



Economic  
and Social  
Research Council

# Strategic Delivery Plan

Community engagement webinars

*Professor Alison Park (Interim  
Executive Chair)*

2022—2025

# Agenda

Opening welcome

Overview presentation of  
ESRC's Strategic Delivery  
Plan (30 mins)

Q&A (30 mins)



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Research Council



# UKRI Strategic Context

UKRI's first 5-year strategy: Transforming Tomorrow Together published earlier this year, sets out a framework for how we will deliver our vision and mission over the longer term.

UKRI's Corporate Plan published last month is developed annually and sets out our collective actions towards the delivery of our strategies.

ESRC's Strategic Delivery Plan sets out what we aim to deliver over the next 3 years and has been shaped by our community and reviewed by ESRC Strategic Advisory Network, ESRC Council, and UKRI Board.

Our collective actions are underpinned by a 3-year budget until the end of 2045/25.

UKRI budget ~£25bn (14% increase)

ESRC's budget ~£750m (total budget, including core, infrastructure and strategic budgets)

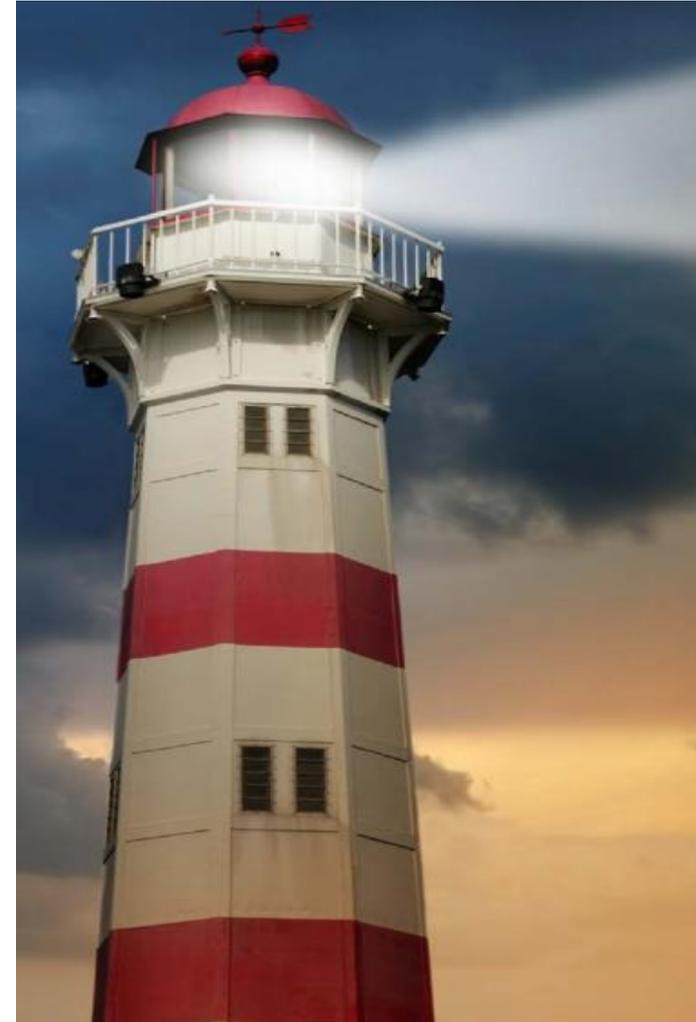


# Our Ambitions

Our vision is one of a more prosperous, healthy, sustainable and secure society.

We will 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 will continue to support the health of all our disciplines, maintaining a high-quality research base, a diverse talent pipeline and a resilient, modern and innovative data infrastructure.



# Our purpose

To create a more prosperous, healthy, sustainable and secure society.

**Our principles for change – we will embed the principles of diversity, resilience, connectivity and engagement across all our work, to drive change and create the conditions for an outstanding research and innovation system**

**Our strategic objectives provide the framework for how we will achieve our vision and realise our principles, through world-class:**

