



## UKRI Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF)

### Healthy Ageing Challenge Social, Behavioural & Design Research Programme Outline Stage

#### Call specification

##### Summary

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), via the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), is inviting outline proposals for research grants of up to £2 million (at 100% fEC) for a period of up to 36 months.

The Healthy Ageing Social, Behavioural and Design Research Programme (SBDRP) is part of the [ISCF Healthy Ageing Challenge](#) portfolio of activities. The SBDRP will provide £9.5m (100% fEC) to fund interdisciplinary academic-led teams to carry out research into social, behavioural and design aspects of healthy ageing. The Programme will contribute to the Challenge mission to, 'ensure that people can enjoy at least five extra healthy, independent, years of life by 2035, while narrowing the gap between the richest and poorest' by enhancing our understanding of the aspirations, preferences and needs of the ageing population. Funded projects may address, but are not limited to, research into the impacts of the CoVID-19 pandemic on social, behavioural and design aspects of healthy ageing. Projects will also be expected to make a significant contribution to disseminating this knowledge, helping to inform innovators and positively influence market behaviours.

This is a two-stage call. Outline proposals must be submitted via UKRI's Joint electronic Submissions (Je-S) system by **16:00 on 7 July 2020**. Proposals will then be assessed by a Panel and shortlisted applicants will be notified of their success and invited to submit a full proposal. See full commissioning timetable for more information. Proposals must be led by an academic who is based at an eligible UK research organisation.

**Successful projects must start on 1 March 2021.**

##### Background and scope

In 2017, the Prime Minister announced the UK government's [Industrial Strategy](#) which set out [four Grand Challenges](#), along with an [Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund \(ISCF\)](#) to enable the delivery of activity addressing the identified Challenges. The [Ageing Society Grand Challenge](#) seeks to harness the power of innovation to help meet the needs and opportunities of an ageing society, with a mission to, "ensure that 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”.

Through the ISCF, UKRI has secured an investment of up to £98 million for the Healthy Ageing Challenge, which will enable businesses, including social enterprises, to design, and develop products, services, systems and business models that will be adopted at scale in order to support people as they age. The aim is to allow people to remain active, productive, independent and socially connected across generations for longer. A portfolio of activities will be delivered under the Healthy Ageing Challenge, with academic research playing a crucial role in understanding the key issues facing, and opportunities offered by, an ageing population, and the ways in which innovative ideas, products, services and systems can support healthy ageing. Projects may address, but are not limited to, the impacts of the CoVID-19 pandemic on social, behavioural and design aspects of healthy ageing.

## Call details

Awards up to £2 million (100% FEC) are available for academics based at UK Research Organisations to conduct research into social, behavioural and design aspects of healthy ageing. Proposals are expected to critically engage with businesses, including social enterprises, to enhance their understanding of the needs and opportunities of an ageing population, help inform innovators and to open up creative spaces for businesses and consumers in an ‘ageing market.’ The public sector and charities should also be engaged where appropriate.

The Programme is spearheaded by [Research Director](#) Professor Judith Phillips, who is responsible for overseeing the research across the full range of Healthy Ageing Challenge activities. Successful projects will be expected to work closely with the Research Director. They will also be required to take an active role in the Community of Practice (CoP), a forum to share learning, research and practice across the portfolio of investments in the Healthy Ageing Challenge. Proposals do not need to include a strategy for engagement with the CoP, as the Research Director will facilitate this.

Applicants are encouraged to critically engage with one or more social, behavioural and design aspect of the Healthy Ageing Challenge themes outlined in the [Challenge Framework](#). These are:

- **Sustaining physical activity:** to help people in mid-and later life to increase and sustain their levels of physical activity. For example, how do we support people in mid and later life on low incomes to increase and sustain their physical activities?
- **Maintaining health at work:** to promote and maintain older workers’ health and wellbeing. For example, how do we design workplaces and work practices to support older workers’ health and well-being?
- **Design for age-friendly homes:** to enable people to live independently and safely at home for longer with innovative products and services. For example, how do we support people in mid and later life through design, innovative products, services and models that can be adopted at scale by key stakeholders?
- **Managing common complaints of ageing:** to improve the quality of life of people in later life with a range of common health conditions. For example, how can we stimulate the development of ‘high street products’ and digital technologies to improve the quality of life of people with hearing loss, arthritis etc?

