

Equality Impact Assessment – ADR England Research Community Catalysts

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

What is an Equality Impact Assessment and why does UKRI use it?

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

Our leadership and building on good practice

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

Current good practice that is relevant to the **ADR England Research Community Catalysts** includes our:

- EDI as part of the guidance materials for the assessment Panel
- EDI as an assessment criterion
- Grant terms and conditions, including recognition for sick leave and all forms of parental leave

There are multiple dimensions/aspects to this Equality Impact Assessment:

- 1) Ensuring that the eligibility criteria are clear and objectively justified
- 2) Ensuring that the submission, panel review and awarding processes are free from unintentional bias
- 3) The identification of any potential barriers to attendance and participation in the call and the assessment and awarding process as below
 - a. Meeting duration – appropriate duration to facilitate good environmental conditions for assessment and inclusion
 - b. Venue location and arrangements to accommodate needs **(online)**
 - c. Broad ranging panel membership
 - d. Effective meeting management (qualified Chair, annotated agendas)
 - e. Robust assessment criteria

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	ADR England Research Community Catalysts
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>ADR UK is piloting a new approach to encourage the research use of ADR England Flagship data in partnership with the What Works Early Intervention and Children's Social Care (WWEICSC), Youth Futures Foundation (YFF), the Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO), Evaluation Taskforce (ETF) and ESRC's Public Policy and Engagement Team.</p> <p>This will be in the form of three Research Community Catalyst Awards from between £670,000 to £970,000 (100% full economic cost unindexed) starting no later than 31 January 2023 and ending 31 March 2026:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ADR England Research Community Catalyst for Children at Risk of Poor Outcomes (co-funded by WWEICSC) 2. ADR England Research Community Catalyst for Youth Transitions (co-funded by YFF and TASO) 3. ADR England Research Community Catalyst for Evaluation (co-funded by ETF and ESRC) <p>Applications will be assessed against the following key criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder engagement and collaboration • Effective communication and openness to perspectives • Research knowledge and expertise • Management and coordination • Equality and diversity • Value for money <p>The call will launch in March 2023 and close in June 2023. Independent expert panel reviews will take place in June-September 2023, with funding decisions expected in late October 2023.</p>
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g., with relevant groups and stakeholders)	<p>ADR UK and the five co-funders for this call have consulted with relevant stakeholders across each of the call's three themes. This list includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government (including relevant data owners) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Devolved administrations ○ Department for Education

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ministry of Justice ○ Children’s Commissioner for England ○ Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) ○ Integrated Data Service (IDS) ○ CAF/CASS ● Other organisations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ESRC ○ Other ADR UK partners across the devolved nations ○ Nuffield Foundation ○ Gatsby Foundation ○ Edge Foundation ○ The Association of Directors of Children’s Services Ltd - ADCS ● Range of academics and current researchers in relevant fields, including the Areas of Research Interests Fellows. <p>The three themes identified to pilot this new initiative have been selected to be cross-cutting areas that use existing ADR England flagship datasets in a way that can make a considerable contribution to social science. Also, to create the opportunity for collaborations across government departmental and sectoral boundaries and to consider more holistic perspectives on an issue. There will furthermore be the opportunity for these Community Catalysts to explore the intersections between the three themes.</p>
<p>4. Who (constrained to the funding opportunity itself) is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Applicants to the funding opportunity ● Panel members reviewing and scoring the applications for this funding opportunity and making funding recommendations ● ESRC staff working on the call and attending the panel meeting ● Co-funders including WWEICSC, YFF, TASO, ETF and ESRC
<p>5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<p>Governance and Reporting</p> <p>There are two main levels of governance for all ADR England Research Community Catalysts: a Monitoring and Evaluation Group attended by all members, as well as Steering Group specific to each theme.</p> <p>1. Monitoring and Evaluation Group</p> <p>The Monitoring and Evaluation Group, chaired by ADR UK, will meet every six months and bring together all co-funders</p>

and award holders from each theme plus key strategic and cross-cutting stakeholders. The three Community Catalysts will be required to submit a light-touch reporting template, which will hold the awards to account on behalf of all funders. The group will also evaluate the overall success of the Community Catalysts in meeting their objectives and support them by:

- addressing cross-cutting issues
- identifying future opportunities – such as for wider strategic alignment with external activity;
- maximising the potential overlap between themes.

2. Community Catalysts Steering Group

Each Community Catalyst will chair and administer a Steering Group that will comprise key strategic stakeholders in the sector identified by the co-funders (membership can also be influenced by the award holder). The Steering Group will provide access to senior practice, policy and third sector partners and ensure the Community Catalysts remain well-aligned with the policy and practice priorities and developments. It is also anticipated that the membership of the Steering Groups will include third sector stakeholders or advocacy groups to provide a mechanism for public engagement. These steering groups will be convened two to four times per year and will be a key vehicle for the Community Catalyst teams to consult on the development and delivery of their work plan throughout the award and to embed into the specific context of the theme.