<p><b>People and careers</b></p> <p>Sustaining a world-class, diverse and inclusive social science research base that supports talent across the entire research career through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• talent, skills and leadership.</li><li>• equality, diversity and inclusion.</li></ul>	<p><b>Places</b></p> <p>Enabling social science to flourish in all places across and beyond the UK, delivering research, data and partnerships through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• research institutes and centres.</li><li>• data infrastructure.</li><li>• international collaboration.</li><li>• impact and engagement.</li><li>• place-based initiatives.</li></ul>	<p><b>Ideas</b></p> <p>Capturing and catalysing diverse and excellent ideas across all disciplines, schemes and research career stages, creating new scientific knowledge and real-world impact through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• research grants.</li><li>• research methods.</li><li>• horizon scanning.</li></ul>	<p><b>Innovation</b></p> <p>Providing a powerful evidence base which drives innovation across different organisations, sectors and regions to achieve UK-wide growth and prosperity through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• innovation research and evidence.</li><li>• commercialisation.</li><li>• knowledge exchange.</li></ul>	<p><b>Impacts</b></p> <p>Ensuring that the full power of UK social science is brought to bear in tackling the most pressing global, national and local challenges through new strategic priorities in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Net Zero, environment, biodiversity and climate change.</li><li>• digital society.</li><li>• health and social care.</li><li>• security, risk and resilience.</li><li>• understanding behaviour.</li></ul>
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Supported by **a world-class organisation**: building an inclusive and diverse workforce empowered to deliver sector-wide leadership by catalysing new ways of working and bringing people together.

# World-Class People and Careers

## Talent, skills and leadership

### We will:

Launch a £250 million UK-wide, open competition to fund a network of Doctoral Training Partnerships in the social sciences.

Invest up to £28 million in early career research through our Postdoctoral Fellowships to support flexible, dynamic careers.

launch a new Postgraduate Training Strategy to ensure the UK PhD remains globally competitive and offers enhanced graduate employability



### Our ambitions will:

sustain a world-class, diverse and inclusive research base that supports talent across the entire research career

# World-Class People and Careers

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

### We will:

Launch an 'EDI Caucus' – a network of expert advisors – to support the UKRI EDI strategy by creating an interdisciplinary evidence base on diversity and inclusion

Implement an EDI action plan setting out our short-, medium- and long-term actions as a leader, investor and employer

Collaborate with the Academy of Social Sciences to embed good EDI practices across our disciplines



### Our ambitions will:

Embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in all we do, working in collaboration across the R&I sector to promote inclusive research cultures

# World-Class Places

## Research institutes and centres

### We will:

Extend our investment in institutes to sustain long-term national, globally-recognised research infrastructure and maximise the impact of social science.

Partner with Research Organisations to embed our national network of research centres into the social science research landscape, helping ESRC-supported research to address local, national and global issues.

Run a further round of our research centres competition, investing at least £36 million, to nurture new cutting-edge social science and address important societal challenges at scale.



### Our ambitions will:

Support the long-term resilience and sustainability of a world-leading social science research base by strategic investment in both existing and new institutes and research centres across the UK

# World-Class Places

## Data and infrastructure

### We will:

Boost investment in ADR UK, expanding our innovative programme of linked administrative datasets on key public policy issues

Launch a pioneering new 'Digital Footprints' infrastructure, which will transform access to and analysis of new data types and sources

Launch rounds 16-18 of data collection for Understanding Society, our longitudinal study tracking the lives of 25,000 UK households



### Our ambitions will:

Further develop the UK's world-leading data infrastructure to enable robust research that addresses major societal challenges.

# World-Class Places

## International collaboration

### We will:

Fund discovery-led international research through a further round of the Open Research Area scheme and our international co-investigator policy.

Invest in major international strategic initiatives to support our own priorities, working through multilateral platforms such as NORFACE and T-AP

Continue our commitment to working in partnership with low- and middle-income countries through such programmes as the Raising Learning Outcomes initiative



### Our ambitions will:

Address complex global challenges and sustain the UK's reputation as a centre of excellence in social science by connecting the best minds, talent and infrastructure across the world.

# World-Class Places

## Impact and engagement

### We will:

Expand our support for policymakers through knowledge exchange programmes, new placement and fellowship schemes, and via our Actionable Insights Seminar series

Maximise the use of evidence in policy and practice through a refresh of our What Works Centres, and deliver flexible, agile responses to evidence needs through our investments

Maximise the impact of social science research in policy, third sector organisations and across businesses through a new IAA competition.



### Our ambitions will:

Optimise the impact of our research, data and people by deepening links and partnerships with policymakers, businesses and third sector organisations across the UK.