- **Living well with cognitive impairment:** to improve the quality of life for older people living with cognitive impairment. For example, how do we promote the uptake of existing and innovative solutions at home and work?
- **Supporting social connections,** to enable people to sustain and broaden their social connections and relationships into later life. For example, how do we improve the inclusion and accessibility of social and leisure activities?
- **Creating healthy active places:** to develop places that encourage people in later life to sustain physical activity. For example, for example, how do we design an integrated urban/rural ecosystem to support people in mid and later life?

Applicants should note the themes are a guide, not an absolute. Areas of research not covered above can be included if a strong case is made for their importance to the Ageing Society Grand Challenge key mission goals – *to ensure that 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.*

Potential areas of research may include, but are not limited to:

- **Understanding behaviour.** This could include research on how organisational and environmental context impacts on the healthy ageing of groups and individuals, such as:
  - how older people and their networks (including family members and carers) make decisions as consumers, and what businesses can learn from this
  - how businesses understand and engage with older consumers, or those purchasing for them, and how this can be improved to address market failures and encourage the spread of a positive vision of healthy ageing;
  - how such behaviours vary across and within social, economic, cultural and life course contexts; how social, economic and cultural norms and behaviours impact the healthy ageing of groups and individuals
  - how existing products are adopted, adapted and marketed, and the impacts these have on healthy ageing.
- **Design.** Areas of research could include, but are not limited to, approaches centred on inclusive and universal design, human-centred design, service design, design thinking, user-led and participatory co-design and co-production, design disruption and transformative design. Proposals in this area should demonstrate how such approaches can impact on the healthy ageing of diverse populations and help people live better for longer, such as:
  - understanding and maximising design for mainstream home products, including the scope for adapting and improving existing products
  - using design approaches to enable people to ‘age in the right place’, choosing to move or to safely stay in their own homes for longer
  - design for maintaining physical activity and creating healthy active places that are attractive and accessible to people as they age
  - improving the ergonomics and design of workplaces, including for those self-employed, or working for SMEs
  - design for maintaining social connections into and throughout later life
  - utilising design in order to enable living well with cognitive impairment
  - designing mainstream products that take into account changing needs as people age, including common complaints of ageing.

- **Organisational and environmental contexts.** This could include research on:
  - workplace cultures and behaviours, including financial well-being and changes to working patterns, as well as approaches to occupational health and well-being for an ageing workforce
  - variations in healthy ageing across organisational context, e.g. for those who are self-employed or working in SMEs
  - organisational attitudes and approaches to an ageing population, such as creating healthy active places which are attractive to, and accessible for, an ageing population, or marketing practices and attitudes amongst retail organisations
  - new approaches and innovations to ensuring healthy ageing at work, including digital solutions, and the adoption and effectiveness of adaptive and assistive technologies, products and services.
  
- **The innovative use of existing data** to better understand the needs, aspirations and behaviours of an ageing population. This can include, but is not limited to:
  - administrative, commercial, health and environmental data
  - drawing new knowledge and insight from combining existing data in new and innovative ways
  - the use and adaptation of technological and digital solutions.

Successful projects must:

- **Meaningfully engage with older people.** All proposals must evidence how they will meaningfully engage with older people throughout the life of the project, including the co-design of research, collaborations and general engagement, as well as governance. Creative and innovative forms of engagement are encouraged. This can include, but is not limited to, using an older people's reference group for the specific project.
  