Measures of Success

Light touch reporting for all Community Catalysts will be done via the **Monitoring and Evaluation Group** set out above. The following measures of success will be monitored during and at the end of the award and award holders are expected to be able provide evidence against their progress:

- Growth in the number of academic researchers who have the skills to use the data
- Durable training and capacity building tools and resources for future use
- Evidence of, or interest from, stakeholders in research co-funding, research collaborations or funding opportunities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of effective/appropriate collaboration with policy and third sector/public stakeholders <p>Other relevant key performance indicators that Community Catalysts will be periodically invited to contribute evidence to, as part of ADR UK's reporting to its Programme Delivery Board may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies aligned to government / public service need (ADR UK-funded and wider) • ADR UK-led (funded) stakeholder engagement events • Academics attending training events organised (or funded) by ADR UK to build knowledge of how to analyse relevant data sources • Evidence that ADR UK-funded research has influenced government/public policy • Whitehall departments/devolved administrations/public service/policy organisations engaged with ADR UK research • Evidence that ADR UK-influenced policy has led to positive outcomes for UK citizens
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GENERAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

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

Eligibility and criteria:

- This funding opportunity is open to Principal Investigators based [at any UK research organisation eligible for ESRC funding](#) including UK Higher Education Institutions, [Independent Research Organisations](#) and [Public Sector Research Establishments](#). That organisation will be responsible for submitting the grant application to UKRI. Proposals can also include co-investigators from UK business, policy, or civil society and given objectives and selection criteria we encourage non-academic co-investigators from a government department or intermediary evidence body. Standard ESRC eligibility rules apply. Our [research funding guide](#) contains more details on individual and institutional eligibility
- Panel members are instructed to assess applications on their merits and not to 'read between the lines' or give the benefit of the doubt based on the reputation of the individual applicant or team, as this would be a form of confirmation bias.

Standard Grant Terms and Conditions:

- UKRI standard Grant Terms and Conditions comply with UK equality legislation and include provisions designed to mitigate against potential negative impacts (such as sick pay, parental and adoption leave, the possibility of part-time and flexible working, and grant extensions).
- Research Organisations are subject to equality legislation and have a duty to comply with it. RGC 8 states that 'The Research Organisation must assume full responsibility for staff funded from the grant and, in consequence, accept all duties owed to and responsibilities for these staff, including, without limitation, their terms and conditions

of employment and their training and supervision, arising from the employer/employee relationship.' Universities are therefore required to make reasonable adjustments as required to support their staff.

Panel recruitment:

- We will aim to ensure that the composition of the panel is diverse, with at least a 60:40 gender balance.
- Whilst panel members are appointed, first and foremost, based on expertise, we will aim to appoint a diverse panel membership. Final decisions take into account trying to balance the panels by gender and geography and seek to ensure a diversity of career stage and institutions. We will only make recruitment decisions which compromise diversity when it is objectively justified by the necessity to ensure the required breadth of subject expertise with high-quality candidates.

Process

- All panellists participate in an induction which familiarises them with [UKRI's Principles of Assessment and Decision Making](#). The Panel Guidance will further reference these principles.
- All panellists complete [ESRC's Conflict of Interest Form](#), and as well are asked to declare any conflicts against each proposal received for the funding opportunity. Proposals are allocated accordingly.
- All meetings will be held virtually. We will consider access needs and review this continuously.
- It is the role of panel members to individually review and score applications, paying close attention to the assessment and scoring criteria and definitions.
- They panel will then meet collectively to discuss and agree final scores for each proposal at the panel meeting day (this may include interviewing applicant teams), under the guidance of the panel Chair and Deputy Chair.
- For each proposal we appoint two panellists who formally assess and score the proposal. All panellists are then asked to participate in discussions (via online discussion boards, as well as at the panel meeting day) in order to ensure that an open and transparent assessment process is undertaken, and a diverse range of views are represented.

Protected Characteristic Group	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
Disability (both mental and physical)	Potential negative	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Participants with visual and hearing disabilities may have difficulties if virtual activities cannot cater for their needs.</p> <p>Participants with neuro-disabilities may experience difficulties with concentration and focus during virtual activities.</p> <p>The current situation may present additional challenges for those intending to apply. We recognise that due to the shift to homeworking that has followed enforced lockdown (which is now lifted), people with disabilities may find the current circumstances particularly challenging for a variety of reasons.</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Solicit information from online participants (in confidence) about any additional requirements they may have in order to fully participate.</p> <p>Online meeting platforms offer an accessible and inclusive environment for participants. Depending on the needs identified, considerations might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The chat function and closed captioning can be enabled, and volume adjusted, to support those with hearing requirements; • Adequate lighting, alternative document formatting and potential use of screen readers for the visually impaired; • Provision of documents in sans-serif, dyslexia-friendly fonts; and dyslexia-friendly formats; • Avoiding colours, lighting etc that may trigger migraines, epilepsy; • Where there are particular constraints consider opportunities for participants to engage in a different way (e.g., tele-conference); • Consider the length of any online meetings, shorten if necessary, and ensure that plenty of breaks are built into the agenda; • If we promote the event on a web site, we will need to check it is accessible and compatible with the range of specialist hardware and software that people with disabilities use to access electronic information;