# World-Class Places

## Place-based solutions

### We will:

Address local challenges by facilitating collaboration and connections between local policy stakeholders, academics and innovators, in particular by launching Local Policy Innovation Partnerships,

Invest in major place-based What Works Centres such as the Wales Centre for Public Policy co-funded by the Welsh government, and the Centre for Local Economic Growth

Implement UKRI's 'Places Toolkit' to support embedding place considerations across a wider range of our work



### Our ambitions will:

Enable the social sciences to develop insight into, and generate solutions to, the major place-based challenges facing the UK, thereby improving outcomes for local people, places and communities.

# World-Class Ideas

## We will:

Invest more than £40million a year in our Research Grants, New Investigator Grants and Secondary Data Analysis Initiative schemes.

Launch new rounds of our Large Grants scheme (~£10million) and Centres Competition (minimum £36 million )

Push forward the frontiers of methodological research through a new collaborative research initiative.

Continue to horizon scan for long-term, global, societal challenges, and innovative ways to tackle them



## Our ambitions will:

Capture and catalyse diverse and excellent ideas across all disciplines, schemes and research career stages, creating new scientific knowledge and real-world impact.

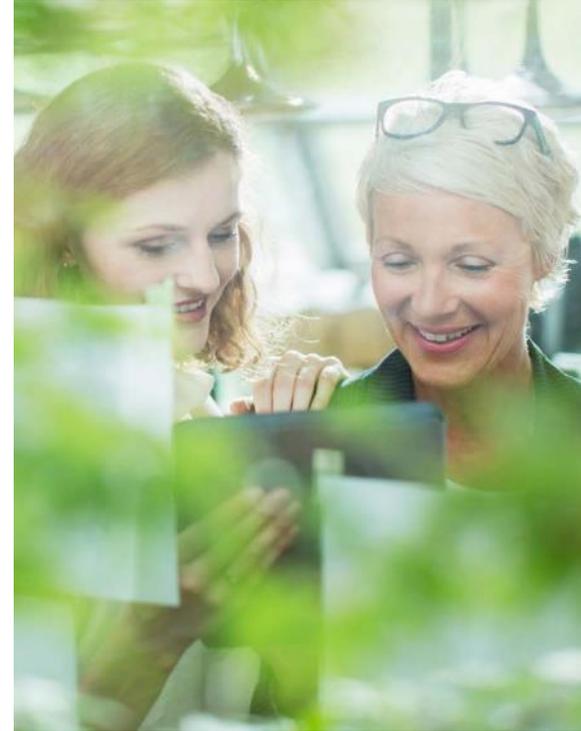
# World-Class Innovation

## We will:

Fund a new UKRI Innovation and Research Caucus, collaborating with Innovate UK, to support the whole of UKRI in its innovation policies and decision making.

Accelerate the adoption of innovative business practices in the business and financial services sectors by investing over £3 million in partnership with Innovate UK.

Build a powerful evidence base around what works in innovation through over £40million of investments, including The Productivity Institute and the Programme on Innovation and Diffusion.



## Our ambitions will:

Provide a powerful evidence base that identifies the optimal conditions for innovation and its successful adoption and diffusion across different firms, sectors and regions, driving development in policy and practice to achieve UK-wide growth and prosperity.

# World-Class Impacts

ESRC's strategic research will be driven by five priorities. It will be vital to connect beyond the boundaries of social science, drawing on the complementary strengths of the broader UK science base to generate fresh concepts and perspectives, novel data and methods, and new national capability. We will put policymakers and practitioners at the heart of all these programmes, from co-producing their design through to ensuring real-world impact.



**Our ambitions will:**

Ensure that the full power of UK social science is brought to bear in tackling the most pressing global, national and local challenges.



# World-Class Impacts

## Priority 1: Net Zero, Environment, Biodiversity and Climate Change

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### **We will:**

Connect existing research findings on climate change to policymakers and practitioners, and identify the demand for new evidence, led by our interdisciplinary environment leadership team.

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Invest in ambitious new interdisciplinary programmes on climate change mitigation and adaptation, including a new programme on energy demand reduction with EPSRC, as well as the economics of climate change.

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Work with international partners to launch a major multidisciplinary programme on finding solutions to climate change, including through the International Initiative for Research on Climate Change (IIRCC).

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### **Our ambitions will:**

Provide research insight that drives a successful social and economic transition to a net zero society and a sustainable and biodiverse environment.

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# World-Class Impacts

## Priority 2: Digital Society

### We will:

Explore people's relationships with digital technologies and inform public understanding and decision making in the public and business sectors by investing in a £5 million programme led by an interdisciplinary network of researchers.

