

Celebrating PRIZE 2022

10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Celebrating outstanding social and economic impacts of ESRC-funded researchers







Welcome

ESRC's Celebrating Impact Prize competition pays tribute to the UK's world-leading economists and social scientists, highlighting how their work makes a difference to individuals, communities and organisations in the UK and globally.

2022 marks the tenth anniversary of the competition. Since its inception in 2013, we have been celebrating excellent examples of the role that the social sciences play in helping address key economic and social challenges. In that time we have recognised 55 outstanding researchers and research teams as award winners.

This year, our competition highlights the importance of the economic, social and behavioural sciences in helping to address issues such as environmental protection and conservation, regional inequalities, access to health services, election design, and student loan systems. Our finalists also show how research evidence helped us to understand and mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are marking the tenth year of the awards with a special category, the John Hills Impact Prize 2022, in memory of the late Professor Sir John Hills. Throughout his research career, Sir John worked to bring social science evidence to bear on social policy and inequality, not least through his contribution to the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE) at the London School of Economics, which he co-founded in 1997 and directed until 2016. We are supporting this legacy by awarding a prize in his name to a researcher who, like Sir John, has demonstrated significant impact over a sustained length of time.

The impacts of all the Celebrating Impact Prize finalists are impressive. I am proud that the ESRC has funded this research, and that we can fully recognise and celebrate the significant impact it has achieved.

Professor Alison Park

Interim Executive Chair
Economic and Social Research Council



About ESRC

ESRC's mission is to harness the power of social science to drive change that makes a difference to all our lives, improving outcomes for individuals, society and the economy.

We do this by supporting independent, high-quality social science research, resources and training focused on the major social and economic issues facing us today. We are part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), a non-departmental government body sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

About the Celebrating Impact Prize

The ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize, now in its tenth year, is an annual opportunity to recognise the success of ESRC-funded researchers in achieving and enabling outstanding economic or societal impact from their research.

Entrants' applications are reviewed by a panel of academics, engagement and knowledge exchange experts, and research users. Shortlisted applicants were invited to an interview, along with non-academic supporters who helped describe the impact of the work.

In 2022, ESRC is awarding prizes for:

- Outstanding Impact in Business and Enterprise
- Outstanding Impact in Early Career
- Outstanding Impact in International
- Outstanding Impact in Public Policy
- Outstanding Impact in Society
- The John Hills Impact Prize 2022

Research influences COVID-19 policy to prioritise social needs of disadvantaged communities



Professor Laura Bear London School of Economics and Political Science

ESRC-funded research into the impact of COVID-19 on families, neighbourhoods and communities influenced policies on the right to say goodbye to loved ones, social bubbles for extended family networks, the prevention of racialised stigma, and the UK's first national community health initiative. Professor Laura Bear's evidence to the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) impacted policy design by a range of bodies, including the COVID-19 strategy and operations committees in No. 10, Public Health England, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and the Government Communication Service Behavioural Science Unit.

Impacts

- Enabled families to have the 'right to say goodbye to loved ones' in care homes, hospitals and at funerals by raising national recognition of the importance of a dignified death in line with different faith traditions.
- Changed the government's approach to household and community care, resulting in broader social bubbles during lockdowns to help the elderly, carers, disabled, and extended families. By August 2020, 44% of UK residents reported to the Office for National Statistics that they had formed a support bubble benefitting from this policy. During the second lockdown these bubbles were widely used for family support relationships and childcare, especially by women.
- Ensured community responses were created which addressed public health and vaccine take-up through the Community Champions scheme, the UK's first national, community-led, public health initiative. Launched in January 2021 with £23 million of funding targeted at 60 of England's most deprived areas, the scheme brought together local authorities, the third sector and community organisations. These groups helped to lessen racial stigma and provided support such as delivering health advice with food parcels and setting up vaccination hubs in places of worship.
- They combined with NHS efforts to contribute to a significant increase in vaccination rates among the over-50s in all ethnic groups and in some by over 20 percent. The initiative was so successful that a second Community Vaccine Champions Scheme followed in 2022.

About the research

When COVID-19 'lockdown' restrictions were imposed in late March 2020, the disruptions to social support were felt most severely by marginalised communities. Professor Laura Bear used her four years of ESRC-funded research to guide policy in this national emergency.

Her previous work in West Bengal in India had shown how policies could negatively impact social infrastructures. Based on this work, she stressed the importance of a 'social calculus' approach to decision-making, which considers how government interventions affect networks of care and support among marginalised groups. Professor Bear applied this insight and approach to the UK economy as a co-manager of the ESRC Rebuilding Macroeconomics centre, based at UCL.

She was able to apply her insights as a member of the UK Government's Independent Scientific Pandemic Insights Group on Behaviours and the Ethnicity Subgroup, where she provided advice to SAGE based on a social calculus.

To generate a real-time evidence base, Professor Bear set up a COVID and Care Research Group at the London School of Economics. This team carried out ethnographic research among marginalised communities in London and the Midlands. In April 2020 the research revealed that the trauma of COVID-19 deaths was increased by the inability to say goodbye to and mourn loved ones, as well as the lack of public acknowledgement of deaths. This led to a cross-government effort to ensure family members could visit the dying, funerals could go ahead safely, and the human costs of COVID-19 would be addressed in public communications.

Later work revealed the negative impact of restrictions on the extended families of marginalised groups, and stigma when groups were singled out in media and government communications. This insight resulted in more consultation on communications and policies at the local level between Public Health England, local authorities and community organisations.

Professor Bear's research also highlighted community efforts to help the most vulnerable and the importance of co-production to effective policy. Her advice was central to the design and implementation of the government's Community Champions initiative, which enabled volunteers to connect services with local people to improve their health and wellbeing. The locally led initiative engaged with marginalised groups by building new collaborations between organisations. Between May and October 2021, coordination across the NHS, local authorities and Community Champions led to a significant increase in vaccination rates amongst over-50s in all ethnic groups and in some by over 20 percent. The policy was so successful that a second Community Vaccine Champions Scheme followed in 2022.

"My research helped government take account of the vital role played by social infrastructures in helping us cope with COVID-19," says Professor Bear. "It considered and provided evidence of lived experience and, through my work with government and policymakers, helped build community responses in areas that were most affected by the pandemic."

Further information

Professor Laura Bear is a Finalist in the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2022.

Contact

Professor Laura Bear

Department of Anthropology, London School of Economics and Political Science Email: l.bear@lse.ac.uk

https://www.lse.ac.uk/Research/research-impact-case-studies/2021/a-social-calculus-for-COVID-19-policy

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What is the Community Champions scheme and how is it supporting local communities? – The Disability Unit https://disabilityunit.blog.gov.uk/2021/05/25/what-is-the-community-champions-scheme-and-how-is-it-supporting-local-communities/



Improving election fairness and participation







Dr Sarah Harrison London School of Economics

ESRC-funded research on the psychology of election participation has shaped understanding of electoral best practices internationally. It has led to more accurate election polling, improved election processes, and a better electoral experience for citizens, especially for those who are electorally under-represented, such as disabled people, minority ethnic groups and first-time voters.

Impacts

- Professor Michael Bruter and Dr Sarah Harrison's research at the Electoral Psychology Observatory (EPO) as part of the ESRC-funded 'First and Foremost' project has improved voters' experience globally and encouraged increased voter participation through:
 - Changing electoral organisation: EPO insights on how voters' attitudes, turnout and voting choice are affected by how elections are organised has stimulated changes in electoral systems around the world. Changes include ballot paper redesign, and polling station design and organisation.
 - Supporting vulnerable voters: Election management bodies in South Africa and Australia have designed initiatives aimed at giving first-time voters and those with learning, cognitive or physical disabilities a better voting experience. Initiatives include ensuring the first vote is a memorable occasion, with more help available to reduce 'first time nerves'.
 - Developing skills and capacities of election administrations:
 EPO ran training for senior staff of the Central Elections
 Commission (CEC) in the Palestinian territory, which underpinned initiatives to promote inclusion of women and younger voters. EPO has also trained CEC staff in Georgia to better understand voters' needs and worked with Australian officials in polling stations dedicated to accommodating disabled voters.
- EPO research influenced the opinion polling agency Opinium to take voter psychology into account in their political polling. This led to new ways of identifying voters most likely to change their minds, and more precise measures of youth abstention rates. These innovations helped Opinium become the most accurate polling agency at the 2019 UK general election, and one of only two agencies to predict the EU referendum result.

