Highlight notice: COVID-19 and minority ethnic groups

Opportunity status:	Closed
Funders:	**Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)**, **Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)**, **Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)**, **Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)**, **Innovate UK**, **Medical Research Council (MRC)**, **Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)**, **Research England**, **Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC)**, UK Research and Innovation
Funding type:	Grant
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This highlight notice is part of UKRI Agile Research and Innovation Response to COVID-19 scheme.

Apply for funding to support research on:

- the vulnerability of minority ethnic groups to COVID-19
- the emerging social, economic and cultural impacts of the pandemic on these groups.

This opportunity is open to organisations eligible for UKRI funding. We strongly encourage multidisplinary consortium bids and research that is co-designed or co-produced with members of minority ethnic communities.

Your proposal must set out a clear strategy for maximising the potential for knowledge exchange with policy makers, practitioners and with the UK's minority ethnic communities.

Projects can be supported for up to 18 months.

Who can apply

This highlight notice follows the same eligibility rules as the **UKRI Agile Research and Innovation Response to COVID-19 scheme.**

Proposals will be accepted from anyone who is normally eligible to apply for UKRI funding. This includes any company or SME that would normally be eligible for Innovate UK grant support.

Check your eligibility for funding.

Usual research council or Innovate UK funding rules will apply.

Research and technology organisations (RTOs) can lead applications for Innovate UK grants, but they must collaborate with at least two businesses of any size.

Academic institutions cannot lead an application to Innovate UK, but may participate in collaborations.

Exceptionally, proposals will also be accepted from public sector research establishments (PSREs). Providing this opportunity to PSREs addresses the Nurse Review's principle of '**investing in excellence, wherever it is found**'.

UKRI have developed this **initial list of PSREs (PDF, 65KB)** that could be eligible to apply for research council grants (at 80% fEC) through this fund. This list is not exhaustive.

PSREs will need to complete the appropriate eligibility form to evidence they have the capacity and capability required by UKRI. Instructions on how to apply for eligibility and a list of PSREs which are already eligible can be found on the **UKRI eligibility page.**

An individual or business can be principal investigator or lead on only one bid at any one time. You may support others as co-investigator, as long as you have the capacity to do so without detriment to the project you lead.

You may be asked to become part of wider consortia or join with already existing efforts.

Please note this call is specifically for proposals that will deliver within 18 months and require a rapid decision due to the nature of the proposed project. Other UKRI schemes are still open to applications for COVID-19 related work that do not require such a rapid response or for longer term projects.

Working with international co-investigators

For more details please see the 'Additional information' section below.

Resubmissions

Applications previously submitted to the DHSC/UKRI initiative's earlier calls cannot be resubmitted to either the DHSC/UKRI rolling call or this UKRI open call.

Applications previously submitted to any other Innovate UK competition cannot be resubmitted to this UKRI open call.

Proposals submitted to this call that are unsuccessful cannot be resubmitted to this call unless invited to do so.

What we're looking for

This highlight notice calls for research that focuses on:

- exploring the range of influences and mechanisms likely to contribute to ethnic differences in COVID-related outcomes (including health, social, economic or cultural outcomes)
- urgently building understanding of what may mitigate these effects to achieve better outcomes for minority ethnic groups in the short and longer term.

While we do not expect any individual proposal to necessarily cover all aspects of this call, we strongly encourage multidisciplinary consortium bids that will be able to demonstrate significant breadth of coverage of these issues.

UKRI's ambition is to fund one or two consortia in this area, with a combined value of up to £5 million.

Find out more about the scope in the full **highlight notice guidance for applicants**.

The following illustrate the nature and range of areas **within scope**:

- housing and employment circumstances, how they influence an individual's likelihood of exposure to COVID, and also interact with ethnicity
- ethnic differences in accessing welfare benefits and support
- consequences of the pandemic for children and young people from minority ethnic groups
- understanding the trust of minority ethnic groups in institutions and authority figures
- community mobilisation and resilience in minority ethnic communities
- migrants, including those affected by No Recourse to Public Funds
- impact on individuals from ethnic minorities caused by the shift of NHS resources and attention away from chronic conditions during the pandemic
- impact on minority ethnic groups of COVID outbreaks in care homes from the perspectives of both the workforce, residents and their respective families and communities.