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)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recording of online webinars (e.g., Applicant Webinars, Panel Induction) so that it can be made available for access within an appropriate time.
Gender reassignment	Probably not.	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Use of non-gender-neutral language can present a barrier to participation.</p> <p>There could be potential discrimination against a panel member, or an applicant due to their perceived or actual experience of gender reassignment.</p> <p>Trans people may be absent from work as a consequence of transition and UKRI records may show the wrong gender.</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>We will work to ensure the use of gender-neutral language where possible in our documents.</p> <p>UKRI Training grant terms and conditions are flexible in nature and absence as a result of medical treatment. We would expect that absence related to transition would be covered by the research organisation (RO)'s medical leave policy and strongly encourage ROs to treat absence relating to transition like any other medical absence.</p> <p>Consideration needs to be given at UKRI level as to how records (including Gateway to Research and other communications materials) might be adjusted, and to encourage sharing personal pronouns (e.g., during introductions, and/or in Teams/Zoom name window when Panels meet virtually).</p>
Marriage or civil partnership	Probably not.	Panel and/or applicant eligibility is not based on marital status.	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	Potential negative	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.

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)
		<p>Childcare responsibilities may be a barrier to attending events and meetings.</p> <p>Completion of the work may be affected by maternity and parental leave and leave related to surrogacy and adoption.</p>	<p>The costs of additional childcare for grant-holders, beyond that required to meet the normal contracted requirements of the job, and that are directly related to the project, may be requested as a directly incurred cost if the institutional policy is to reimburse them. However, childcare costs associated with normal working patterns may not be sought.</p> <p>Dates will be agreed and publicised in advance to allow potential attendees to make arrangements to attend, and events will be held during core working hours. We will aim to avoid school holidays, half-term, or other key dates which may compromise participants' ability to commit.</p> <p>Regular breaks in the panel meetings for parental duties including breastfeeding/expressing if required.</p> <p>Ensure the use of gender-neutral language – parental leave, irrespective of sexual orientation.</p>
Race (including ethnicity)	Potential negative	See above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.	See above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations (particularly in relation to panel composition and mitigations against unconscious bias)
Religion or belief	Potential negative	<p>See above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>There could be potential discrimination because it is known that somebody (either a panel member, a research</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations (particularly in relation to panel composition and mitigations against unconscious bias)</p> <p>Ensure that religious observances are taken into account when planning panel meetings. Considerations might include:</p>

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)
		applicant or research participants) has a particular faith or belief.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling meetings to avoid major religious festivals; (if impossible to avoid then consider mitigations) • Allowing prayer breaks if requested
Sexual orientation	Potential negative	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.
Sex (gender)	Potential negative	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Ensure use of gender-neutral language in call specification, guidance, etc.</p> <p>Ensure that the panel has balanced gender representation (aim for 60:40 split).</p> <p>Our general practice is to canvass internal and relevant external contacts/stakeholders for a long list of potential panellists (based on the requirements of the call), then as noted, whilst panel members are appointed first and foremost based on expertise, we will aim to appoint a diverse panel membership (including gender representation).</p>
Age	Potential negative	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Panel members are briefed to make clear that they should be assessing the application in front of them and not reading between the lines. They should assess the</p>

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)
			<p>applicant team's capabilities and experiences to deliver their proposed work.</p> <p>Use of a variety of different communication strategies including social media to ensure that our messages reach the widest possible target audience.</p>
Other characteristics not protected under the Equality Act	Potential negative.	Considerations here may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographical location • Education background 	<p>ESRC is committed to go above and beyond bare compliance with Equalities legislation to ensure that our processes are as fair and equitable as they can be.</p> <p>When developing strategies, we will ensure that we look beyond the protected characteristics to ensure general inclusivity.</p> <p>We work to ensure that panels are balanced as far as possible (within the constraints of quality and appropriateness) across the range of protected characteristics, where we have the data, and across broader characteristics including participation from post-1992 and Russell Group institutions, ensuring that we have a good geographical spread of panel members across the four nations of the UK, and across a diversity of career stages and paths.</p>

Evaluation:

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

Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g., calls and events:	Yes
Date completed:	19 February 2022
Review date (if applicable):	Not applicable.