



UKRI Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) Healthy Ageing Social, Behavioural and Design Research Programme (SBDRP) – Outline Stage

Frequently Asked Questions

Version: June 2020

In order to remain transparent this document will be updated to reflect those questions most frequently raised with UKRI by potential applicants. This document should therefore be referred to regularly in conjunction with the call documents

1. How do I apply for this call?

All proposals under this call must be completed and submitted through the UKRI's Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S) system (<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/>). Please refer to our [Je-S guidance](#) for further information.

2. How much funding is available for each award?

Funding is invited for projects up to £2 million at 100% full economic cost (fEC). In order that projects reach the scale of impact required, we would not normally expect to fund projects much smaller than £1 million (100% fEC).

3. What should the duration of the proposed research be?

The duration of the grant should not exceed 36 months.

4. Can the applicant be an Early Career Researcher (ECR)?

Applications are welcomed from researchers at all career stages, but ECRs are asked to note that Principal Investigators (PIs) are expected to demonstrate a significant leadership history and a track record of delivering high quality research.

5. Can the application include Co-Investigators?

Yes. Co-Investigators (Co-Is) can be included in applications, subject to [standard eligibility requirements](#).

6. Can people join as Co-Is on different projects?

Yes. Applicants can be included on more than one bid, as long as their cumulative time commitment (across all UKRI-funded projects) does not exceed 100% of their current hours (or a maximum of 37 hours per week). We would not expect applicants to be PI on more than one bid.

7. Can academics based outside the UK be included in proposals?

Yes, international Co-Investigators are welcome. Proposals can assign a cumulative

maximum of 30% of their total grant (at 100% fEC) to Co-Is not based at UK Research Organisations (i.e. international and business Co-Is).

8. Can multiple Research Organisations (ROs) be included in one proposal?

Yes, we encourage collaboration across institutions. However, proposals will not be penalised where the appropriate expertise can be sourced from a single institution.

9. Can ROs partner on multiple bids?

Yes. Institutions can both submit multiple bids, and partner across more than one bid.

10. This call is being administered by ESRC, does that mean only Social Scientists are eligible to apply?

No. ESRC are running this call on behalf of UKRI and applications are welcome from all discipline areas.

11. Is there scope for developing new datasets in this call?

Yes. Developing new datasets as part of a research project is expected, whilst combining existing data in innovative ways is actively encouraged. Data infrastructure costs would not normally be supported, but costs associated with access to existing databases will be.

12. Will the call fund digital and technological health interventions and/or solutions?

Whilst data and technological health interventions are within scope, we would not normally expect to support costs associated with product development.

13. Do all projects need to incorporate a design aspect?

Design is an important component of the call and we encourage research in this area. However, proposals are not required to incorporate a design aspect.

14. The call includes an expectation to work closely with the Healthy Ageing Challenge Research Director. How is it envisaged this relationship will develop, and what role will the Research Director play in my project?

Professor Judith Phillips, as the Research Director for the Healthy Ageing Challenge, represents and communicates the interests of the research community, and particularly those funded through this programme, across the full portfolio of Challenge investments, and to the wider public. Her role is to provide intellectual leadership and to ensure the coherence of funded research activities, to act as the public face of the research elements of the Challenge, and to add value where possible by identifying opportunities for shared learning, connecting research and researchers to the other Challenge investments, and building new connections where appropriate. The Research Director and her team will ensure your project is connected to the rest of the Challenge, highlighting impact and knowledge-exchange opportunities, and co-ordinating the overarching work of the SBD research programme. You and your team will be expected to actively work with the Research Director to take advantage of these opportunities

15. What is the Community of Practice (CoP) and how will my project be involved?

The Community of Practice is a forum to share learning, research and practice across the portfolio of investments in the Healthy Ageing Challenge. It is run by the [Centre for Ageing Better](#). Projects will be expected to be active participants in the CoP and will have a role in shaping how this develops over the funded period. The Research Director will initially facilitate involvement.