Invest £3.75 million in a new European programme with AHRC on digital transformations (CHANSE), exploring how digital innovations affect, and are affected by, economic, social and cultural change.

Launch a new education research programme, up to £6 million, focused on the impact of technology on teaching and learning in schools, and further build on our investment in research on the impact of digital work and remote working.



### Our ambitions will:

Enable the successful adoption and harness the positive benefits of transformative technologies across society.

# World-Class Impacts

## Priority 3: Health and Social Care

### We will:

Strengthen social care research and evidence infrastructure through investment in our ongoing major investments in the Centre for Care and the Centre for Improving Adult Care Together (IMPACT).

Accelerate insights and innovations from the UK's wealth of social and biomedical longitudinal population studies by commissioning Population Research UK in partnership with MRC – a £9 million data infrastructure investment.

Launch a major £450,000 programme of food system research trials to transform the evidence base for addressing place-based inequalities in healthy diets, in partnership with six government departments and agencies (including Defra and the Cabinet Office).



### Our ambitions will:

Support research and evidence infrastructure that drives change in health and social care and supports improvements in outcomes and opportunities.

# World-Class Impacts

## Priority 4: Security, Risk and Resilience

### We will:

Invest in research that aims to improve human security, supporting work that builds resilience to withstand, adapt to, and recover from acute or chronic shocks.

Expand our research programme and knowledge exchange and fellowship activities that focus on the UK's international role in a post-Brexit, post-pandemic world.

Develop new policy-facing research on global trade to support the UK's development of, and capabilities for, new international trading partnerships.



### Our ambitions will:

Advance understanding of the shifting geopolitical order and the UK's evolving role within it, providing evidence to help create a more stable, resilient and secure global future.

# World-Class Impacts

## Priority 5: Understanding Behaviour

### We will:

Establish a new £15 million national capability in behavioural research, building a critical mass of researchers to convene and catalyse new fundamental and applied research using a wide range of data and cutting-edge methods.

Strengthen the talent pipeline for the future by creating a new £5.5 million interdisciplinary Centre for Doctoral Training in behavioural research.

Invest in a behavioural research programme that addresses core policy challenges in line with UKRI strategic themes such as Net Zero, security, and health.

