UKRI Economic and Social Research Council

Equality Impact Assessment
National Capability in Behavioral Research Hub

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is committed to promoting equality and participation in all its activities, whether this is related to the work we do with our external stakeholders or whether this is related to our responsibilities as an employer. As a public body, we are also required to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations when making decisions and developing policies. To do this, it is necessary to understand the potential impacts of the range of internal and external activities on different groups of people.

What is an Equality Impact Assessment and why does UKRI use it?
When developing a new scheme, or considering changes to an existing one, UKRI will carry out an equality impact assessment to review how it may affect particular groups or individuals and will take the findings into account. We expect that very rarely our actions will create barriers to participation. The assessment may however flag issues that are not of UKRI's making but we will, where it is in our remit to do so, recommend actions and adjustments. Some impacts are not exclusive to the scheme or change that is being evaluated and need to be addressed throughout our organisation. In some cases we may not have enough expertise and we will consult with others.

Our leadership and building on good practice
It is our ambition to be recognised as a leader in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and to build on our record of achievements to date, following on from the RCUK, Innovate UK and HEFCE Action Plans. These Plans are updated from time to time and Equality Impact Assessments will help us to prioritise actions.

Current good practice that is relevant to the National Capability in Behavioral Research Hub includes our:
- Grant terms and conditions, including recognition for sick leave and all forms of parental leave
- EDI in Panel Meetings Guidance for all panel members.

There are multiple dimensions/aspects to this Equality Impact Assessment:
1) Ensuring that the eligibility criteria are clear and objectively justified
2) Ensuring that the submission, peer review and awarding processes are free from unintentional bias
3) The identification of any potential barriers to attendance and participation in the call and the assessment and awarding process as below
   a. Meeting duration – Appropriate duration to facilitate good environmental conditions for assessment and inclusion
   b. Venue location and arrangements to accommodate needs
   c. Broad ranging panel membership
   d. Meeting management/Chair/robust assessment criteria

	Question	Response
1.	**Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed**	National Capability in Behavioral Research Hub
2.	**Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event**	The ESRC intends to establish a National Capability for Behavioural Research Programme which will likely consist of a central hub complemented by a series of 'spokes' to deliver key aspects of the programme. This major behavioural research 'hub' of world-leading social science and interdisciplinary experts will include a spoke for academic capacity and capability building and other relevant training for non-academics delivered via a Centre for Doctoral Training Plus (CDT+). A precise specification for the investment is being developed, infomed by stakeholder consultations. However it is likely that the Hub will act as a connector and facilitator across academia and policy. It will include a core research function operating at the global frontier of research and methods, providing agile funds for exemplar projects to demonstrate value as well as facilitating links between existing research expertise and relevant stakeholders. It will signpost evidence and work with data investments to promote and maximise value from existing and new, innovative forms of data. The hub will co-create and promote a vision for behaviour research that draws on a broad definition of what this encompasses, factoring in broader societal and economic drivers. £10M funding will be available to support a single Hub which will last a maximum of 6 years. Any discipline may apply, though the Hub must at least be 50 per cent within the social sciences. Peer review will likely take place from end of January to end of March 2023 Panel and Interviews will take place from mid-May to mid-June 2023 The expected start date for the Hub will be September 2023
3.	**What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?** *(e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)*	Stakeholder engagement consists of two phases – Phase 1 covering key questions around the landscape and model and Phase 2 focussing on building key partnerships with a view of attracting co-funding. Stakeholder activities include:

