

## Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	UKRI Ageing Research Development Awards
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>Ageing Research Development Awards will develop tractable avenues of research at the interface of UKRI council remits. Awards will enable the development of interventions to reduce time spent in poor health in later life. Proposals must clearly describe the intended demographics of the research, noting significant inequities that exist in ageing healthily, and how they propose to address these. Proposals must also engage with relevant Public and Patient Involvement and Engagement groupings, where relevant to the research question.</p> <p>Applications are welcomed from across all areas of UKRI remit, with interdisciplinary teams encouraged.</p> <p>Lead applicants must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be a researcher based in the UK at an eligible Research Organisation, or be based in an overseas MRC unit</li> <li>2. Usually have at least a postgraduate degree, although most applicants will usually hold a PhD</li> <li>3. Ensure proposals satisfy standard MRC eligibility criteria, as highlighted in the guidance for applicants</li> <li>4. Show that they will direct the project and be responsible for its delivery</li> </ol> <p>International investigators are eligible to apply as co-investigators, subject to standard MRC guidance.</p> <p>Private sector partners are not eligible to apply as investigators but can contribute as project partners or collaborators.</p>
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	<p>The call has been informed through consulting the following stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MRC Ageing Research Steering Group</li> <li>• BBSRC/MRC Ageing Research Community</li> <li>• EPSRC Strategic Advisory Team for Healthcare Technologies</li> <li>• MRC Strategy Board</li> <li>• MRC Population and Systems Medicine Board</li> <li>• UKRI Health, Ageing &amp; Wellbeing Programme Board – Ageing Strand Subgroup.</li> </ul> <p>The above groups comprise a broad range of individuals, from a diversity of backgrounds and experiences, though principally drawn from the UK academic research community. Membership of the MRC Population and Systems Medicine Board adheres to current MRC EDI targets for Board/Panel Membership.</p>
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic researchers working in the ageing field, across the breadth of UKRI remit and across a breadth of career stages and disciplines.</li> <li>• Private sector project partners.</li> <li>• Academic Research Offices.</li> <li>• UKRI staff</li> </ul>
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standard ResearchFish reporting.</li> </ul>

Protected Characteristic Group	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
<b>Disability</b>	Negative (low)	<p>Disabled individuals might require longer time and more support to apply.</p> <p>Some disabled panellists may be less able to travel and attend in-person meetings.</p> <p>One aspect of the call is related to health equity – if health equity x disability applications are submitted, we will have relevant disabled representation on the panel (where possible to obtain) to facilitate good decision making, recognising the low % of disabled researchers within the academic community. This will be identified at the outline application stage.</p> <p>Applications could be reviewed unfairly as a result of unconscious biases if the applicant(s) mentions their disability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We published a pre-announcement giving everyone more time to develop their application.</li> <li>• A virtual webinar was held to inform applicants about the funding opportunity. This will reduce travel required, allowing individuals to access information from home.</li> <li>• If applications are received in this space, UKRI will work to ensure appropriate representation of disabled individuals on the assessment panel, where possible.</li> <li>• Dates for meetings and events will be agreed and publicised in advance to allow attendees to make arrangements to attend. Reasonable adjustments will be made to allow all panel members to fully participate.</li> <li>• The assessment panel will be held virtually over one day, to avoid any potential challenges with respect to recruiting disabled panel members (for example – as a result of travel). Where necessary adjustments are required for panel attendance, UKRI will seek to enable these.</li> <li>• We will ensure standard guidance and best practise is adhered to when making funding decisions.</li> <li>• UKRI is always open to dialogue between researchers and the office to provide solutions and advice.</li> </ul>
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	Negative (low)	<p>One aspect of the call is related to health equity – if health equity x gender reassignment applications are submitted, we will have relevant representation on the panel (where possible) to facilitate good decision making, recognising the low % of researchers who may have undergone gender reassignment within the academic community. This will be identified at the outline application stage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If applications are received in this space, UKRI will work to ensure appropriate representation of individuals who have undergone gender reassignment on the assessment panel, where possible.</li> <li>• We will ensure standard guidance and best practice is adhered to when making funding decisions.</li> <li>• We will utilise gender neutral language in all materials provided and</li> </ul>