About the research

Launched in 2020, the ESRC-supported Electoral Psychology Observatory (EPO), led by Professor Michael Bruter and Dr Sarah Harrison, conducts research on electoral psychology and how it relates to the organisation of elections (known as 'electoral ergonomics'). Rather than focusing on who wins or loses elections, or on parties and politicians, EPO's pioneering research aims to understand elections from the point of view of voters.

"Our work is unique in that we co-design projects which apply unprecedented scientific approaches to understanding voting experiences in elections. Working with the leading international Electoral Commissions in Australia, the US, South Africa and EU Member States, our research has helped partners better understand voters, their needs, and how to make elections better and more inclusive," says Dr Sarah Harrison.

EPO introduced the groundbreaking concept of 'electoral ergonomics' to electoral practitioners worldwide. Its research shows that every element of electoral organisation – from the design of polling stations to options for casting a vote remotely – will colour voters' experience, attitudes and behaviour. "Electoral ergonomics is about taking account of all the ways the election process can impact how, or indeed whether, a person votes. These may be aspects that the voter is simply unaware of," says Professor Michael Bruter.

For example, while most people say they would like the option of voting online, internet voting leaves people feeling less part of a democracy and hence less likely to vote again at the next election. Voting in person helps young and first-time voters in particular feel happier and more positive about democracy than voting remotely. Crucially, whether a person votes in the first two elections of their lives is likely to determine whether they will vote or abstain for the rest of their lives.

"Adhering to best practice in electoral organisation makes voting fairer, more accessible and more fulfilling," says Professor Bruter. "What we now know is that your first vote,

like other significant 'first times' in life, matters and first-time voters need to be treated accordingly. We also know that it's vital that first-time voters, minority voters and those with visible or hidden disabilities, such as depression or learning difficulties, feel that the polling station is inclusive for them," he says.

EPO's engagement with electoral stakeholders, including governments, electoral commissions, All-Party Parliamentary Groups, polling agencies, electoral observers, and voters themselves is contributing to better electoral practices around the world. This sustained engagement, combined with new approaches to understanding voter behaviour, led EPO to work with the opinion polling agency Opinium, influencing the agency to take voter psychology into account in their political polling.

"We at the Central Electoral Commission firmly believe that using Professor Bruter and Dr Harrison's research has contributed to better understanding of the way we serve voters in elections regardless of age, gender or disabilities. Ultimately this will lead to a better experience and participation of the Palestinian citizens in the coming years," says Hisham Kuhail, CEO, Central Electoral Commission of the Palestinian Territories

Further information

Professor Michael Bruter and Dr Sarah Harrison of the Electoral Psychology Observatory (EPO) are Finalists in the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2022. The EPO conducts cutting-edge research projects on the minds of voters funded by grants from the ESRC and the European Research Council.

Contact

Professor Michael Bruter

Electoral Psychology Observatory, London School of Economics Email: m.bruter@lse.ac.uk

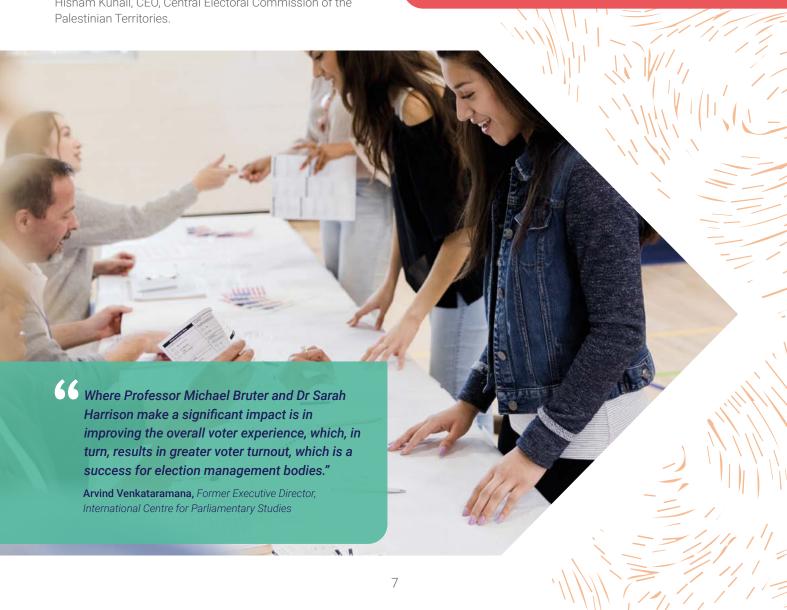
Information on the EPO: https://www.epob.org

EPO Demonstrating Impact:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-kIREI6wJg

First and Foremost:

https://www.epob.org/project-descriptions/



Harnessing people's passion for the ocean to protect the marine environment



Dr Pamela Buchan University of Exeter

ESRC-funded research into what promotes a willingness to preserve the marine environment has led to a range of initiatives by local authorities, conservation charities and marine organisations which are changing people's relationship with the ocean.

Impacts

- Dr Pamela Buchan's ESRC-funded PhD research helped secure £9.5 million to establish the UK's first National Marine Park (NMP) in the Plymouth Sound. The NMP encourages greater engagement with the marine environment for millions of annual visitors. Her findings also informed policy changes designed to give more deprived Plymouth communities access to the NMP.
- Dr Buchan's research prompted the Ocean Conservation Trust (OCT) to change the emphasis of its public engagement programme from educating people to connecting them with the ocean. The OCT now prioritises sensory ocean experiences and emotional engagement with the ocean, for example by handling crabs at the National Marine Aquarium or via virtual reality experiences for care home residents.
- Working with OCT and the Local Government Association, Dr Buchan developed a model Ocean Recovery Declaration ('Motion for the Ocean'). This helps local authorities work towards a clean, healthy and productive ocean, bringing its direct economic, health and wellbeing benefits to their communities. The Motion for the Ocean has been passed by 13 coastal and inland councils, representing a total population of nearly 1.7 million people.

About the research

Oceans cover 70% of the planet and their health affects everyone. As the world's greatest carbon sink, a healthy ocean is essential in the fight against climate change. Protecting and preserving the seas is a matter of concern for many.

In her ESRC-funded PhD research project, Dr Pamela Buchan investigated what motivates people to want to protect the marine environment. She surveyed or interviewed 280 coastal and non-coastal based marine citizens (people who are actively engaged in pro-marine environmental behaviours). Her research concluded that people can develop a marine identity when they love and depend upon a healthy ocean. This leads to a willingness to perform pro-marine environmental behaviours, which may contribute to improving ocean and climate health.

Holidays by the sea, paddling in rockpools, sailing, working in the marine sector – all such experiences provide the emotional and physical connections with the ocean that are the essential building blocks required to support pro-ocean behaviour. Connecting with the ocean through the senses is much more likely to inspire environmental action than education on its own. "The important implication is that we can't expect people to get involved in marine citizenship and take responsibility for achieving sustainable, healthy oceans without positive personal experiences of the sea," Dr Buchan says.

Dr Buchan's research is helping more people develop that connection. The UK's groundbreaking National Marine Park at Plymouth Sound, which is based on her research, will provide 'hands-on' experience of the sea to local residents and visitors, and is expected to be a blueprint for marine parks in the UK and beyond. Her collaboration with the global environmental charity Ocean Conservation Trust (OCT) has prompted a range of initiatives designed to offer all age groups the chance to develop a love for the sea. The National Marine Aquarium, a key OCT initiative, welcomes 300,000 visitors a year and offers numerous opportunities to see, hear, smell, taste and feel the marine environment.

While a positive relationship with the ocean inspires people to feel greater responsibility for its health, they can also, according to Dr Buchan's new definition of marine citizenship, try to change society's relationship with the ocean for the better. "People deserve a say on how we use the marine environment, and their responsibility is to speak up, working with decision-makers or government and trying to change society's relationship with the ocean," she says.