- **Work with business** to address their project aims. Projects are expected to engage with businesses, including social enterprises, to share knowledge about the social, behavioural and design aspects of healthy ageing. Engagements may also seek to, amongst other things: stimulate and support innovation in products, services, systems and business models; promote a positive vision of healthy ageing and people in later life; evidence, encourage and support the development of a market where there is currently market failure. Engagement can include collaborations, partnerships, events and reference groups. Critical constructive engagement is encouraged.
  
- **Address diversity and environments of ageing.** Projects should show an understanding of, and engagement with, how social, behavioural and design aspects of healthy ageing affects individuals and communities in very different ways. This could include, but is not limited to, diversity in terms of age, class, disability, ethnicity and gender. Where appropriate, applicants are encouraged to consider place-based approaches, including comparative research, to explore environments of ageing, including specific communities and workplaces.

- **Address ageing across the life-course.** Applicants are expected to engage with the process of ageing across the life course, not just older people. However, applicants are asked to note the aims of this Challenge are to engender change by 2035.
- **Accommodate the impacts of CoVID-19** on the proposed research. 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.
- **Work across disciplines to meet the aims of the project.** Applicants are encouraged to embrace interdisciplinary working in order to meet the aims of the programme, including working with those who do not normally carry out research in gerontology or related fields (for example, the inclusion of design researchers, computer scientists, or engineers, working in other specialisms).
- **Include a compelling and well-designed impact, knowledge exchange and communication strategy** to ensure their project findings are widely disseminated and understood by the business and innovation communities in particular, as well as service providers, the wider public, including older people, and those making and influencing public policy.

## Funding

This call is for interdisciplinary collaborative grants of up to £2m (100% fEC). In order that projects reach the scale of impact required, we expect to fund projects of at least £1m (100% fEC). The ESRC will provide 80% of the full economic cost. Projects may last up to 36 months. We intend to make 3-5 awards. **Awards must start on 1 March 2021 and be completed by 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024.**

Applicants should carefully consider the full range of costs needed for their research. In particular, costs associated with meaningful stakeholder engagement should be considered. Proposals must also include funding to attend an annual meeting of all SBDRP-funded projects in London.

Although not a requirement, **co-funding from stakeholders is welcome.**

It is anticipated that successful proposals will devote between 10- 20% of their total funding to knowledge exchange and communications activities. Please refer to the ESRC Impact toolkit (<https://esrc.ukri.org/research/impact-toolkit/>) for further guidance.

## Impact

In line with the UKRI position on Excellence with Impact (<https://www.ukri.org/innovation/excellence-with-impact/>), we expect that our researchers will have considered the potential scientific, societal and economic impacts of their research. Applicants should actively consider how these impacts can be maximised and developed within their proposal. Applicants plans to maximise and develop the potential impacts of their research will form part of the peer review and assessment process.

Opportunities for making an impact may arise, and should be taken, at any stage during the research lifecycle: the planning and research design stage; the period of funding; and all activities that relate to the project up to – and including – the time when funding has ended. The research lifecycle therefore includes knowledge exchange and impact realisation activities – including reporting and publication, and the archiving, future use, sharing, and linking of data. It is important that researchers have in place a robust strategy for maximising the likelihood of impact opportunities and their own capacity for taking advantage of these.

Applicants should set out how they intend to identify and actively engage relevant users of the research and stakeholders and include evidence of any existing engagement with relevant end users. A clear understanding of the context and needs of these users should be articulated and ways for the proposed research to meet or impact upon these needs should be considered. The proposal should also outline how the legacy of proposed activity will be managed to engage beneficiaries and increase the likelihood of its impact in providing lasting value to participants, stakeholders and the wider community.

To be effective, all communication, engagement and impact activities must be planned in detail and properly resourced in the proposal.

The ESRC's **Impact Toolkit** gives detailed advice on how to achieve the maximum impact for projects. The toolkit includes information on developing an impact strategy, promoting knowledge exchange, public engagement and communicating effectively with key stakeholders: <https://esrc.ukri.org/research/impact-toolkit/>.