16. What do you mean by meaningful engagement with older people?

Projects funded under the SBDRP are expected to engage with older people throughout the funded period, from research design to the dissemination of findings. This will be considered meaningful where it can be demonstrated the opinions of older people have been taken into account throughout the project. The form of that engagement can be determined by the project, but we would recommend forming an older people's reference group and liaising with them throughout the project as a minimum requirement.

17. At what stage is it expected that older adults will be included in the development of the research questions?

We would encourage applicants to include older adults throughout the development of the research. Where this is impacted by CoVID-19, please clarify this in your proposal and detail any steps you are taking to address this.

18. Are carers a focus of this call, and can they be included in engagement plans?

Yes. Applicants are encouraged to consider the views, experiences and roles of carers in their proposals. Where appropriate, this should include be part of engagement strategies, including reference groups.

19. How should I engage with business on this programme?

The Healthy Ageing Challenge supports the Government's ambitious mission to ensure people can enjoy at least five extra healthy, independent years of life by 2035, while narrowing the gap between the experience of the richest and poorest. While this mission was set before the COVID-19 pandemic, the relevance of the ambition to improve health and reduce inequalities has been reinforced by recent events. To achieve this aim the businesses and industries involved will need insight from the latest and best research inputs. This might take the form of supporting and communicating innovations and best practice in products, services, systems and business models, encouraging the growth and development of an area where there is currently market failure, or promoting a positive vision of healthy ageing and people in later life. Engagement can take the form of collaborations, partnerships, events and reference groups. Please see the ESRC's [Impact Toolkit](#) for more advice and guidance.

20. Are third sector organisations considered businesses on this call?

No. Whilst the involvement of third (and public) sector organisations is encouraged, they are not considered businesses for the purposes of this call. However, it is important to note that Social Enterprises are considered to be businesses.

21. Can non-UK domiciled businesses be included in proposals?

Yes, but only as Project Partners (i.e. they are providing in-cash, or in-kind, contributions). Only UK-based businesses can receive UKRI funding.

22. Is there a preference for the size of business projects work with?

No. Projects should include the businesses most relevant to their aims, regardless of size.

23. Are businesses expected to contribute additional funding?

Businesses do not have to contribute additional funding. They can be included as Co-Is when they will be significantly involved in research, as Project Partners, when they will be contributing in-kind or in-cash support, or as part of an engagement strategy. Only UK-based businesses can receive UKRI funding. Please also note that proposals can assign a cumulative maximum of 30% of the total grant (at 100% fEC) to non-UK Research Organisations Co-Is.

24. Is there scope to evolve collaboration with business in the process of developing and designing research?

Yes. We would expect your engagement with business to evolve throughout the project. However, we would also expect to see a robust initial engagement plan.

25. How would I be expected to engage with business if my research is highly innovative and not yet well known to industry?

Applicants are expected to meaningfully and actively engage with business. Where this includes research that is not well known within an industry, we would expect your proposal to include a detailed and realistic engagement plan.

26. What is the expectation regarding striking the balance between ensuring products and services are profitable for businesses and addressing inequality?

Addressing inequalities in Healthy Ageing markets is encouraged. This should be referenced when detailing how projects will address diversity and environments of ageing. Though projects can be critical friends to business and innovation partners, they should endeavour to be solution-focused, helping illustrate and design ways for markets to reduce inequality.

27. Given the variability in lifespan, and life-course, for some 'new' ageing populations, will the call accept different definitions of an ageing population in different proposals?

Yes, though applicants are asked to note that the mission of the Ageing Society Grand Challenge is to meet its aims by 2035. Therefore, please make reference to this when setting out a case for using a non-standard age range in your proposal.

28. Can the programme of research be based in a specific location?

Yes. We encourage applicants to address place. This may mean some proposals are based in specific locations. Where this is the case, proposals should detail how findings from this research can be extrapolated to understand other places and spaces.