In a collaboration with the OCT and the Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group, Dr Buchan has developed a campaign that encourages people who are passionate about the marine environment to contact their local councillors and councils, asking them to commit to change. Her Ocean Recovery Declaration, or 'Motion for the Ocean', is a framework which helps local governments identify how they can benefit both oceans and their local communities. More than a dozen councils ranging from South Tyneside to Blandford have adopted the declaration and now ensure that their local authority decisions, including planning, take account of the impacts on the ocean.

"Raising awareness of people's responsibilities and rights to the marine environment and connecting more people to the ocean has the potential to transform society's relationship with the ocean. This will benefit not only ocean health but also the health, wellbeing and prosperity of communities," she says.

Further information

Dr Pamela Buchan is a Finalist in the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2022

Contact

Dr Pamela Buchan

Faculty of Environment, Science and Economy, University of Exeter

Email: pb381@exeter.ac.uk

Dr Pamela M. Buchan PhD: https://www.pamelabuchan.co.uk

Citizens of the Sea – A PhD Thesis Summary Report: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/352508841_ Citizens_of_the_Sea_-_A_PhD_Thesis_Summary_Report

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Ocean recovery declaration: https://www.pamelabuchan.co.uk/projects/oceanrecoverydeclaration



Transforming university access for poorer students in Colombia







Professor Lorraine Dearder University College London

An ESRC-funded research collaboration has supported radical reforms to Colombia's university student loan system. From 2023, up to 10,000 extra poorer students annually will be able to access higher education, while the Colombian government will secure higher revenues from loan repayments over the long term.

Impacts

- The Colombian Government has adopted a new incomecontingent student loan system following a collaboration with the ESRC-funded Centre for Global Higher Education. Up to 10,000 extra students per year will be offered loans under the scheme starting in January 2023. The fairer and more affordable scheme means that former students are required to repay only when they have sufficient income in the future.
- The ESRC funded team's statistical modelling provided the Colombian Government with confidence that these incomecontingent loans will eliminate loan defaults and provide the government with higher revenue streams and more sustainable budgets in future.
- The new scheme is targeted specifically at high-attaining students from the three most deprived socio-economic groups across all regions of Colombia. It will enable more students from poorer backgrounds to access higher education because the risk of repayment hardships and loan default has been removed.
- The team's innovative loan modelling methodology is informing policymakers in Brazil, Chile, Japan, the US and elsewhere on the potential to design more effective and fairer student loan systems.

About the research

For over 70 years, Colombia's student loan system has been based on former students repaying fixed amounts over a given period regardless of their employment status or level of earnings. Using novel modelling methods that linked data on loans, earnings and educational outcomes, Professor Lorraine Dearden and Professor Bruce Chapman at the ESRC-funded Centre for Global Higher Education worked with the Colombian government to provide evidence of the system's shortcomings. The research team found that in some months almost half of students had to spend over 90% of their earnings on student loan repayments.

"Ignoring graduates' ability to repay their loans has had dire consequences," Professor Dearden says. "Default rates under the existing system were extremely high, causing stress, financial hardship, an inability to secure future commercial loans and lifetime household disadvantage. Also, as parents are most likely to act as loan guarantors, many potential students from poorer backgrounds decided against university due to the risk of their family's financial ruin should they be forced to default."

Since 2016, the researchers have shared their joint international policy and empirical expertise with local analysts in the Colombian public student loan company (ICETEX), as well as with policymakers and government officials. Under the existing system, the debts of those unable to pay their loans were often sold to a third-party debt collection agency at significant loss to the government. Research revealed that because more than 95% of ICETEX loan holders had been employed for at least some time over the last 10 years, the government would have recouped far more revenue had it held onto the debts and collected repayments via an Income-Contingent Loan (ICL).

Finalised in August 2022, the Colombian government's new ICL-based scheme will significantly improve the lifetime prospects of Colombians, particularly the most disadvantaged, as it protects graduates from repaying loans when they are at their most vulnerable due to ill health, unemployment, or rearing a child. It also ensures new loan holders need no longer fear the consequences of defaulting.

"While we provided major experience and guidance, the final decisions over how loans could work were made by Colombian officials using our tools," says Professor Bruce Chapman. "This is a key lesson for all policy reform issues worldwide; it is essential that ownership rests with those who understand their domestic institutional context."

Building on their ESRC-funded work in Colombia, both researchers believe they now have a transformational prototype for similar reforms in the many countries worldwide with student loan systems in crisis. "The conversion of the Colombian student loan system casts a bright light on a model of prospective change for the many millions of students facing challenging university financing options in their own countries, including in the US, Japan, China, Ireland, Brazil and many more," says Professor Dearden.

Further information

The Centre for Global Higher Education's Professor Lorraine Dearden and Professor Bruce Chapman are Finalists in the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2022

Contact

Professor Lorraine Dearden

Social Research Institute, University College London Email: I.dearden@ucl.ac.uk

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Improving access to pregnancy and birth services in Ghana



Mr Winfred Dotse-Gborgbortsi
University of Southampton

An ESRC-funded PhD project has increased the quality and accessibility of birthing services for 1.8 million women living in Eastern Ghana and its nearby regions. It has also provided new methods for using health and survey data to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality in developing countries around the world.

Impacts

- Mr Winfred Dotse-Gborgbortsi's ESRC-funded PhD research shaped Ghana Health Service's (GHS) priority setting and decision-making to help reduce maternal and neonatal mortality. Resulting initiatives include improving health service delivery by grouping health facilities and communities into health service areas for resource sharing. Birthing services have also been provided to 152 health facilities in Eastern Ghana with tailored interventions such as increasing human resources, enhancing referral services, improving sanitation, water and hygiene, and ensuring the supply of key medicines.
- The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has adopted approaches based on Mr Dotse-Gborgbortsi's innovative spatial inequality modelling techniques in measuring access and use of sexual and reproductive health services in low-income settings. Working in collaboration with UNFPA, similar methods for modelling inequalities are now being scaled in 10 countries including Burkina Faso, Kenya and Pakistan.
- Mr Dotse-Gborgbortsi has increased the capacity of GHS to learn from key healthcare data by facilitating nationwide online health information management training delivered to 1,320 public health officers in Ghana. Face-to-face training has been provided to 10 district health managers on the use of information technology to collect and analyse routine health data.
- During COVID-19, he built, trained and supported a collaborative network of 184 public health officers and early career West African researchers.

About the research

Deaths owing to pregnancy and childbirth-related complications are high in Ghana: the most recent estimates suggest 310 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births and 22 new-born deaths per 1,000 live births. Providing easily accessible skilled birthing services is considered one of the most effective ways of achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goal of reducing maternal and neonatal mortality rates to 70 per 100,000 live births and 12 per 1,000 live births respectively by 2030.

Research by ESRC-funded doctoral student Mr Winfred Dotse-Gborgbortsi, in partnership with the Ghana Health Service (GHS), investigated how women's access to high-quality maternal healthcare is affected by travel time to health facilities and the standard of obstetric services on offer. His study included spatial analysis integrating health facility databases with routine health data for over 40,000 women in 152 health facilities in the 33 districts of Eastern Ghana. The results identified inequalities in the provision of high-skilled obstetric care.

"My use of disaggregated data highlights the danger of national estimates which can mask regional and district shortages of the most skilled healthcare staff," says Mr Dotse-Gborgbortsi. His contribution to a 2021 United Nations Population Fund global report reveals that the Eastern Ghana region has an inadequate supply of medical doctors, nurses and midwives for maternal health needs.

The study's innovative use of geospatial data on geographic barriers to travel revealed that only 29% of women needing birthing care in the Eastern region could reach a well-equipped, top-quality hospital within an hour. Over half of women would need to travel more than two hours in order to access comprehensive emergency obstetric birthing services.

The variation in maternal care quality, combined with travel difficulties, prompts many women to bypass these facilities in search of better care. For example, more than half of approximately 6,000 annual births at the Nsawam Hospital in Ghana's eastern region are to women who have travelled from the neighbouring Greater Accra region.

GHS has used Mr Dotse-Gborgbortsi's analysis of key data to raise the standards of Eastern Ghana's 152 health facilities. This has seen the introduction of interventions ranging from an increased supply of skilled obstetricians to the redistribution of midwives.

"Mr Dotse-Gborgbortsi's field-based research has enabled the Ghana Health Service to understand the exact circumstances of specific populations and health facilities which enables us to tailor our improvement initiatives to their particular needs," says Dr Anthony Ofosu, Deputy Director General of the Ghana Health Service.