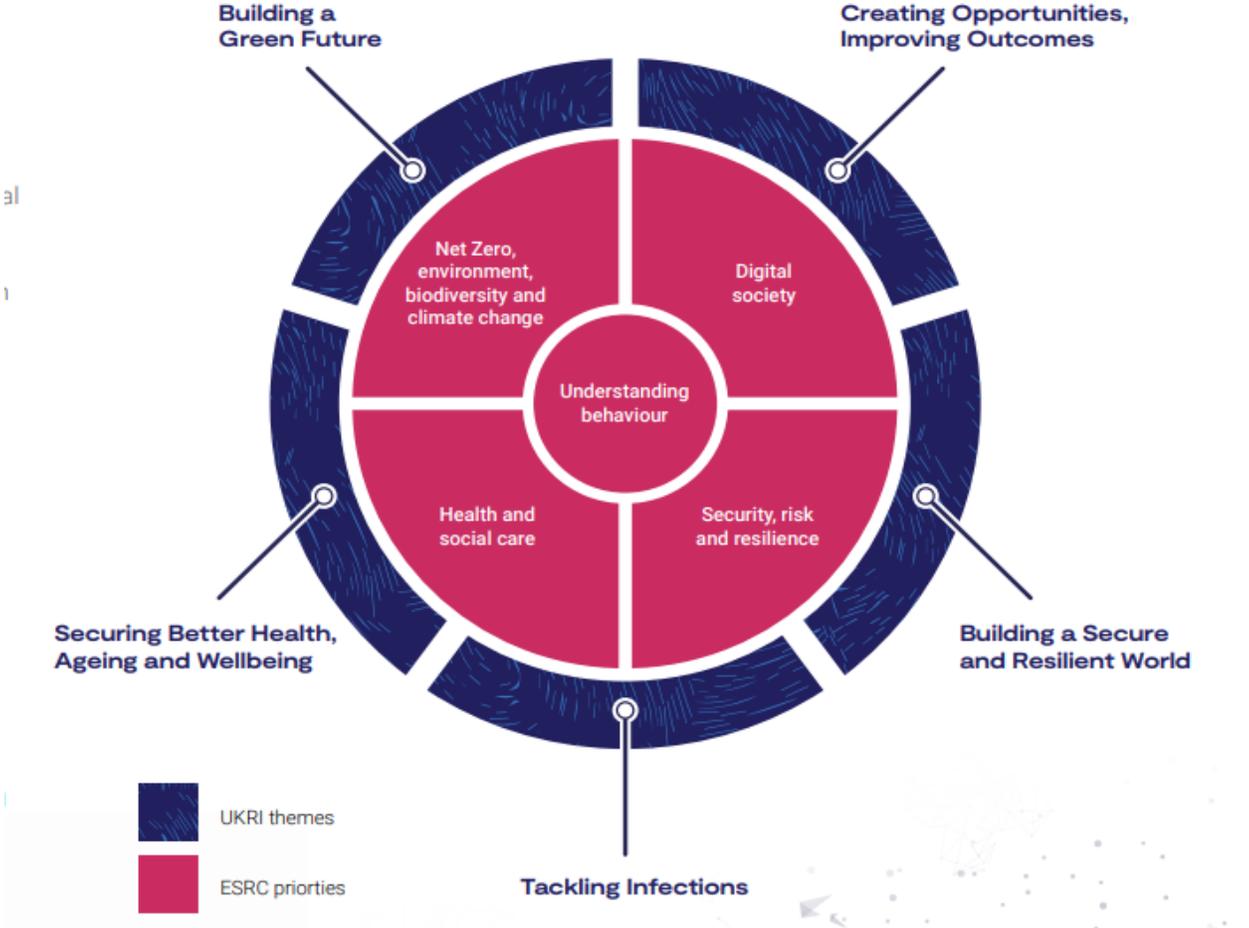


### Longer term we will:

Understand how and why people, organisations and groups behave to inform policy and interventions that address major global challenges.

# World-Class Impacts

ESRC's strategic research will be driven by these five priorities. It will be vital to connect beyond the boundaries of social science, drawing on the complementary strengths of the broader UK science base to generate fresh concepts and perspectives, novel data and methods, and new national capability. We will put policymakers and practitioners at the heart of all these programmes, from co-producing their design through to ensuring real-world impact.



**Our ambitions will:**

Ensure that the full power of UK social science is brought to bear in tackling the most pressing global, national and local challenges.



# World-Class Organisation

## We will:

As part of a UKRI response we will respond to all the relevant Review recommendations and our engagement in the Simpler and Better Funding Programme is continuing to streamline our systems, simplify and improve policies and processes, and reduce the administrative burdens on our communities, staff and partners

Implement an ESRC EDI Action Plan as part of UKRI's EDI strategy and objectives, and covering our role as a leader, funder and employer.

Showcase social science impacts and successes through our annual Celebrating Impact Prize and impact engagement campaigns



10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

## Our ambitions will:

Ensure UKRI is an efficient, effective and agile organisation, with an inclusive and diverse workforce.

# Our Budget

**We will:** Invest ~£750m over the next 3 years to realise the ambitions of our Strategic Delivery Plan

This represents ~10% increase between 2021/22 and 2024/25

Working in partnership, we seek to grow this investment, improving livelihoods in the UK and globally



**Our ambitions will:** Use the totality of our funding to maximise the value and reach of the social sciences, working with our partners across and beyond UKRI.

# Delivering Our Committments

Funding Opportunity	Funding Type	Call opening date	Call closing date
Pre-announcement: Establish an Innovation Adoption Accelerator	Grant	12th September 2022	13th December 2022
Strategic Coordination Hub and research opportunities for developing Local Policy Innovation Partnerships	Grant	6 <sup>th</sup> October 2022	12 <sup>th</sup> January 2023
ADR UK research fellowships 2022	Fellowship	29th September 2022	24th January 2023
Leadership team for a National Capability in Behaviour Research	Grant	8th September 2022	24th January 2023
ESRC Doctoral Training Partnerships: 2024	Grant	16th June 2022	14th February 2023
Centres Competition Pre-announcement	Grant	11th October 2022 Outline stage opens February 2023	May 2023* Anticipated, subject to change

# Strategic Delivery Plan

Thank you



## Useful links:

- [ESRC Strategic Delivery Plan 2022–2025 \(ukri.org\)](#)
- [Our corporate plan – UKRI](#)
- [Our strategy 2022 to 2027 – UKRI](#)

## ESRC Funding Finder:

- [Opportunities – UKRI](#)