The following would be **out of scope** and not be eligible for this call:

- highly applied healthcare focused proposals, for example focused on care delivery for a specific disease

- proposals focused on a specific geographic locale unless a framework for extrapolating broader lessons can be clearly articulated in the proposal.
- exclusively internationally focused proposals where no lessons can be drawn for the immediate or longer-term UK context
- proposals framed in terms of intersectionality more broadly – the primary focus for applications under this highlight must be ethnic minorities
- proposals submitted previously to either the UKRI rapid response call or UKRI/DHSC rolling call unless significantly revised and/or incorporated in new ways into other proposals.

How to apply

First, read the full **highlight notice guidance for applicants.**

Applying then follows the same application processes as **UKRI Agile Research and Innovation Response to COVID-19 scheme.**

There are two application routes for this call. The deadline for both is midnight on 18 September 2020.

Project leaders from academic and public sector research organisations should apply to the research councils via the Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system.

Project leads from businesses need to apply to Innovate UK via one of the three strands on the Innovation Funding Service (IFS).

Applications to the research councils

1. Fill in the **application form**.
2. Attach the form to your application in the **Joint Electronic Submission system (Je-S)**.

All proposals must use the provided form.

Please include the phrase '**COVID BAME highlight**' at the beginning of your grant title so that we can identify it as a proposal to the highlight notice call.

Full instructions for the Je-S application process are provided in the 'Additional information' section and **instructions on how to submit an application to the Agile Research and Innovation Response to COVID-19 call on the Je-S system.**

The application form and the following information should be collated into a single PDF:

- the regulatory requirements annex that forms part of the application form
- a CV for the principal investigator and any co-investigators. Each CV to provide relevant key publications, outputs and grants, and other relevant information indicating their suitability to lead or support the research as described in the

application (no more than 1 x A4 page per CV using Arial 11 point. These can be inserted into the form as a PDF)

- an **optional** document of supporting figures, Gantt chart or data tables (no more than one page of A4).

No further attachments should be included.

Please note that although the call for research proposals is being hosted on Je-S by EPSRC, and will show the EPSRC logo in some places, the call remains UKRI wide. Your proposal will still be assessed by the most appropriate council(s).

Applications to Innovate UK

Submit your application using the Innovation Funding Service (IFS).

Two different funding options are available.

These links give more information on those state aid funding options and how to apply:

- **de minimis**
- **Article 25.**

The scope of the competition is the same for each option. Choose the option that suits your project and your business using that information and our **general guidance.**

You can only apply to one of these competitions.

You may only apply once to this UKRI open competition as a whole for any given innovation project. You cannot submit a project application that was previously submitted to this or any other Innovate UK competition.

As part of assessing your application, we may share it within UKRI, and with other organisations, under the terms of our **privacy notice and information management policy**. We may also do this to support the national and international coordination of research to combat COVID-19 or to seek funding contributions from third parties. Innovate UK may share proposals with their Affinity Partners for consideration for support.

Full details on how to apply via these systems is given in the 'Additional information' section.

US COVID-19 high performance computing consortium applicants

If an applicant wishes to access high performance computing resources from the US COVID-19 Consortium (as per the additional details section below), they should produce a supplementary document following the **guidance to provide additional information**, and submit it as a separate PDF along with their applicant as above.

We ask that applicants state that they are applying for time to the consortium in their application email.

How we will assess your application

The call for proposals closes on Friday 18 September. Applications are then being assessed by a specially convened review panel with a view to funding projects up to a combined value of £5 million. The assessment process and award decision will be complete in November.

Review panel membership

The panel membership includes:

- Professor Tarani Chandola (Chair), University of Manchester
- Professor Sinead Brophy, Swansea University
- Jabeer Butt, Race Equality Foundation
- Professor Jagjit Chadha, National Institute of Economic and Social Research
- Dr Jayati Das-Munshi, King's College London
- Professor Meena Dhanda, University of Wolverhampton
- Professor Azhar Farooqi, Clinical Director, Centre for Black and Minority Ethnic Health
- Professor Peter Hopkins, Newcastle University
- Associate Professor Stacy Johnson, University of Nottingham
- Professor Meena Kumari, University of Essex
- Professor Simonetta Longhi, University of Reading
- Professor Ambreena Manji, Cardiff University
- Professor Linda McDowell, University of Oxford

Contact details

For more information on this highlight notice and how to apply to the research councils, please email **CV19researchinnovation@ukri.org**

For more information on how to apply to Innovate UK please email **support@innovateuk.ukri.org** or call 0300 321 4357.