Applicants should note this is a mission-led research programme, for which proposals are expected to commit significant time and resources to creating and communicating high quality research impact, including knowledge exchange and engagements with both older people and relevant business and innovation sectors. All proposals should also illustrate how their projects will contribute to the high-level Challenge goal of ensuring 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.

## Eligibility

Principal Investigators (PIs) must be based at a UK Research Organisation eligible for UKRI funding for the duration of the award. For further details, including the eligibility of Co-Investigators (Co-Is) from business, third sector and government organisations, as well as international Co-Is, please see the eligibility requirements in the [Research Funding Guide](#).

This call is being run by ESRC on behalf of UKRI, however it should be noted that PIs and Co-Is from all disciplines supported by UKRI are welcomed and encouraged to apply.

## Capacity-building

We will be looking for evidence of a strong commitment to support the development of researchers at all stages of their career and that capacity-building is considered an integral part of the project.

Please note that we expect these approaches to be addressed in the **full** proposal and not in detail at the outline stage and that this will be included in the selection criteria at full phase. In full proposals this will be expected to include a strong career development programme

shaped to suit the stage of the researchers' career and providing increased opportunities for professional development. This should include, but not be limited to, the early career stage and you are encouraged to consider how you can support the continuing career development of all members of the team regardless of their career stage.

The focus should be on the quality and impact of the research, and how increasing capacity contributes to this. Examples of building capacity include, but is not limited to:

- Support and mentoring for all members of the team
- Building networks within and beyond academia

Please note, due to the length of funding available, we do not expect to fund associated studentships.

## Assessment of proposals

This is a two-stage call. Outline proposals must be submitted via UKRI's Joint electronic Submissions (Je-S) system by **16:00 on 7 July 2020**. Proposals will then be assessed by a Panel and shortlisted applicants will be notified of their success and invited to submit a full proposal. See full commissioning timetable for more details.

Proposals will be assessed by a Panel of academic subject specialists, as well as business and innovation specialists working in the healthy ageing domain.

### Assessment criteria:

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Does the proposal **fit** with the Healthy Ageing Challenge themes (listed in the call details section), or provide a compelling case why it would meet the Challenge goal of ensuring that 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;
- Is it **clear** what the proposal is seeking to achieve, and does it provide a realistic scheme of work to do so within the funded period? This will include a risk assessment including any on-going impacts of CoVID-19.
- Are the **research questions** important, novel, timely and likely to lead to significant new understanding? Does the proposal include appropriate impacts and insights from the CoVID-19 pandemic?
- Are the proposed **methods** suitable to the aims and objectives of the research? Are they clearly defined, rigorous and feasible?
- Does the proposal include a realistic and meaningful plan to **engage with older people** throughout the life of the project?
- Does the proposal include a realistic and meaningful plan to **engage with business** and the innovation sector, including social enterprises, throughout the life of the project?
- Does the proposal include a compelling and well-designed **knowledge exchange, impact and communication** strategy?
- Does the proposal address healthy ageing across or within suitable **environments of ageing** to meet the project aims?
- Does the proposal address the development of healthy ageing across the **life-course** and for **diverse individuals and communities**?

- Does the proposal represent **value for money**?
- Does the proposal encompass the appropriate and relevant **combination of expertise** needed to address the proposed research question?
- Does the proposal include appropriate **expertise** for undertaking the research, stakeholder engagement, knowledge exchange, communications, project management and reporting?
- Does the proposal demonstrate **strong leadership** and plans for cross-team working?

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal by 5 November 2020. They will receive the reviews and Panel feedback from the outline stage in order to help them develop their full stage application.

### **Applicants' Workshop:**

The full proposal period will include the opportunity to attend a workshop on either **5 or 6 October 2020**. These provide applicants with an opportunity to discuss aspects of their proposals, particularly the engagement, knowledge exchange and impact strategies, with workshop mentors (user group representatives and business and innovation specialists). Discussions will last no more than 45 minutes per project. These workshops are designed to help strengthen proposals through supportive and constructive advice and guidance from key stakeholders and do not form part of the assessment of proposals.