Further information

Mr Winfred Dotse-Gborgbortsi is a Finalist in the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2022

Contact

Mr Winfred Dotse-Gborgbortsi

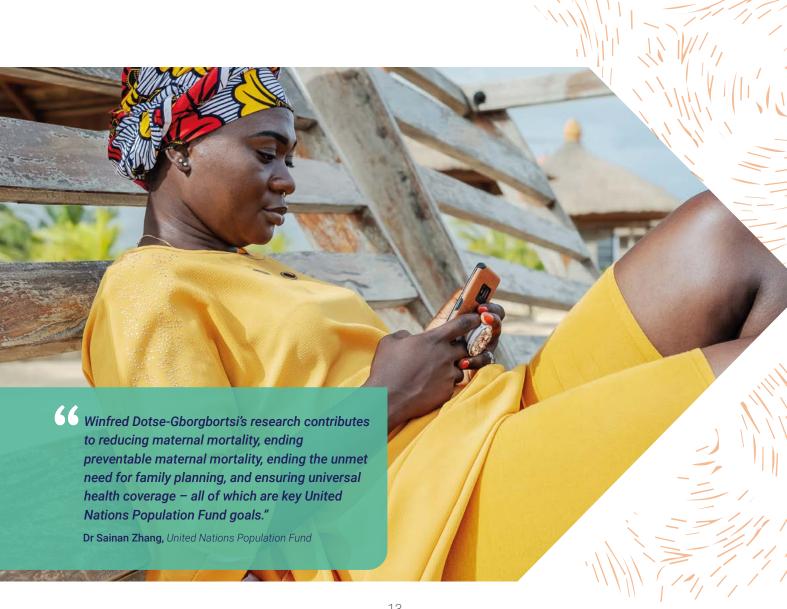
School of Geography and Environment Science, University of Southampton

Email: w.w.dotse-gborgbortsi@soton.ac.uk

https://www.winfredotse.com/about/

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Spatial inequalities in skilled attendance at birth in Ghana: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/tmi.13460



Empowering women in the aviation and aerospace industry



ESRC-funded research into the under-representation of women in the UK aviation and aerospace industry has led to the introduction of a unique, industry-wide mentoring scheme which supports women to build their careers in a traditionally male-dominated profession.

Impacts

- ESRC-funded research by Professor Susan Durbin and colleagues has enabled the creation of alta, a unique, free, women-to-women mentoring scheme for the aviation and aerospace industry. Created in 2019, the platform has grown and now supports over 450 women as mentors or mentees, including over 100 new members who have joined since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Alta's provision of career and social support has created a community of professional women from over 150 organisations.
- As both an online and face-to-face programme, alta cuts across boundaries and enables women working anywhere in the world, in both small and medium-sized enterprises and large companies, to access female mentoring support that would otherwise not have been available to them. Women have access to insights tailored to their needs including technical support and advice, and support on career progression.
- The scheme has changed how these businesses address gender and is helping the industry better understand how to recruit and support women. The Royal Aeronautical Society has embedded alta within its careers service and made mentoring support available to its 1,700 female members (and non-members) for the first time. Collins Aerospace, Boeing UK and GKN Aerospace now help fund alta, and they are using it as a tool to break down barriers and create more balanced workplaces.

About the research

Women in professional roles are under-represented in the aviation and aerospace industry, with few holding the most senior positions. Under 6% of the UK's 16,000 pilots and fewer than 10% of the sector's engineers are female. Since aviation and aerospace industries suffer chronic skills shortages, steps to improve the recruitment and retention of women are urgently needed.

Professor Susan Durbin, with her co-investigator, Dr Ana Lopes, and research assistant, Stella Warren, undertook research funded by ESRC, the University of the West of England, and industry partners into the existing provision of mentoring. They also looked at what women wanted from mentoring to inform the design of a potential scheme.

Between 2015 and 2016, the team spoke with 250 professional women, employers and HR directors across the industry through a survey, qualitative interviews and focus groups. At that time, none of alta's partners – Airbus, the Royal Air Force, Little Blue Private Jets and the RAeS, Raytheon, or other industry employers – provided mentoring support specifically for professional women.

"We found out what women themselves wanted from mentoring rather than simply focusing upon a business need," Professor Durbin explains. "Some companies had existing schemes but they were generally aimed at senior or graduate levels, with nothing in between. Our research identified a demand for women-only, industry-wide mentoring that enabled women to build connections both outside and within their organisations. Mentoring was seen as particularly valuable for help with issues such as maternity leave and return to work, work-life balance and childcare issues as well as technical support and advice, and support on career progression."

The alta pilot project was developed as a unique collaboration between researchers and the aviation and aerospace industry to meet women's and employers' needs for mentoring support. A key factor in alta's design is its unique electronic matching system that enables women to connect with the

most suitable mentor for their specific needs. The resulting scheme complements rather than replaces existing company schemes, and adds another element to the mix of recruitment and retention initiatives required to support culture change and enhance gender equality and diversity in the industry.

Alta has gained high-level support from the most experienced women in the sector. Most mentors are executives, board members, senior managers, squadron leaders and middle managers, many of whom recognise mentoring as a valuable means to develop management skills, expand their experience and 'give something back'. The benefits of alta are felt across different career stages, with mentees developing the skills to become mentors themselves while connecting with experienced women in key roles within the industry. In a 2021 survey, 90% of members said they would recommend alta to their female friends and colleagues.

"Alta's support helps women remain and progress their careers in the aviation and aerospace industry, providing a practical way to enhance gender equality for individuals, organisations and the whole sector," says Professor Durbin. "Our goal is to connect women across a highly male-dominated industry and empower them to support each other in reaching their full potential and goals, which overall also helps the sector."

Further information

The alta mentoring platform team of Professor Susan Durbin, Stella Warren, Dr Ana Lopes, Judith Milne, Alessandra Badino, Sarah Minett, Nick Davies, Akelia Moxam-Black, and Wing Commander Victoria Fulton is a Finalist in the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2022.

Alta was founded by the Royal Aeronautical Society (RAeS), the University of the West of England, Airbus UK, the Royal Airforce and Little Blue Private Jets.

Contact

Professor Susan Durbin

Department of Business and Management, University of the West of England Email: sue.durbin@uwe.ac.uk

Alta mentoring platform: https://alta.onpld.com

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Shaping community responses to the psychological and social impacts of COVID-19



Dr Daisy FancourtUniversity College London

The COVID-19 Social Study provided real-time insight into the psychological and social impacts of the pandemic. These insights shaped national and local COVID-19 policies, helped charities and health organisations support individuals, and informed the public as to how best to protect their own mental health and wellbeing.

Impacts

- The ESRC-funded MARCH Network enabled Dr Daisy Fancourt and colleagues to establish the UCL COVID-19 Social Study team to conduct real-time data analysis. Results shaped third sector and charity responses, helping the British Red Cross to plan, deliver and evaluate its services, including the Vaccine Voices programme.
- Hundreds of community organisations engaged with the data. The research helped the Samaritans to support those feeling suicidal during the pandemic, and assisted London-based mental health charity ThriveLDN and national charity COVIDAid. Kent County Council and Oldham Council also drew on the research to decide when to implement mental health support for the public and to identify groups most in need of help (including those with Long COVID).
- Over 12 Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) documents drew on the real-time data analysis, informing major policy decisions including when to ease lockdowns, what financial support packages were needed, whether mass testing should be enforced, and how to design the vaccine roll-out.
- The Social Study's real-time data helped the NHS address mental health demand. It also helped the National Suicide Prevention Advisory Group to plan how to reduce self-harm and suicide risk.
- More than 85% of Social Study participants reported that it had been a worthwhile experience. Some were prompted to become more mindful of their mental health, seek help if they needed it, connect with others, and engage in healthy behaviours.
- The data insights fed into the World Health Organisation's international policy work on pandemic response and mental health and led to the development of 33 further studies across the WHO European region.

About the research

The UCL COVID-19 Social Study, based on 1.2 million online interviews completed over 105 weeks by over 70,000 individuals, is the UK's largest study into the social and psychological impacts of the pandemic. Led by Dr Daisy Fancourt and Professor Andrew Steptoe, this was the only UK study to provide continuous weekly or monthly social data from March 2020 to April 2022. It offered a unique perspective on how the pandemic affected the mental health, wellbeing, behaviours and attitudes of the UK public.

"The study, which will continue to analyse data until 2023, was first and foremost a phenomenal team effort. It comprised 20 social scientists, funders and advisers as well as collaborations with health and community organisations and government departments, not to mention the remarkable efforts of all our participants who gave their time so generously," says Dr Daisy Fancourt.

It took just 6 days to launch the study, which meant that the first survey sweep could begin ahead of the first lockdown. This feat was possible thanks to the team's rabid mobilisation of resources from the existing ESRC-funded Mental Health Research Network (MARCH), of which Daisy Fancourt is the principal investigator. This pre-existing network brought together collaborations of more than 2,000 community organisations and researchers working on social, community and health issues. It made possible the rapid recruitment of a large survey sample of people from a variety of backgrounds, including marginalised and disadvantaged socio-economic groups. ESRC flexibility over the use of existing grants to pivot towards researching COVID-19 enabled the study to launch before the Nuffield Foundation and Wellcome Trust provided further funding.

Data from the study was based not only on the online surveys, but also 400 telephone interviews with people from a range of different groups, including those experiencing homelessness, victims of domestic abuse, people with long-term health conditions and frontline healthcare workers. The data highlighted the enormous difficulties faced by a substantial proportion of the population during the pandemic.

"Inequalities that existed before COVID-19 were exacerbated by the pandemic," says Professor Andrew Steptoe. Findings show that around 20% of young adults thought of self-harm or death during the pandemic. Mental health or physical conditions consistently worsened, and people struggling financially before COVID-19 were at least 10 times more likely to be worse off financially during the pandemic.

"Without the ESRC-led MARCH Network, this study would not have happened at such pace and made the difference it has had. The data is currently being made available via the UK Data Service for use by other researchers to maximise its impact and allow the diverse topics it covered to be further explored," says Dr Daisy Fancourt. For the COVID-19 Social Study team, at least two things are clear: large-scale, longitudinal cohort studies are vital in order to understand population health, and working with partners ensures the evidence gets to the people who can support communities.

Further information

The UCL COVID-19 Social Study team of Dr Daisy Fancourt, Professor Andrew Steptoe, Dr Henry Aughterson, Dr Jess Bone, Alexandra Bradbury, Dr Feifei Bu, Dr Alexandra Burton, Jo Dawes, Dr Meg Fluharty, Vas James, Dr Hei Wan (Karen) Mak, Dr Tom May, Dr Alison McKinlay, Lucy Nicholls, Dr Elise Paul, Dr Keir Philip, Dr Katey Warran, and Dr Liam Wright is a Finalist in the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2022.

The COVID-19 Social Study, established as part of the ESRC-funded MARCH Network, is also funded and supported by the Nuffield Foundation and Wellcome Trust, and led by University College London.

Contact

Dr Daisy Fancourt

Department of Behavioural Science and Health, University College London Email: d.fancourt@ucl.ac.uk

https://www.covidsocialstudy.org



Shaping national and regional domestic abuse policy and practice



Professor David GaddUniversity of Manchester

ESRC-funded research into why some young men subject women to coercive control and violence has shaped new interventions by charities and support services and influenced domestic abuse policy at national and regional levels. It has also fostered the introduction of preventative domestic abuse education in secondary schools, which is helping to reduce the number of young men who become perpetrators of, and protecting women from, domestic violence.

Impacts

- Using his ESRC-funded research findings Professor David Gadd helped write the 2021–2031 Greater Manchester Gender-Based Violence Strategy, which is backed by an additional £1 million investment in a 'whole-system' approach to abuse.
- His research has influenced UK domestic abuse policy, helping to secure government commitment to a national perpetrator strategy in the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act.
- His work influenced the government's decision, enshrined in the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act, to set out the obligations of schools and colleges in preventing domestic abuse.
- His work was cited in parliamentary debates on the value of sex and relationship education and the effectiveness of working directly with perpetrators.
- Professor Gadd advised the UK Home Office on its 'This is Abuse' social marketing campaign, run in partnership with Channel 4 and MTV, which generated 5 million YouTube views. He also informed Police Scotland's 'Don't be that Guy' and Manchester's '#Is this Okay?' campaigns.
- The research insights underpinned the Mentoring West Midlands intensive, 24-hour mentoring scheme for high-risk offenders, which secured a 77% reduction in violence among those mentored and saved emergency and victim services almost £500,000.
- His work informed the pioneering National Institute for Health and Care Research ADVANCE intervention programme for substance-dependent domestic abuse perpetrators and fed directly into the RESPECT Young People's Programme toolkit training (which has been delivered to over 200 trainee practitioners working with young men since 2016).
- Traditionally, domestic abuse interventions have been about what to do after the event, and how to work with the victim, rather than prevention. His work has challenged this approach.

About the research

One in four women will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime. Along with the impact on the individuals involved, the social and economic costs of this abuse amount to more than £66 billion a year according to UK government estimates. Rates of gender-based violence tend to be highest among teenagers and young adults, and boys and men predominate among perpetrators. "Changing the attitudes and behaviour of boys and men in order to reduce the number of young men who become perpetrators is the key to protecting women from domestic violence," says Professor David Gadd, lead researcher in the ESRC-funded From Boys to Men project.

The project is based on a school survey of 1,200 young people aged 13 to 14, focus groups with 13- to 19-year-olds, and life history interviews with 30 young men aged 16 to 21. Data revealed that by the time young people reach 14 most have some experience of domestic abuse, whether in their own relationships or in that of their parents. While most young people think it is wrong to hit a partner, many can think of exceptions to this rule — typically when a partner has hit them first or cheated on them. Young people in general rarely see controlling behaviour as domestic abuse.

"There is an urgent need to begin conversations with teenagers about domestic abuse, as many are already learning about it long before cohabiting relationships begin in early adulthood," says Professor Gadd. Attitudinal change in relation to trust is particularly important. "Men need support to understand that you can't increase your trust in a relationship by controlling your partner," he says. Young men often assume it's acceptable to check up on their partner because they feel insecure, but this leads to feeling greater insecurity rather than less. Better awareness of these issues is important for everyone.

Professor Gadd has successfully campaigned for more joinedup thinking that brings together preventative engagement with public awareness campaigns, diversity sensitive perpetrator interventions and, crucially, conversations with teenagers in schools, families and communities. In these conversations, difficult issues around why some resort to coercive control and how to deal with insecurity in intimate relationships can be articulated and confronted.

Greater Manchester's Gender-Based Violence Strategy 2021-2031, which includes a clear focus on boys and men, exemplifies such joined-up thinking. The strategy, based in part on Professor Gadd's research, sets out a comprehensive, responsive programme of service delivery to enhance the safety of women and girls while preventing gender-based violence from occurring in the first place and challenging the attitudes and inequalities that enable it. The Strategy engages with over 2,000 organisations, implementing schools-based training, developing responsive interventions delivered by the probation sector and NGOs as well as preventative campaigns directed at Greater Manchester's 2.8 million residents.

"Government as well as other agencies and organisations all strive to provide young people who use violence with opportunities for change. Professor David Gadd's work illuminates how to make this a reality and reduce domestic abuse in society," says Nicole Jacobs, Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales.

Further information

Professor David Gadd is a Finalist in the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2022

Contact

Professor David Gadd

Department of Criminology, University of Manchester Email: david.gadd@manchester.ac.uk

How to stop men hurting women: https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000sr3p

From Boys to Men project: https://www.boystomenproject.com

Professor David Gadd interview: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UbuKkAGz6I0

Home Office This is Abuse campaign video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_vQ2KiNNQqk



Exposing social inequalities and working to break the cycle of disadvantage



Professor Heather Joshi CBE University College London

As a leading architect of ESRC's prestigious longitudinal studies infrastructure, Professor Heather Joshi CBE has made an outstanding contribution to social science. Her influence on government policies relating to women, employment, working families and pensions is evident in the everyday lives of British people across multiple generations.

Impacts

- Drawing on the evidence from the UK's longitudinal data resources Professor Heather Joshi has had a significant impact on social policy since the 1990s. This includes:
 - influencing the fairer split of pension rights on divorce that became part of the Welfare Reform and Pensions Act 1999
 - advocating for improved pension rights for women, which culminated in the introduction of a single tier pension in 2014
 - shaping government policies on childcare and maternal and paternal leave, which improved the ability of single parents to take up paid work
- Her pioneering work in leading Britain's birth cohort studies has provided long-term data resources for academics and policymakers to use time and again to understand social change and the impacts of policies. For example:
 - The Millennium Cohort Study (MCS), which she directed from 2000 to 2011, follows the lives of more than 19,000 babies born in the UK between 2000 and 2002, and has become an internationally renowned data resource
 - Since its launch with Professor John Bynner, the MCS has influenced government thinking and a range of policies on, for example, infant health, parenting and family life, education, bullying, obesity, young people's mental health, domestic violence, poverty and social mobility. It has also provided evidence used in over 1,300 academic publications
 - She has advised cohort studies in France, Ireland,
 Germany and New Zealand, which took note of the MCS design which will provide further data for international comparison.

About the research

In a career spanning over 4 decades, Professor Heather Joshi has helped reveal the nature of social inequalities in the UK and has advocated continuously for policies that break the cycle of disadvantage. Her thoughtful engagement with policymakers has had a significant impact on social policy since the 1990s. Her work is backed by rigorous evidence often drawn from the UK's groundbreaking birth cohort studies, which she helped nurture. These generational studies collect wide-ranging data from individuals over their lifetime to paint a nationally representative picture of changing lives and circumstances.

Professor Joshi's expertise in the relationships between motherhood, employment and pay, supported by longitudinal evidence, raised awareness of inequalities and directly impacted policy. She highlighted the unequal impact of divorce on women's retirement incomes, influencing the fairer split of pension rights on divorce that became part of the Welfare Reform and Pensions Act 1999. In 2000, Professor Joshi's report with Hugh Davies on women's lifetime incomes and pension rights highlighted the disproportionate disadvantages faced by women compared to men under the earnings-related pension system. Ultimately, their findings improved women's pension rights by helping to shape the introduction of a single tier pension in 2014.

She played a pivotal role in shaping the sweeping reforms of policies on parental employment that affected millions of working families and single parents in the early- to mid-2000s. Professor Joshi's research showed that the impact of a mother's employment on children's early years development was negligible. This generated great interest amongst the public, the press and government, and her evidence helped inform policies on childcare and maternal and paternal leave, and improved single parents' ability to undertake paid work. Professor Joshi's finding that children of working mothers were just as successful in life as those whose mothers stayed at home was based on her analysis of data from the 1958 and 1970 birth cohort studies, two of the UK's 5 birth cohort studies.

Over her career, Professor Joshi has played a crucial role in these pioneering data investments, both by bringing their evidence to policymakers' attention and by building the resources themselves through her leadership roles at the UCL Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS), and in particular as director of the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS) from 2000 to 2011. Professor Joshi says, "longitudinal data tells you about the circumstances of a person's life journey and is perfect for studying inequality and disadvantage."

Under her leadership, MCS, which follows the lives of more than 19,000 babies born in the UK between 2000 and 2002, has become an internationally renowned data resource. The launch of the MCS was a team effort, with the then CLS Director, Professor John Bynner, leading the collaborative winning bid, prior to Professor Joshi taking over leadership in May 2000.

"My vision for the MCS was to build an interdisciplinary, multipurpose, internationally comparable study, that would become a worthy national asset, bringing in government co-funding to enhance the ESRC's core funding," Professor Joshi says. Since its launch, MCS evidence has been used in over 1,300 academic publications, and has influenced government thinking and a range of policies on, for example, infant health, parenting and family life, education, bullying, obesity, young people's mental health, domestic violence, poverty and social mobility.

The success of the MCS has increased support for new cohort studies at home and abroad. Internationally, the cohort studies launched in the 2000s in France, Ireland, Germany and New Zealand, took note of the design, content and practices of MCS. Communication between the studies was facilitated by the European Child Cohort Network, which Professor Joshi co-founded. In the UK, Professor Joshi and her colleagues have successfully helped develop a successor to the MCS. The planning of a two-year feasibility study for a new UK-wide, ESRC-funded birth cohort study for the 2020s is currently underway.

Further information

Professor Heather Joshi is a Finalist in the ESRC John Hills Impact Prize 2022

Since starting her career in 1979 as a Research Fellow at the ESRC-funded Centre for Population Studies, Professor Joshi has led or shared responsibility for 47 research grants with a total value of £44 million, providing the robust evidence-base on which policymakers depend.

Contact

Professor Heather Joshi CBE

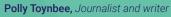
Centre for Longitudinal Studies, University College London Email: h.joshi@ucl.ac.uk

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Social inequalities – the report card:
https://ioelondonblog.wordpress.com/2017/01/10/social-inequalities-the-report-card/

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H. Joshi et al (2018) The gender pay gap for people born in 1958. Data Impact blog: https://blog.ukdataservice.ac.uk/the-gender-pay-gap-fromthe-perspective-of-people-born-in-1958/

Time and again Professor Joshi's research emerges as crucial evidence in settling public debates. When some politicians and their press attacked working mothers, she showed mothers' employment did not harm children's development. Her research removed obstacles to subsidised childcare – and proved the value of birth cohort studies' huge impact on public policy."





Network helps tackle UK's productivity challenge







Tim VorleyPro Vice-Chancellor and Dean of Oxford Brookes Business School

The ESRC-funded Productivity Insights Network has offered new perspectives on the cause and effect of comparatively low productivity in the UK. These insights are informing policy debates and strategy at the devolved, regional, and national levels.

Impacts

- The ESRC-funded £2.3 million Productivity Insights Network (PIN) and affiliated research funded by the ESRC Rebuilding Macroeconomics programme informed the 2022 Levelling Up the United Kingdom White Paper, which advocated, for the first time in official government documents, an explicit reframing of the UK's productivity and regional problems.
- PIN data and analysis also informed the Industrial Strategy Council report on UK regional inequalities.
- PIN has shaped productivity debates in devolved governments, underpinning Northern Ireland's 2021 'Vision for a 10x Economy' strategy. It has fed directly into the Welsh Government's Economic Action Plan, Curriculum for Wales, Employability and Skills Plan, and Post-COVID Renew and Reform Plan.
- The Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) has adopted a new toolkit to help employees return to, and stay in, productive work after prolonged sickness absence. This has been made available to 240,000 rail employees and over 100 rail line managers have been trained in its use.

About the research

The slowdown in UK productivity growth rates since 2008 is one of the most severe experienced anywhere in the industrialised world. The UK's low productivity is a concern because productivity is fundamental to everyone's prosperity and quality of life.

Since 2018 the ESRC-funded Productivity Insights Network (PIN) has taken a collaborative and interdisciplinary approach to tackling the UK's weak productivity performance. It aimed to address thematic, contextual and spatial questions, as well as broadening the research focus beyond economics to include social, environmental, geographical, health-related, psychological, legal and governance issues. The network also included public, private and third sector partners. "Our holistic ethos enabled us to change the whole tone of the productivity debate by opening it up to a much wider range of disciplines and approaches, and by focusing on the geographical aspects of productivity which are so central to the puzzle, particularly in the UK," says lead investigator Professor Philip McCann.

PIN research has provided game-changing insight into the scale and nature of the UK's regional productivity imbalances, setting them in the context of OECD-wide evidence (which identifies the UK as an outlier). Parts of the UK, such as London and the South East, perform well and show robust productivity figures, but elsewhere productivity levels are lagging. Prosperity therefore differs dramatically across the UK, and these differences are among the highest of any industrialised country.

Through 47 individual projects, PIN-funded researchers have provided solutions to real-world productivity-related issues within small and large organisations, ranging from helping rail workers return to work after mental health-related sickness absence to providing a talent management toolkit for small advanced-manufacturing firms.

At the national level, the Network's key contribution has been to reframe how policymakers think about productivity-related issues. "We see our role as pointing decision-makers to the evidence and putting it across in simple, clear terms while

providing them with the confidence that our messages are supported by a robust evidence base," says Professor McCann. The PIN team has engaged with decision-makers across the UK through seminars and one-to-one discussions with devolved and central government departments, local and city-region bodies, third-sector organisations and high-level non-governmental bodies. They have also successfully engaged with over 100 businesses.