		<p>Applications could be reviewed unfairly because of unconscious biases if the applicant(s) mentions they have undergone gender reassignment.</p> <p>Some panellists may be unable to attend meetings because of other commitments linked to gender affirmation.</p>	<p>promote the use of gender-neutral and inclusive language.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dates for meetings and events will be agreed and publicised in advance to allow attendees to make arrangements to attend. Reasonable adjustments will be made to allow all panel members to fully participate.</li> <li>• Ensure all individuals attending the panel are asked how they would like to be referred to and discuss confidentiality as required.</li> <li>• During the panel meeting we will ensure name changes are reflected and respected and give individuals the opportunity to provide pronouns beforehand (and on zoom) if they wish.</li> </ul>
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b>	No anticipated impact		
<b>Pregnancy and parental leave</b>	Negative (low)	<p>Pregnant individuals or those on parental leave may not be able to respond to this opportunity as PI if they are on leave or off work.</p> <p>Potential bias if explicitly mentioned in the application.</p> <p>Potential panellists who are on parental leave and/or are pregnant may be unable to take part and may miss out on opportunities for networking and sharing their views</p> <p>Panellists who are on parental leave and/or are pregnant may require breaks throughout the day with the risk of potentially missing discussions during the panel meeting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals may wish to work as part of a collaborative team to submit a proposal, potentially as a co-investigator rather than PI</li> <li>• We published a pre-announcement giving everyone more time to develop their application.</li> <li>• Multiple panel meeting dates will be offered to accommodate caring responsibilities.</li> <li>• Panel dates will be agreed and publicised in advance to allow attendees to make arrangements to attend.</li> <li>• Provision for parental leave is covered in the UKRI terms and conditions.</li> <li>• We will ensure to schedule a number of breaks throughout the panel meeting to allow for an adequate number of breaks throughout the day.</li> <li>• We will ensure that panellists have an even share of proposals to discuss and these will be spread across the meeting to allow for those who need to leave to do so without missing discussions they are key to.</li> </ul>
<b>Race</b>	Negative (moderate)	One aspect of this opportunity will be a focus in health equity. UKRI has experienced criticism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will work to ensure that the decision-making panel</li> </ul>

		<p>in the past where decisions made on awards wrt. health inequity have not had appropriate engagement of minorities wrt. decision making. If applications are received wrt. race and health equity, UKRI will have relevant representation on the panel (where possible) to facilitate good decision making, recognising the low % of ethnic minority researchers within the academic community. This will be identified at the outline application stage.</p>	<p>meets current UKRI/MRC ethnic minority targets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As standard, the Panel will be made aware of UKRI's position on unconscious bias and how to raise concerns.</li> </ul>
<b>Religion or belief</b>	No anticipated impact	<p>The call does not intersect with any major religious holidays that may impact the ability of individuals to apply.</p> <p>The panel assessment will not intersect with any major religious holidays, that may preclude certain panel members from attending. If recruited panel members indicate any difficulty in attending the meeting, or require any reasonable adjustment, UKRI will take these into consideration to facilitate their full inclusion.</p> <p>Potential bias based on name or if explicitly mentioned in the application.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure standard guidance and best practise is adhered to when making funding decisions.</li> <li>Scheduling meetings to avoid major religious festivals. Where difficult to avoid, we will consider appropriate mitigations.</li> <li>Ensure that religious observances are considered when planning panel meetings.</li> <li>All key call submission dates have been reviewed for clashes with major religious festivals.</li> <li>We will make any reasonable adjustments to future confirmed dates/times accordingly, considering any religious observances.</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	Negative (low)	<p>One aspect of the call is related to health equity – if health equity x sexual orientation applications are submitted, we will have relevant representation on the panel (where possible) to facilitate good decision making. This will be identified at the outline application stage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If applications are received in this space, we will consider the addition of Panel Members with expertise in this area.</li> <li>As standard, the Panel will be made aware of UKRI's position on unconscious bias and how to raise concerns.</li> </ul>
<b>Sex (gender)</b>	Negative (low)	<p>One aspect of this opportunity will be a focus in health equity. UKRI has experienced criticism in the past where decisions made on awards wrt. health inequity have not had appropriate engagement of minorities wrt. decision making. If applications are received wrt. biological sex/gender diversity and health equity, UKRI will have relevant representation on the panel (where possible) to facilitate good decision making, recognising the low % of ethnic minority researchers within the academic community. This will</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will ensure that the decision-making panel meets current UKRI/MRC gender diversity targets.</li> <li>Ensure standard guidance and best practise is adhered to when making funding decisions. All UKRI staff are trained in unconscious bias, and the principles of this training will be upheld across all events and panel meetings.</li> <li>Multiple dates for panel meetings will be offered to accommodate caring responsibilities.</li> </ul>

		<p>be identified at the outline application stage.</p> <p>Applications from applicants from all genders are welcomed.</p> <p>Potential bias based on name</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dates for events will be agreed and publicised in advance to allow potential attendees to make arrangements to attend.</li> <li>• We will work to ensure the use of gender-neutral language where possible in our documents and at events.</li> <li>• Reflect in unconscious bias briefing for panel.</li> <li>• Gender-neutral language will be used in call specification, guidance. We will make sure the panel has balanced gender representation.</li> <li>• Reimbursement of additional childcare costs (on a case-by-case basis) if the meeting participant is otherwise unable to attend (this could include childcare at the venue, additional hours of childcare in the child's usual setting or paying for a relative to travel to care for school age children).</li> </ul>
<b>Age</b>	No anticipated impact	<p>Researchers from a range of career stages are invited to participate in this opportunity, including early career researchers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals across a broad range of ages will be present on the decision-making panel.</li> <li>• Panel members and reviewers are briefed to assess proposals against the selection criteria and provide justification for their assessments.</li> <li>• Applications should be judged on their own merits without inferences being drawn regarding the applicants' abilities due to their apparent or actual age.</li> <li>• Ensure use of a variety of different communication strategies, including social media, to ensure that our messages reach the widest possible target audience.</li> <li>• UKRI staff and any facilitators should seek to ensure that all participants have the opportunity to speak.</li> <li>• Reflect in unconscious bias briefing for panel.</li> </ul>

<b>Additional characteristics</b>	<b>Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?</b>	<b>Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used</b>	<b>Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)</b>
<b>Regional location</b>	Positive	The call will be open to a wide range of disciplines,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The panels will be balanced as far as possible (within</li> </ul>

		encouraging interdisciplinarity. This should enhance engagement from across the 4 nations of the UK.	<p>the constraints of quality and appropriateness) across the range of protected characteristics, and across broader characteristics, ensuring that we have a good geographical spread of panel members across the four nations of the UK, and across a diversity of backgrounds, career stages and paths.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect in unconscious bias briefing for panel.</li> </ul>
<b>Socio-economic status</b>	Positive	<p>Existing systemic problems within academia re: access to the academy from researchers of lower socio-economic status. This opportunity will have no impact on this.</p> <p>The opportunity seeks to address health inequalities as they intersect with ageing. It could therefore lead to new understanding with respect to how socio-economic status intersects with ageing healthily.</p>	
<b>Education level</b>	Positive	<p>UKRI eligibility criteria require investigators to hold a position at an eligible research organisation. Other staff members will generally have some form of higher education. This opportunity will have no impact on this.</p> <p>The opportunity seeks to address health inequalities as they intersect with ageing. It could therefore lead to new understanding with respect to how educational status intersects with ageing healthily.</p>	
<b>Parent/guardian responsibilities</b>	Neutral		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have purposefully designed the call so that it does not fall on any major public or school holidays, allowing parents/guardians to fully participate.</li> <li>• The assessment panel will be held virtually, over the course of one day. This should allow parents/guardians opportunities to fully participate.</li> </ul>
<b>Carer/parent carer responsibilities</b>	Neutral		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above.</li> </ul>

## Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	We will strive to ensure that the assessment panel meets existing MRC criteria for representation of typically under-represented groups. This may help to mitigate against any (low) risks arising from discrimination.	
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No barriers identified; therefore, activity will <b>proceed</b>.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You can decide to <b>stop</b> the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You can <b>adapt or change</b> the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>	<p>We will endeavour to achieve existing diversity targets for Panel Membership, and will seek to bolster the panel with further expertise, where demand dictates.</p> <p>UKRI staff and Panel Members have undertaken unconscious bias and active bystander training. They will flag potential concerns during funding meetings.</p> <p>Where specific concerns are raised by the research community, UKRI welcomes an open and honest dialogue around these to consider how processes may be adapted.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore, you are going to <b>proceed with caution</b> with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.</li> </ul>		
<b>Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required</b> (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events:	<b>Yes</b>	
<b>Date completed:</b>	<b>12/04/2023</b>	
<b>Review date</b> (if applicable):		