		• Initial scoping in conjunction with Public Health England • Understanding Behaviour - series of Delivery Plan engagement sessions • Academic Workshops and consultations with individual stakeholder groups (eg government, UKRI and non-UKRI funders, and industry): • External Advisory Group made up of members from ESRC Council and Strategic Advisory Network with expertise in behavioural research, capacity building, data and inter disciplinary research • Internal Working Group meeting monthly.
4.	Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	• Applicants to the Hub funding activity • Peer reviewers and commissioning panel members for Hub funding activity • ESRC staff attending the Panel meeting and interviews for Hub funding activity. • Potential Co funders to the Hub
5.	What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	• A UKRI Risk Management Strategy and Risk Register has been developed and a UKRI Risk Management Strategy will be followed to ensure Risk Management is embedded in Behavioural Research Programme activities • A Theory of Change Model will be developed to describe how our activities will lead to the outcomes and impacts we want to achieve. The Theory of Change will provide a platform to identifying and quantifying programme benefits. • A Benefits Management Plan will be developed to monitor and realise benefits from the change activities. • An evaluation plan will be developed to evaluate the progress of the program andinvestments.

GENERAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

ESRC's research commissioning processes are designed with fairness in mind.

- The project team will ensure documentation and communications are carefully worded and should draw attention to UKRI's aspirations around ED&I
- ESRC (UKRI) is responsible for compliance with the terms of the Equality Act 2010 including any subsequent amendments introduced while work is in progress.
- The project team will ensure that participants are alerted to the fact that if they wish to participate in an ESRC-led activity but find that they are barred from doing so as a consequence of ED&I considerations they should contact the office for advice.

- The project team will keep personal information confidential and adhere to data protection regulations

Eligibility and criteria
- The National Capability for Behavioural Research Hub call is open to all eligible research organisations (RO). Check if you're eligible for funding – ESRC – UKRI. Applicants are eligible for funding whether or not they are established members of a recognised RO, but applicants who are not an established member of a recognised RO must be accommodated by the RO and provided with appropriate facilities to carry out the research.

Standard Grant Terms and Conditions:
- UKRI standard Grant Terms and Conditions comply with UK equality legislation and include provisions designed to mitigate against potential negative impacts (e.g. sick pay, parental and adoption leave, the possibility of part-time and flexible working, and grant extensions).
- Research Organisations are subject to equality legislation and have a duty to comply with it. RGC 8 states that 'The Research Organisation must assume full responsibility for staff funded from the grant and, in consequence, accept all duties owed to and responsibilities for these staff, including, without limitation, their terms and conditions of employment and their training and supervision, arising from the employer/employee relationship.' Universities are therefore required to make reasonable adjustments as required to support their staff.

Panel recruitment and Interviews:
- We will aim to ensure that the composition of the commissioning panels are diverse, with at least a 60:40 gender balance (at least 40% for the underrepresented gender).
- We will ensure (if possible) that the chair and vice chair of the commissioning panels are not the same gender.
- Whilst panel members are appointed, first and foremost, based on expertise, we will aim to appoint a diverse panel membership. Final decisions take into account trying to balance the panels by gender and geography and seek to ensure a diversity of career stage and institutions. We will only make recruitment decisions which compromise diversity when it is objectively justified by the necessity to ensure the required breadth of subject expertise with high quality candidates.
- A tool has been developed which allows ESRC staff to assess the EDI characteristics of commissioning panels, and this will be used when appointing panels.

Process
- The ESRC Peer Review College should be the first source of peer reviewers consulted by ESRC staff. Where it is not possible to secure the necessary peer review from within the college membership ESRC case officers will look beyond the college membership. All members of the ESRC community are encouraged to complete the ESRC peer review training tool which is mandatory for Peer Review College members. The training tool outlines the ESRC's standard peer review process and emphasises the importance of timely, objective, fair and informed peer review.
- The membership of the Peer Review College aims to reflect the community it represents and effort are made to achieve an appropriately balanced membership in terms of gender, age, ethnic origin etc.
- Peer reviewers are required to evidence their views and scores. ESRC staff conduct usability checks on all peer review comments and where there is evidence of bias or a reviewer has failed to provide evidence for their scores the review will be marked as 'unusable'.
- All panel members will receive guidance which covers issues including fairness, objectivity and unconscious bias.