29. Is it acceptable for proposals to cover just one Challenge theme?

Proposals will be assessed on their scientific merit and fit to the Healthy Ageing Challenge mission goals. Whilst we strongly encourage proposals to address the Challenge Framework themes, please note that these are not exhaustive and areas of

research not covered can be included if a strong case is made for their importance to the Ageing Society Grand Challenge mission goals – to ensure that people can enjoy at least five extra healthy, independent, years of life by 2035, whilst narrowing the gap between richest and poorest. Proposals will not be assessed on the number of the themes they address.

30. What are the expectations around interdisciplinarity on this call? Could a proposal include multiple disciplines, but with more emphasis in one Research Council remit are than others?

Proposals are expected to be interdisciplinary, and to include an appropriate range of expertise to meet their stated research, impact, knowledge exchange and communication aims. Proposals will be assessed on the suitability of that expertise, not on their 'home' discipline areas.

31. What should my impact, knowledge exchange and communication strategy include?

As SBDRP is an impact-focused funding call, projects are required to illustrate how they intend to ensure their research is accompanied by a robust and compelling plan of action to achieve this. At the outline stage, proposals should include an indicative strategy, including reference to any identified routes to impact, approaches to knowledge exchange and communication strategy. This can include working with project partners to increase the visibility and impact of the research. Relevant costs and staff associated with this strategy should be identified in the proposal. Please see the ESRC's [Impact Toolkit](#) for more advice and guidance.

32. What happens after the outline stage?

At the outline stage, all applications will be assessed by academic and user reviewers. Those that are scored sufficiently highly (normally 4.5/6), or received highly polarised scores, will be assessed at a shortlisting panel made up of academic experts, with input from older people and those from relevant industry sectors. Those shortlisted at this stage (c. 10-20 proposals) will be invited to submit a full application and to attend an applicants' workshop. Please see the timetable in the Call Specification for more details.

33. What are applicants' workshops?

Applicants' workshops (held on 5-6 October 2020) are an opportunity for those whose proposals have been shortlisted to discuss aspects of their proposed scheme of work (particularly regarding engaging with older people and business) with independent mentors. This will not be assessed and is a chance for applicants to receive supportive feedback on their proposal before submitting a final application.

34. Applicants to this call are invited to address the impacts of CoVID-19 on social, behavioural and design aspects of healthy ageing. Are all proposals expected to carry out COVID-19 related research? Are there funds reserved for those projects?

Projects may directly address the impacts of COVID-19 on social, behavioural and design aspects of healthy ageing. We do **not** expect all proposals to do COVID-19 related research. However, **all** applicants are required to present an assessment of how the pandemic might shape or affect research and engagement plans. There are no funds reserved for research into COVID-19 related impacts on this call. All

proposals will be assessed on the criteria listed in the call specification in the same manner.

35. I'm concerned my ability to carry out the proposed project may be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions. What is UKRI doing to help?

UKRI is fully aware of the impact of COVID-19 on the research community and will be making decisions on a case-by-case basis. For this call, we have extended the outline call by one week in recognition of the extra responsibilities and/or workload applicants may currently have. Further accommodation has been built into the overall competition timelines, with research now expected to commence 2 months later, in March 2021. Please see the [UKRI Coronavirus Hub](#) for the most up-to-date information. We will continue to monitor the situation and will offer suitable support and guidance where appropriate.

36. Can contingency costs be included in grant proposals to cover the uncertainties associated with the COVID-19 pandemic?

No, we do not allow contingency costs to be included in grant proposals. In the event the proposal is funded and plans are restricted by the COVID-19 pandemic we would work with grant holders to accommodate those restrictions in an appropriate manner.

37. Are there any urgent strategic funding calls available for social science researchers investigating COVID-19 related issues?

UKRI has established a separate open call for proposals for short-term projects addressing and mitigating the health, social, economic, cultural and environmental impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak. Guidance on how to apply is available on the UKRI Coronavirus Hub and any other opportunities will be published here <https://www.ukri.org/research/coronavirus/>

38. Can a grant be extended if activities are impacted by COVID-19?

We expect applicants to have assessed the relevant risks related to COVID-19 in their research proposal. However, we recognise that this is a rapidly changing environment and not all risks can be foreseen or effectively mitigated against. Therefore, we will continue to monitor the situation and will offer suitable support and guidance where appropriate.