Innovate UK's phone lines are open from 9:00 to 11:30 and 14:00 to 16:00, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays).

Additional info

The call specification was informed by a workshop convened by UKRI in June to explore key evidence gaps about the vulnerability of different ethnic groups to COVID-19 and its impacts.

A range of experts joined this formative discussion, bringing with them considerable community, sector and research knowledge. Attendees' backgrounds covered a range of disciplines including

- sociology
- social policy
- psychology
- law
- philosophy
- research methods
- epidemiology
- public health.

Key policy and government stakeholders also participated. Over 40% of attendees were from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups.

Supporting documents

- **Highlight notice guidance for applicants (PDF, 131KB)**
- **How to submit an application to this call on the Je-S system (PDF, 236KB)**
- **Terms and conditions for COVID-19 awards (PDF, 126KB)**

Additional application information

Applications to this open call must be submitted via online submission systems. For academic-led proposals the updated **application form (DOCX, 66KB)** should still be completed and uploaded upon application.

Applications to the research councils

Bids must be led by an eligible research organisation or public sector research establishment (PSRE).

Proposals must be submitted via Je-S using an EPSRC outline proposal form. All applicants (principal investigators and co-investigators) will need to hold registered level Je-S accounts. If you are not already registered, please ensure that sufficient time is allowed for this process before completing your proposal.

Find out how to **create a registered Je-S account (PDF, 236KB)**.

Users will need to select the account type 'an applicant on a standard or outline proposal'.

This account type will require verification from the nominated organisation.

Users will receive an email from Je-S saying the account is being verified and a further email to confirm if the account has been accepted or declined when your organisation has verified your details.

Please note that the call is being 'hosted' on the Je-S system by EPSRC on behalf of all the research councils (AHRC, BBSRC, ESRC, EPSRC, MRC, NERC, STFC). It may therefore be branded with EPSRC logo in various places. This is unavoidable because of legacy systems.

The call does however remain a cross-UKRI programme and proposals within the remits of any of the research councils can be submitted. Your proposal will continue to be reviewed and assessed by the most relevant council(s).

See the detailed instructions on **how to submit an application to this call on the Je-S system (PDF, 236KB)**.

Read the **terms and conditions for COVID-19 awards** (in addition to the standard UKRI terms and conditions).

Applications to Innovate UK

Bids must be business-led or collaborations with a business (or businesses).

Proposals will be submitted via IFS (Innovation Funding Service) following one of the three links relating to one of the three different State Aids regimes available:

- **de minimis**
- **EU Temporary Framework**
- **Article 25.**

Applicants should decide under which State Aid route to apply, select the appropriate link and complete their applications in IFS, in line with the guidance.

You can only submit an application to one of these state aid frameworks and may only apply once to this UKRI open competition as a whole for any given innovation project.

Re-submission of projects that were previously submitted to this or any other Innovate UK competition is not permitted.

Applications requesting Innovate UK funding must comply with Innovate UK terms and conditions.

Innovate UK is unable to fund applications that do not fully comply with State Aid Law – any projects that are invited forward for more detailed consideration by Innovate UK will have to provide further information to demonstrate that they meet State Aid requirements.

Applications previously submitted to any other Innovate UK competition cannot be resubmitted to this UKRI open call.

Read about Innovate UK's funding rules in **Innovate UK's guidance for applicants.**

Innovate UK's assessment of applications will include evaluation of potential routes to market that will enable the proposed solution to achieve the desired impact upon the effects of the pandemic and result in beneficial impact upon the growth of the businesses involved.

Additional information on councils' priorities in this area can be found on their websites.

DHSC prioritisation of COVID-19 research studies

Any research that requires access to the UK health and care system must follow guidance issued by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) to get their study nationally supported as high priority COVID-19 Urgent Public Health Research.

See the **NIHR guidance.**

This will include research that would normally need NHS R&D approval, including where access to patients, data or health and care staff would be required.

Given the urgency of the current situation UKRI are committed to a principle of parallel processing. We encourage requests to UKRI to be submitted in parallel to requests for access to the UK health and care system through the NIHR portal. However, we are aware that you may need evidence of the approval of funding before the NIHR makes their decision on access. We will therefore endeavour to make decisions as quickly as possible.

If approval is received through NIHR and a study is nationally recognised, evidence of this must be provided to UKRI.

Working with international co-investigators

International co-investigators from any country are eligible to receive funding from grants issued by UKRI councils for this call.

Please note: international co-investigators are not eligible to receive funding from Innovate UK grants in this competition.

Any academic researcher (such as those holding a PhD or equivalent qualification, or higher) from an established international research organisation of comparable standing to a UK research organisation will be eligible to act as a co-investigator.

Proposals should explain the inclusion of international co-investigators, detailing the skills expertise, or access to resources and contexts, that they will contribute to the project.

The grant will cover 100% of the direct costs for international co-investigators. Funding requested for international co-investigators must not exceed 30% of the proposal's full economic cost.

More than one international co-investigator may be included, provided the total funding cap is not exceeded.

Salary costs are not normally eligible costs. Exceptions may be requested and justification should be provided to explain why these costs cannot be covered through other sources.

We recognise that this is a particular issue for international co-investigators from low and middle-income countries (LMICs) and requests for exceptions will be considered in this context.

Overheads (estate or indirect costs) are not eligible costs. However, where research is being undertaken by a co-investigator based in a LMIC, a contribution towards overheads will be considered, where it can be shown that it will assist in

developing research capacity (calculated as 20% of the overseas organisations' directly incurred costs).

If working with international co-investigators, it is the responsibility of the UK institution to undertake any due diligence that may be necessary, and to ensure appropriate collaboration agreements are in place as required.

Applicants are requested to provide assurance in the letter of support that the necessary due diligence has or will shortly be undertaken to enable work to start without delay, should funding be approved.

Global Talent visa and COVID-19 research

International academics and researchers wishing to work on UK-based COVID-19 research projects funded by UKRI or other endorsed funders can apply for a **Global Talent visa** under relaxed criteria until 31 January 2021.

Data and software sharing and open access requirements

Data produced as a result of this funding will need to be shared in line with the **joint statement on sharing research data and findings relevant to the novel coronavirus (nCoV) outbreak**, to which UKRI is a signatory.

Software, such as analysis scripts, spreadsheets, or modelling codes, created as part of the work under this funding should be similarly shared.

Examples of suitable data depositories include:

COVID-19 Data portal

The **COVID-19 Data Portal** was launched in April 2020 to bring together relevant datasets for sharing and analysis in an effort to accelerate coronavirus research.

It enables researchers to upload, access and analyse COVID-19 related reference data and specialist datasets as part of the wider European COVID-19 Data Platform.

Health Data Research Innovation Gateway

The **Health Data Research Innovation Gateway** is a portal to find and request access to UK health datasets controlled by members of the UK Health Data Research Alliance.
Launched in January 2020, the first phase of the Gateway provides detailed descriptions (metadata) of these datasets, which researchers can search, browse and request access to health data.

It does not hold or store any patient or health data. It aims to increase transparency around accessible datasets and processes associated with their access.

UK Data Service

The **UK Data Service** is the UK's largest collection of social, economic and population data resources.

OpenAIRE

[OpenAIRE](#) provides unlimited, barrier free, open access to research outputs financed by public funding in Europe.

US COVID-19 High Performance Computing Consortium

UK researchers can apply for access to the High Performance Computing (HPC) Consortium, including some of the world's leading HPC systems, for computational time to support their research into COVID-19.

Information on the systems available can be found on the **[consortium website](#)**. In particular, applicants to the UKRI COVID-19 call can apply by producing a supplementary document to their UKRI applicant (see the 'How to apply' section above for more details).

UK researchers who are not applying for funding from the COVID-19 call can apply to the consortium directly by **[submitting a proposal.](#)**

Related opportunities

[Get funding for ideas that address COVID-19](#)