- It is the role of panel members to moderate and assess the quality of peer review and to agree final scores for each proposal. Panel members will be briefed on unconscious bias and encouraged to feel empowered to constructively challenge potential bias where they identify it. The Panel Chairs and Panel Secretaries play a particularly important role in this respect. An implementation intention statement will be read out at the beginning of the commissioning panel meeting which sets the tone for discussions and requires that panel members pay close attention to the scoring criteria and definitions.
- Interviews will be held with members of the panel, the applicant/team and the moderators. Advance notice of interview dates will be provided.
- The project team will keep personal information confidential and adhere to data protection regulations

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 (both mental and physical)	Potential negative	There could be potential discrimination against a panel member, a research applicant or a research participant due to their perceived or actual disability. Je-S does not currently comply with disability accessibility schemes. This will be picked up by The Funding Service. Applicants should seek support from their own institution's research support office. Panel meeting attendees with physical disabilities may have difficulties if meeting venues cannot cater for their needs Panel meeting attendees with neuro-disabilities may experience difficulties with	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations. • Ensure that staff have had sufficient EDI/ unconscious bias/diversity awareness training so they can respond effectively to the requirements of all participants • Solicit information from panel meeting participants (in confidence) about any additional requirements they may have in order to fully participate • Meetings are likely to be held remotely via an online communications platform such as Zoom, eliminating the need for travel to meeting venues which may not offer an accessible and inclusive environment for all participants. • Using transcript, closed captions for those who have hearing impairment • Ensure any images used are transcribed so that text-to-talk/other software can be used

		concentration and focus during panel assessments	- Ensure that participants have the correct software and that it works with zoom/powerpoint etc - Any webinars detailing the aims and objectives of the call will be made accessible via captioning and recording and will be made available online - Alternative document formatting and potential use of screen readers for the visually impaired; - Provision of documents in sans-serif, dyslexia-friendly fonts; and dyslexia-friendly formats; - Avoiding colours, lighting etc that may trigger migraines, epilepsy; - Zoom meeting length taken into account and shortened if needed - Ensuring that plenty of breaks are built into the agenda; - All web pages relating to the initiative should comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines - We will endeavour to support any additional needs, including but not limited to hearing and sight on request by stakeholder and any other participants. If we hold in person meeting in future: - Ensure they are held in venues that can offer an accessible and inclusive environment for participants. - Ensure there is accessibility for wheelchair users and people with impaired mobility; - Ensure participants are asked about their dietary restrictions in advance and that these are accomodated - Consider using induction loops for the hearing impaired - Provision of documents in sans-serif, dyslexia-friendly fonts; and dyslexia-friendly formats - ensuring that plenty of breaks are built into the agenda

			• Ensuring sufficiently bright and spacious rooms with adequate lighting, alternative document formatting and potential use of screen readers for the visually impaired. Also, avoiding colours, lighting etc that may trigger migraines or epilepsy • Ensure that venues are easily accessible to main transport links • Consider paying T&S (on a case by case basis) for carers or support workers to attend alongside the participant, where this is required and not covered by the Individual's own employment contract
Gender reassignment	Potential negative	There could be potential discrimination against a panel member, a research applicant or a research participant due to their perceived or actual experience of gender reassignment. We would expect the Research Organisation to fulfil its legal duties, whereby the Equality Act states that it is unlawful for an employer to treat a transitioning employee unfairly or differently than they would if you were absent because of sickness/injury.	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.
Marriage or civil partnership	Probably not		
Pregnancy and maternity	Potential negative	Childcare responsibilities may be a barrier to attending events, meetings and interviews, Completion of grant may be affected by maternity and parental leave and leave related to surrogacy and adoption.	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations. • Meeting dates will be agreed and publicised in advance to allow potential attendees to make arrangements to attend • Applicants should have some discretion on who can attend the interview. An alternative person could be allocated to attend on behalf of the team member in their absence

			• Provision for parental leave (including maternity leave, paternity leave and leave related to surrogacy and adoption) are covered in the UKRI terms and conditions • We will ensure the use of gender-neutral language – parental leave, irrespective of sexual orientation • Panel meetings are likely to be held virtually with no travel required. We will ensure there are sufficient breaks in any online meeting to provide breaks for breastfeeding/expressing mothers if necessary • If meeting in person, consider whether the venue is able to provide facilities for breastfeeding/expressing mothers if necessary • Reimbursement of additional childcare costs (on a case-by-case basis) if the meeting participant is otherwise unable to attend could be considered, but we would seek to schedule meetings/interviews at a time that would avoid incurring an additional cost (this could include childcare at the venue for in-person panel meetings, additional hours of childcare in the child's usual setting or paying for a relative to travel to care for school age children)
Race (including ethnicity)	Potential negative	There could be potential discrimination against a panel member, a research applicant or a research participant due to their perceived or actual race/ethnicity.	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.
Religion or belief	Potential negative	There could be potential discrimination because it is known that somebody (either a panel member, a research applicant or research participants) has a particular faith or belief.	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations. Ensure that religious observances are taken into account when planning panel meetings. Considerations might include: • Scheduling meetings to avoid major religious festivals; (if

			impossible to avoid then consider mitigations – ie. during Ramadan ensuring that meetings finish early so that participants are able to get home to break their fast.; [Link to useful website on holidays](#). • Allowing prayer breaks if requested • Use unconscious bias statements and alert people to potential biases and how to avoid them in meetings If meeting in person: • Make sure participants are asked about their dietary restrictions in advance and ensure that these are accomodated • Awareness of the sensitivities around offering Muslims meals during periods of fasting) • Not scheduling meetings such that they would require travel late on Friday evenings (Jewish Sabbath) or on Fridays (Friday prayer, Islam) • Allowing prayer breaks if requested
Sexual orientation	Potential negative	There could be potential discrimination against a panel member, research applicant or research participant based on their perceived or actual sexual orientation.	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.
Sex (gender)	Potential negative	Use of language can present a barrier to participation and it may be perceived that those with caring responsibilities are disadvantaged.	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations. • Ensure use of gender neutral language in all communications and documentations • Dates for events will be agreed and publicised in advance to allow potential attendees to make arrangements to attend • Ensure that venues are easily accessible to main transport links. • Reimbursement of additional childcare costs if the meeting participant is otherwise unable to attend (this could include childcare at the venue, additional hours of childcare in the child's usual setting or

			paying for a relative to travel to care for school age children)
Age	Potential negative or positive depending on scheme eligibility requirements	This scheme requires an experienced team to lead the hub and the career stage and therefore age (indirectly) of applicants may lead to difficulties demonstrating the level of experience needed.	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations. • Applicants track record is not an explicit criterion, given likely relationship to career stage and hence (indirectly) age • Applications should be judged on their own merits without inferences being drawn regarding the applicants' abilities due to their apparent or actual age • Panel members and reviewers are briefed to assess proposals against the selection criteria and provide justification for their assessments • Ensure use of a variety of different communication strategies, including social media, to ensure that our messages reach the widest possible target audience • ESRC staff and any facilitators should seek to ensure that all participants have the opportunity to speak • Reflect in unconscious bias briefing for panel
Other characteristics not protected under the Equality Act	Potential negative.	Panel members may be disadvantaged and unable to attend meetings if they have caring responsibilities	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations. • Potential reimbursement of additional childcare costs (over and above normal working hours) if the meeting participant is otherwise unable to attend.

Note: Excessive use of repeated line breaks can make a document inaccessible for users of assistive technologies. To ensure inclusion, please ensure a new table row is inserted for each point if there is more than one consideration or impact for each group (please ensure you populate the "protected characteristic group" column e.g. "disability continued"); rather than using the same row for multiple points with repeated line breaks to separate points.

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification
Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	Yes, but mitigations in place.

Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will **proceed**.		
2. You can decide to **stop** the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. You can **adapt or change** the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias	ü	See the mitigations outlined above.
4. 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.		

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:	06 May 22
Review date (if applicable):	Annually, or if any significant changes are made to the scheme.