This evidence-based engagement has proven highly influential to policy thinking. "The Productivity Insights Network deserves to be recognised for its broad and deep research about the number one long-term structural challenge facing the UK," says Lord O'Neill, Vice Chair of the Northern Powerhouse Partnership and Former Commercial Secretary to the Treasury.

Jagdeep Athwal, Head of Strategic Analysis, Cities and Local Growth Unit, Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy also emphasises that "the PIN team played a key role in framing the narrative that UK regional productivity inequalities are very high by international standards, and this presents a national productivity problem which requires a comprehensive and wide-ranging policy response – an approach which the UK Government's 2022 'Levelling Up the United Kingdom' White Paper went to great lengths to set out."

Further information

The Productivity Insights Network of Philip McCann,
Tim Vorley, Maria Abreu, Kate Penney, Kat Sloan, Richard
Harris, Vania Sena, Gary Dymski, Ben Gardiner, Kirsty
Newsome, Iain Docherty, Colin Mason, Andrew Henley,
Robert Huggins, Leaza McSorley, Adam Brown, Jen Nelles,
Jonathan Cook, Raquel Ortega-Argiles, Tony Venables,
Patricia Rice, Andre Carrascal-Incera, Ron Martin and
Phil Wallace is a Finalist in the ESRC Celebrating Impact
Prize 2022

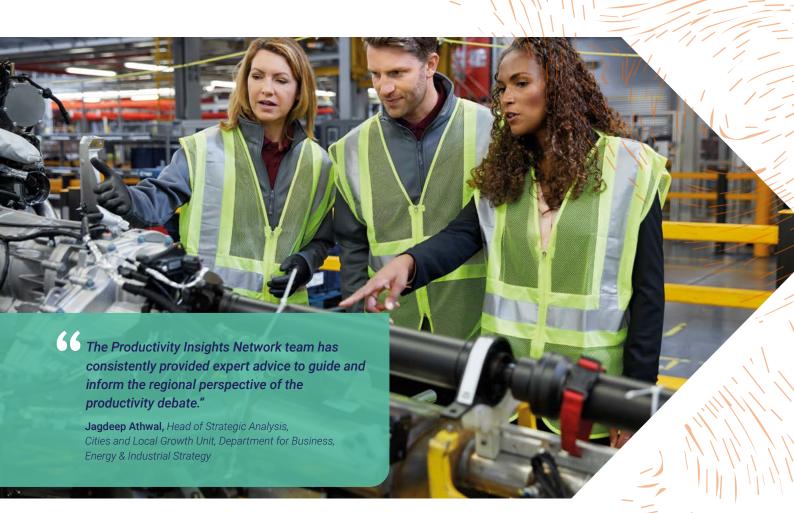
Contact

Professor Philip McCann

The Productivity Institute, University of Manchester Email: philip.mccann@manchester.ac.uk

https://productivityinsightsnetwork.co.uk

PIN outcomes overview: https://productivityinsightsnetwork.co.uk/2021/09/ productivity-insights/



Strengthening intergovernmental relationships between the UK and devolved administrations



Professor Nicola McEwen University of Edinburgh

ESRC-funded research has highlighted fundamental weaknesses in the relationships between the UK government and the devolved administrations and shaped new reforms that promise more transparent and effective intergovernmental processes and practices. The research has also influenced UK government legislation designed to help protect the outputs of effective joint working between the UK and devolved governments.

Impacts

- Professor Nicola McEwen shaped the understanding, scrutiny and development of three pieces of legislation that affected devolved powers: the Scotland Act (2016), the European Union (Withdrawal) Act (2018) and the United Kingdom Internal Market Act (2020). Her evidence, briefing papers and discussions influenced the positions adopted by devolved governments, parliamentary committees and parliamentarians. This ultimately helped to ensure that key elements of the legislation supported the effective functioning of devolution, including some protection for the authority of devolved institutions.
- Recommendations from Professor McEwen's jointly authored report on inadequacies in the formal system of intergovernmental relationships (IGR) fed into the outcomes of a formal 'joint review' of IGR initiated by the Prime Minister and First Ministers. Recommendations included establishing an impartial, standing secretariat; decision-making by consensus; more equality in the roles and responsibilities of the governments; and a new, fairer process for resolving disputes.
- Professor McEwen's recommendations led to an agreement between the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government on how and when it reports on ministerial engagements with the other governments of the UK. Her research also prompted the UK Government to increase transparency, including a quarterly review and a new gov.uk webpage for intergovernmental relations reporting.
- Professor Nicola McEwen's advice has helped parliamentary committees across the UK respond to the unprecedented challenges placed on the UK constitution since 2014. She appeared 25 times as an expert witness between 2014 and 2020, and her research was cited 90 times across 14 parliamentary reports.

About the research

The UK has four governing administrations, each with its own responsibilities and powers. When facing crises, as well as during the routine business of government, these administrations must work together to ensure they govern effectively. Effective intergovernmental relationships are therefore essential to the stability of the political union. However, recent events, including reforms to devolution, the UK's departure from the EU, and COVID-19, shone a light on weaknesses in the UK's system of devolution. EU Exit, in particular, brought new stresses and strains in relationships, adding urgency to the need for reform.

The 2016 devolution settlement complicated the linkages between the new powers devolved to the Scottish Parliament and those which were reserved to the UK. As co-investigator on the ESRC large grant project, The Constitutional Future of Scotland and the United Kingdom, Professor McEwen highlighted the problematic nature of increasing interdependence between these reserved and devolved powers. She considered these against the backdrop of underdeveloped processes and machinery intended to support relationships between the UK and devolved governments.

Professor McEwen has also analysed the political and institutional dynamics that arise when governments are led by competing political parties with divergent outlooks on the future of the UK. The outcome of the EU Exit referendum heightened the competitive nature of IGR. As a Senior Fellow of the ESRC UK in a Changing Europe initiative, Professor McEwen carried out real-time research on the consequences of EU Exit negotiations, agreements, legislation for devolution, and relations between the governments.

Based on further ESRC-funded research, Professor McEwen concluded that the intensification of formal and informal IGR during the EU Exit process revealed both opportunities for, and obstacles to, more formalised co-operative working across

the UK. Her insights showed that overcoming barriers to more effective IGR would require shared understanding of devolution, efforts to rebuild empathy between the UK and devolved governments, and more effective intergovernmental machinery. Professor McEwen has actively worked with governments to support the process of reform.

"Overall, the recent reforms carry the potential for significant improvements to the system," she says. "Improved machinery, process and organisation matter. But, going forward, my research highlights how important it is to realise that the conduct of intergovernmental relations also matters. There is a space in which governments need to work together which requires a cultural shift as much as a procedural one."

"With Nicola on the team we were able to draw on a deep well of expertise, insight and challenge not just into the mechanics of intergovernmental relations but also into the cultural and constitutional issues at stake," says David Rogers, Director, Constitution and Cabinet, Scottish Government.

Further information

Professor Nicola McEwen is a Finalist in the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2022

Contact

Professor Nicola McEwen

School of Social and Political Science, University of Edinburgh Email: n.mcewen@ed.ac.uk

https://www.centreonconstitutionalchange.ac.uk

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McEwen, N. (2020), 'Negotiating Brexit: Power Dynamics in British Intergovernmental Relations', Regional Studies, online first publication date: 3 April. DOI: 10.1080/00343404.2020.1735000 https://www.centreonconstitutionalchange.ac.uk/sites/



Helping the UK's benefits system deliver financial security and stability



Professor Jane Millar, OBE, FBA, FaCSS University of Bath

Professor Jane Millar OBE has drawn on her deep understanding of social policy to inform the social security provisions on which the lives of millions of people in the UK depend. From her influential ESRC-funded research on lone parenthood to her contribution to debates about Universal Credit and its design, she has made a profound contribution to recent developments in the welfare state in the UK.