Full-stage proposals will be assessed by a Panel of academic subject specialists, as well as business and innovation specialists working in the healthy ageing domain.

UKRI reserves the right to take a portfolio approach to SBD RP grants.

## **How to apply**

Outline stage proposals will be accepted via UKRI's Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S) system, which is available at <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/JeS2WebLoginSite/Login.aspx>. Je-S is the electronic submission system, which is used by UKRI to provide a common electronic system that supports research administration. More detailed information can be found at <https://jes.rcuk.ac.uk/>. **Applicants should note the registration requirements for making a Je-S submission.**

Only those proposals submitted through the Je-S system will be accepted for processing. The proposal submitted through Je-S will be taken to be the final version, and will be the version used for external peer assessment.

The Principal Investigator must be from a Research Organisation [eligible for UKRI funding](#).

**The call for proposals closes at 16:00 on 7 July 2020.**

Outline proposals should address the aims of the call as listed in the call details and should include:

- **Case for Support** (5 pages), including an **outline** of the project aims, methods and indicative work packages (including approximate timings), and details of how the



project will address the Programme aims as listed in the call details, including a brief assessment of how the CoVID-19 pandemic might affect the research plan.

- **CVs** for the PI and Co-Is
- **Justification of Resources**, including **indicative costs** associated with stakeholder engagement, project administration and travel and subsistence. Please note that exact costings will be required at the full application stage
- **Letters of Support** from any relevant organisation associated with the project if available, as well as a letter of support from your head of department (or equivalent) indicating their support for the proposed work. Please note, letters of support from those involved in the project, including research, engagement, impact and knowledge exchange activities will be required for the full proposal stage.

Following the outline stage assessment, shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit **full proposals** and will need to evidence the following (please note, this information is not required for the outline stage of proposals):

- **Case for Support** (10 pages), including a full description of the project aims, methods and work packages (including proposed timings), as well as details of how the project will address the Programme aims as listed in the call details
- **CVs** for PI and Co-Is
- **Justification of Resources**, including full costs associated with stakeholder engagement, project administration and travel and subsistence
- **Letters of Support**, including those from organisations in the project, including research, engagement, impact and knowledge exchange activities
- List of Publications
- Relevant final/interim reports
- Data Management Plan
- Proposal Cover Letter (optional)

All proposals will be subject to ESRC review to ensure compliance with the call specification and objectives, following peer review by academic and industry-based subject specialists and submission to a selection Panel (see timetable below).

The Je-S guidance for the call will provide details on the information that you will be required to submit as part of your proposal. All applicants are strongly advised to consult ESRC's research funding guide (<https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-forapplicants/research-funding-guide/>), which sets out the rules and regulations governing its funding. However, please note, that call-specific guidance supersedes standard guidance where there is a conflict.

## Commissioning timetable

- Outline call opens – 14 May 2020
- Outline call closes – 16.00 7 July 2020
- Shortlisting Panel meeting – 14 September 2020
- Full proposal stage (invite only) opens – 28 September 2020
- Applicants' Workshops – 5 and 6 October 2020
- Full proposal stage (invite only) closes – 16.00 5 November 2020
- Full panel meeting – 20 January 2021
- Applicants notified of final decisions – 3 February 2021

- Mandatory grant start date – 1 March 2021
- Latest grant end date – 29 February 2024

## Contacts

If you have any questions or would like further information about the scheme, contact:

- Huw Vasey or Pete Henley  
Email: [ISCFHealthyAgeing@esrc.ukri.org](mailto:ISCFHealthyAgeing@esrc.ukri.org)

Enquiries relating to technical aspects of the Je-S form should be addressed to:

- Je-S helpdesk  
Email: [jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk](mailto:jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk)