

**EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment**

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| **Question** | **Response** |
| 1. **Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed** | Protecting Citizens Online 2 – Outline call |
| 1. **Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event** | This is part of a UK Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF) investment, aiming to fund proposals on the basis of the 2019 UK Government Online Harms White Paper, and aligning with the existing National Research Centre on Privacy, Harm Reduction and Adversarial Influence Online (REPHRAIN), funded in 2020. This will be realised via a call for outlines, followed by an invited call for full proposals, which will be assessed at an expert panel. |
| 1. **What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?** *(e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)* | UKRI partner organisations (AHRC, ESRC) and stakeholders from REPHRAIN. The call scope is being developed in collaboration with REPHRAIN, with input from a number of workshops with attendees from academia, industry, policy and the third sector, input from the REPHRAIN steering board, and a public consultation. |
| 1. **Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?** | UK research and innovation community, project partners from academia, industry, policy and the third sector. |
| 1. **What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?** | Standard monitoring frameworks for EPSRC grants will apply. There will be additional monitoring given the funding through SPF – applicants will be given plenty of notice of any additional requirements.  The assessment process has been designed to ensure unconscious bias is minimised and managed. The outline stage of the call will be anonymous in order to encourage the greatest possible diversity of researchers (in terms of research area, career stage, track record and protected characteristics) |

As a funder of research, EPSRC remains committed to attracting the best potential researchers from a diverse population into research careers. For policy changes, funding activities and events EPSRC will aim to:

* Select venues that are accessible and where possible accommodate any specific requirement in our planning and organisation of an initiative to support wider participation. This includes for applicants, reviewers, panel members and staff. Included in the interview invitation letter is a request for any access issues to be notified.
* All participants in the process are asked to inform staff if they have any additional needs to enable attendance or participation.
* Offer support for people with caring responsibilities, further details are available [here](https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/basics/caringresponsibilities/).
* Clearly communicate the timeline and key milestones for funding activities, advertise these widely to reach the largest possible audience.
* Support and encourage panel members to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions. Staff will work closely with the Panel Chair(s) to agree approaches that are designed to minimize opportunities for bias and improve transparency of the decision making process. This includes managing environmental conditions, such as providing appropriate breaks.
* Support flexible working of stakeholders.
* Ensure diversity of peer review assessment and interview panels. Staff will adhere to a mixed panel policy and endeavor to achieve the minimum 30% for the underrepresented gender on the panel.
* Abide by the principles of peer review
* Provide EPSRC staff with tailored unconscious bias training for Peer Review processes and clear guidance for assessors.
* Handle personal sensitive information in compliance with General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

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| **Protected Characteristic Group** | **Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?** | **Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used** | **Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)** |
| **Disability** | None identified |  | * The Outline stage of the call will be anonymised in order to attract the widest and most diverse pool of applicants (in terms of academic discipline, career stage, track record and protected characteristics), and mitigate unconscious bias * The call document expressly states a commitment to EDI and welcomes applicants from a diverse pool * The EPSRC Peer Review process incorporates a target for securing 30% under-represented gender membership on panels * EPSRC staff receive training in EDI and Unconscious Bias management * Panel members and meeting chairs are briefed on Unconscious Bias management before every panel * Every effort will be made not to hold the assessment panels during school holidays or over any major religious events * Both panels during the assessment process will be held online to increase accessibility to panel members with mobility impairments or caring responsibilities; support is made available at EPSRC for those with caring responsibilities * Every attempt will be made to accommodate panel members’ accessibility requirements ahead of and during the panels |
| **Gender reassignment** | None identified |  |
| **Marriage or civil partnership** | None identified |  |
| **Pregnancy and maternity** | None identified |  |
| **Race** | None identified |  |
| **Religion or belief** | None identified |  |
| **Sexual orientation** | None identified |  |
| **Sex (gender)** | None identified |  |
| **Age** | None identified |  |
| **Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)** | None identified |  |

**Evaluation:**

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| **Question** | **Explanation / justification** | |
| Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people? |  | |
| **Final Decision:** | **Tick the relevant box** | **Include any explanation / justification required** |
| 1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will **proceed**. | ✓ |  |
| 1. You can decide to **stop** the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups |  |  |
| 1. You can **adapt or change** the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias |  |  |
| 1. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore you are going to **proceed with caution** with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision. |  |  |

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| **Will this EIA be published\* Yes/Not required**  (\*EIA’s should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events: | **Yes** |
| **Date completed:** | **15th April 2021** |
| **Review date** (if applicable): | **N/A** |

**Change log**

| **Name** | **Date** | **Version** | **Change** |
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| Sonia Raikova | When published | 1 |  |