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Politics and International Relations graduate from the University of Exeter with internship experience at the Institute for Fiscal Studies. Analysed local authority spending data across 150 councils and contributed to a published IFS briefing note. Also served as a constituency researcher for an MP, handling 40+ casework enquiries per week. Strong in policy analysis, evidence synthesis, and briefing writing.

Declan Hargreaves

JUNIOR POLICY RESEARCHER

EDUCATION

BSc (Hons) in Politics and International Relations

University of Exeter, Exeter
Sep 2022 – Jun 2025

First Class Honours. Modules include British government, comparative politics, international political economy, and quantitative methods for political science. Dissertation on fiscal devolution and regional inequality in England.

SKILLS

- Policy Analysis & Evidence Synthesis
- Briefing & Report Writing
- Stata (data analysis, regression)
- Microsoft Excel (pivot tables, charts, VLOOKUP)
- R (basic data visualisation)
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Parliamentary Procedure & Questions
- Casework Management
- Freedom of Information Requests
- Qualitative Interviewing

CERTIFICATIONS

Political Studies Association Student Member

Political Studies Association
Jan 2023

LANGUAGES

- English (native)
- French (intermediate, B2)

REFERENCES

Dr. Gemma Tetlow

Chief Economist, Institute for Government
g.tetlow@instituteforgovernment.org.uk, +44 7700 900 153

Dr. Alex Sherwood

Senior Lecturer in Politics, University of Exeter
a.sherwood@exeter.ac.uk, +44 7700 900 607

EXPERIENCE

Research Intern, Institute for Fiscal Studies, London

Jun 2024 – Aug 2024

12 week internship in the Public Finances team, supporting research on local government funding and regional inequality.

- Analysed spending data from **150 local authorities** in England using Excel and Stata, identifying patterns in per capita funding across 5 service areas
- Contributed 3 data tables and 6 charts to a **published IFS briefing note** on council tax reform options
- Drafted a **3,000 word background paper** on local authority funding disparities, used as internal reference by 4 researchers
- Attended and took notes at **2 roundtable discussions** with Treasury officials and local government representatives

Constituency Research Volunteer, Office of Ben Bradshaw MP, Exeter

Oct 2023 – May 2024

Volunteered 2 days per week in the constituency office, supporting the MP's casework and policy research.

- Handled **40+ casework enquiries per week** covering housing, immigration, benefits, and NHS waiting times
- Drafted **12 parliamentary questions** on education funding and local transport, 8 of which were tabled
- Attended 3 All Party Parliamentary Group meetings as a note taker and prepared **6 post-meeting briefings**

PROJECTS

Dissertation: Fiscal Devolution and Regional Inequality in England

Oct 2024 – Apr 2025

Analysed the impact of business rates retention on spending inequality across English combined authorities.

- Built a panel dataset covering **10 combined authorities over 8 years** (2016 to 2024) using DLUHC published accounts
- Used fixed effects regression in Stata to estimate the relationship between retention rates and per capita service spending
- Found that authorities with higher retention rates invested **14% more per capita** in economic development but showed no significant difference in social care spending
- Awarded a mark of 79% and nominated for the Exeter Politics Department Prize

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITY

Editor, Exeter Politics Review (student journal)

Sep 2024 – Jun 2025

Edited and published 14 student articles per term. Grew readership from 800 to 1,400 unique visitors per month by introducing a weekly newsletter.