39. If travel plans must be altered at an additional cost due to COVID-19, will this be seen as an eligible cost on the grant?

Applicants are encouraged to retain travel plans in their applications. However, we understand that logistical changes may have to be made to a grant because of COVID-19. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. A justification for any additional costs will have to be provided by grant holders.

40. I have received funding from the COVID-19 urgency grant call. Am I still eligible for this call?

Yes. Subject to standard ESRC eligibility restrictions, you can still apply to this call. Please note, however, that you cannot commit more than 100% of your time across the proposed projects.

41. What are the guidelines for how the COVID-19 situation should be taken into account when designing the project's methodology – for instance, can we include fieldwork and interviews for a project aiming to start next year?

Please note applicants are required to present an assessment of how the pandemic might shape or affect research and engagement plans. This should include reference to research methodology. Where unforeseen impacts are encountered, we will offer suitable support and guidance as appropriate.

42. UKRI no longer requires a Pathways to Impact form. Am I still expected to demonstrate impact?

Yes, please see the updated Je-S guidance for more details. Please note proposals to this call are expected to include compelling impact, knowledge exchange/engagement and communication aims and approaches in their case for support.

43. Support staff are permitted on this call. Please define 'support staff'.

Various staff can be included on the application to support the Principal Investigator, but the intellectual leadership, management, organisation and fiscal responsibility for the grant will rest with the PI alone. Staff who could be included on an application include, but are limited to, research, administrative and IT specialists. For this call, please note the assessment criteria for the full stage includes the requirement that proposals include appropriate expertise for undertaking high quality stakeholder engagement, knowledge exchange, communications and project management.

44. What costs associated with engaging with older people are accepted on this call?

Projects will be expected to cover the travel and subsistence (T&S) costs of those providing advice, guidance and feedback (e.g. an Older Person's Reference Group). Proposals may also include costs in order to show an appreciation of the effort of those involved in providing advice, guidance and feedback. It is not recommended that you directly pay those taking these roles, as this may have tax implications for many people.

45. The outline stage requires indicative costings. Am I able to change costings if I am invited to submit a full application?

Yes. You can alter costings between the outline and full stage. These must still meet ESRC rules on costings. Please see the [ESRC Funding Guide](#) for more information.

46. Are associated studentships allowed on this call?

No. Associated studentships are not allowed, but applicants are asked to include a strong career development plan for all staff working on the project, including early-career researchers.

47. Will successful applicants be permitted to apply for funding under other calls within the Healthy Ageing Challenge?

Yes. Healthy Ageing SBD research programme grant holders will be permitted to apply for other funding within the Healthy Ageing Challenge portfolio.

48. What happens to my proposal once I have submitted it?

Once your proposal is submitted via Je-S it will be checked by the UKRI Grants Operations team to make sure the proposal fits UKRI'S basic eligibility criteria. Your

proposal will then be subject to further checks to ensure it is eligible for consideration for this call. Your proposal could be rejected at this stage if deemed ineligible. If it is considered acceptable, it will be assessed by the Panel. Final funding decisions expected in February 2021.

49. Who are the Panel Members?

The Panel is made up of academics and other user experts in healthy ageing.

50. Where can I find out more information about the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund?

The Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund is part of government's Industrial Strategy, the long-term plan to raise productivity and earning power in the UK. More information can be found at the [UKRI ISCF webpage](#).

51. When will further information about funding opportunities under the ISCF Healthy Ageing Challenge be available?

The webpages for the Healthy Ageing Challenge have information on all funding opportunities and will be regularly updated. You can also sign up for regular updates from the challenge from these webpages. See the [ISCF Healthy Ageing webpage](#) for further information.

52. Who do I contact if I have any queries?

Please direct any queries to:

- Huw Vasey or Pete Henley
Email: ISCFHealthyAgeing@esrc.ukri.org