email [recruitment@tcpa.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@tcpa.org.uk) and a member of staff will respond as quickly as possible.

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