Impacts

- Professor Jane Millar's research into the realities of life for lone-parent families has been instrumental in the development and evaluation of policies designed to help lone parents move into and remain in work, including:
 - the Labour government's New Deal for Lone Parents and tax credits
 - the introduction of personal advisers and support packages to help in the transition to work, which contributed to the large increase in the lone-parent employment rate throughout the 2000s
- Since the start of the Universal Credit rollout in 2013, her input has contributed to the introduction of mitigating measures designed to smooth difficulties experienced by some of the 4.8 million households now in receipt of payments, including:
 - placing a limit on deductions for previous tax and benefits overpayments
 - providing advances to help cover the long wait time before first payments are received
 - providing the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
 with timely input on key areas of concern to couples,
 such as how Universal Credit accommodated fluctuating
 earnings, and issues related to debt recovery when
 relationships break down

About the research

Many people receive financial support from the state at some point in their lives. Social security benefits are a key part of the welfare state, and the social security system directly affects the incomes and living standards of millions of people. Over the last four decades, Professor Jane Millar's rigorous research has shaped government policies that touch the most important aspects of people's lives — their financial security, living standards, access to employment, wellbeing and quality of life.

Her research into the realities of life for lone-parent families has been instrumental in the development and evaluation of policies designed to help lone parents move into, and remain in, work. Her initial investigation into lone parents' living standards in the 1980s, followed by further longitudinal research with Professor Tess Ridge with lone mothers and their children between 2002 and 2017, was instrumental in the design and delivery of the Labour government's New Deal for Lone Parents, tax credits, and policies to help lone mothers remain in work. Their evidence helped to shape measures such as the introduction of personal advisers and support packages to help in the transition to work, which contributed to the large increase in the lone-parent employment rate throughout the 2000s.

The DWP recognises the value of Professor Millar's longitudinal qualitative research to its Universal Credit (UC) policy. Under the UC system, couples living together are treated as a single assessment unit and cannot claim as individuals. Professor Millar's ESRC-funded longitudinal study, carried out with Rita Griffiths and Marsha Wood (at the University of Bath) and Fran Bennett (at the University of Oxford), found that the real-world complexities of arranging work, care and household finances did not necessarily fit with policy assumptions about how the new system would change recipient behaviours. Moreover, the design of UC often influenced participants' lives in unintended ways. These findings provided DWP with timely input on key areas of concern to couples, such as how UC accommodated fluctuating earnings, as well as issues related to debt recovery when relationships break down.

Professor Millar has also built a strong case for rigorous longitudinal qualitative research, helping to convince policymakers of the need to understand the dynamic nature of the relationship between policy and everyday lives. Supported by world-class colleagues, she has developed this understanding based on many years of ongoing engagement with politicians, advisers, civil society organisations, parliamentary Select Committees, NGOs and international organisations. "Research engagement and impact are not solo endeavours but very much about working with other people," she says. "I have been very privileged to have worked with many wonderful colleagues, who have shared my research interests and my commitment to understanding policy and policy change."

Professor Millar's strongly held belief that the benefits system must be about security as much as adequacy, and that welfare benefits must allow for the complexities of people's real-life situations, is increasingly understood by policymakers. Over her long career, Professor Millar's ability to ensure the key points are heard has made a profound difference to millions of people's lives.

Further information

Professor Jane Millar is a Finalist in the John Hills Impact Prize 2022

Since starting her academic career in 1983 at the University of York working on an ESRC-funded project on the living standards of lone parents, Professor Millar has led or shared responsibility for 41 research grants with a total value of £8.9 million, providing insight and evidence for the policy community.

Contact

Professor Jane Millar, OBE, FBA, FaCSS Institute for Policy Research, University of Bath Email: j.i.millar@bath.ac.uk

https://researchportal.bath.ac.uk/en/persons/jane-millar

https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/fellows/jane-millar-FBA/

Universal credit: https://www.bath.ac.uk/projects/couples-balancing-work-money-and-care-exploring-the-shifting-landscape-under-universal-credit/

Tax credits: https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/tax-credits-and-how-respond-income-changes



Judges – Outstanding Impact Categories

Jayanthi Ezekiel

Jayanthi Ezekiel is an experienced economist with policy and regulatory expertise in digital infrastructure, digital content, aviation, health and the postal sectors in the UK and internationally. In her work as consultant, she has advised large companies, governments and regulatory authorities on determining the need for policy intervention, the design of regulation and how to ensure the effective implementation and monitoring of regulation. While working in government she led the development of business cases in order to secure government funding for significant policy initiatives, including online safety legislation and stabilisation of the charity sector at the start of the COVID pandemic. She regularly commissions research into some of the highest-priority and sensitive policy issues, including online safety, data policy and economic impact.

Rita Gardner

Rita Gardner is an environmental geographer by training and held academic positions in King's College, London (1979–1994) and Queen Mary University of London (1994–1996) prior to becoming the first female Director of the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers), a post she held from 1996 to 2018.

She led the transformation of the Society to a world-leading, modern learned society and professional body. She is currently Chief Executive of the Academy of Social Sciences (2019) and has held a wide range of non-executive and advisory positions. Her work has been recognised with a CBE for 'services to geography', leading awards from the Royal Geographical Society, the Royal Scottish Geographical Society and the American Association of Geographers, and six honorary degrees.

Judith Phillips

Judith Phillips is Deputy Principal (Research), Professor of Gerontology at the University of Stirling, and is the UKRI Research Director for the Healthy Ageing Challenge. Her research interests are in the social, behavioural, and environmental aspects of ageing and she has published and researched widely on the environmental aspects of ageing, social care, and caregiving.

Professor Phillips has been highly active in shaping the UK's gerontological research landscape and her applied research has impacted on government policy. Prior to joining Stirling University, she was Director of the Centre for Ageing and Dementia Research for Wales and the School for Social Care Research in Wales. Judith is a Fellow of the Gerontological Society of America and the British Society of Gerontology and was President of the Society between 2008 and 2010. She is a Council member of the Academy for Social Sciences. In 2013 she was awarded an OBE for Services to Older People.

Osama Rahman

Osama Rahman was appointed Director of the Data Science Campus at the Office for National Statistics in September 2022. The Data Science Campus applies data science and builds skills for public good across the UK and internationally.

Prior to joining the ONS, for five years Osama was the Department for Education's Director of Analysis and Chief Scientific Adviser. Before joining the Department for Education, Osama spent over 14 years at the Ministry of Justice, including the Department for Constitutional Affairs before the creation of the MoJ. His most recent role was Director for Analytical Services and Chief Scientific Adviser and prior to that he was Chief Economist.

He worked at the Civil Aviation Authority on airports regulation, having spent 10 years as a lecturer and senior lecturer in economics at various UK universities.

David Shallcross

David Shallcross is a monitoring and evaluation specialist with a background in public health. As Impact and Evidence Manager at the Connection at St. Martin's, he runs a team that enables a leading London-based homeless charity to demonstrate the impact of its work and influence public discourse and policies concerning homelessness. As a research fellow at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, he conducted an evaluation of the maternal and child health system in western China. He was appointed to the Strategic Advisory Network of the ESRC in 2021. He has a strong interest in social exclusion, inequality and international development.

Judges – John Hills Impact Prize 2022

Sir Bernard Silverman

Sir Bernard Silverman is a statistician whose research has ranged widely across the theoretical and practical aspects of statistics, especially computational statistics, researching the ways that computing power has changed our ability to collect, analyse, understand and utilise data. He has held chairs at Bath, Bristol, Oxford and Nottingham Universities, and has collaborated in many areas of science, industry and government.

He was Chief Scientific Adviser to the Home Office 2010–2017 and is now Chair of the Geospatial Commission and a member of the Council of ESRC. His other current roles include work on modern slavery, security, official statistics, and science and technology for policy. He was knighted in 2018 'For Public Service and services to Science'.

Stephen Aldridge

Stephen Aldridge is Chief Analyst/Chief Economist and Director for Analysis and Data at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

A government economist by background, Stephen was previously Chief Economist and then Director of the Strategy Unit in the Cabinet Office. He has also worked in the Department of Trade and Industry; various predecessors to MHCLG; the Cabinet Secretariats; and Her Majesty's Treasury.

Stephen is a trustee and director of the Centre for Homelessness Impact; a member of the international advisory board for the UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence; and other bodies. He is a fellow and Council member of the Academy of Social Sciences and a continuing fellow at the Centre for Science and Policy at the University of Cambridge.

Stephen was made a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB) in the Queen's birthday honours list 2007.











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Economic and Social Research Council Polaris House North Star Avenue Swindon SN2 1UJ

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