

AHRC Webinar: Centre for Law and Social Justice

Transcript

Jaideep Gupte

Just waiting for the numbers to stabilize before we start, so we'll give it another 30 seconds or so before we kick off.

Okay, colleagues, I see, numbers are stabilizing and in case there are others in the in the waiting room, I'm sure they'll join in time.

So, a warm welcome to all of you, to our webinar on law and social justice. If I could just remind everyone that we are recording the seminar. So my name is Jaideep Gupta. I'm the Director of Research, Strategy, and Innovation at the Arts and Humanities Research Council. I've personally been excited and looking forward to this conversation, as I'm sure all of you have been given the amazing speakers we have with us today.

Just to say, I think this is an important conversation, because it covers an area of activity that contributes to strengthening legal services, which, indeed underpins our justice system and furthers how every citizen's rights across the UK can be strengthened through social justice. And this is also an important area of our work that truly brings UKRI together. And importantly, this is very much a shared space with the Economic and Social Science Research Council.

So just to give you a brief order.

Sorry I've been muted.

Christopher Smith

We can hear you, Jaideep.

Jaideep Gupte

Okay, brilliant. Thank you, Christopher. I suppose we were just moving across slides, and I was muted in the middle. So just to reiterate that this is an important area of work that brings UKRI together and very much a shared space with the Economic and Social Science Research Council.

So just to give you a brief sense of the order of proceedings today, we have a panel conversation. Roughly up to quarter past 2 when we'll have a short comfort break. We'll then have a further 45 min with the AHRC Team. who will be delighted to provide details on the funding opportunity, answer any questions from prospective applicants and the like. just to remind everyone that if you do have questions at any point during the webinar. Please use the Q&A function and our team will keep sight of them and systematize them, so we can respond to as many as possible. Now, this may mean that your question disappears from the QA. Box, but that only means that we have taken note of it. if your question is quite specific to your application we might ask you to submit it by email to us. And of course, if there are questions that we can't answer today because we run out of time, we'll be sure to respond to them later, and and indeed reflect them in our fa ques so, before I introduce the full

panel, I would like to call on Professor Christopher Smith, who's chief Executive of the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Christopher, if you wouldn't mind setting out what our broad ambitions are for the centre and the importance of this area of work to our strategic plans. Christopher.

Christopher Smith

Thank you very much indeed. And it's an enormous honour, and also a huge pleasure for me to be part of this conversation, and I'm really looking forward to it. So I'm going to just say something about a personal reason for my interest in this work to begin with, and then broaden out. So I study the beginnings of the city of Rome. It's what I've looked at for 30 years, and in the middle of the fifth century BC. The Romans created legal code. It's called 12 Tables, because it's written on 12 tablets, tables of bronze, and it was known throughout the Republic and into the Empire as the foundational code which supported Rome. I'm one of probably about 3 handfuls of people who's interested in the legal codes and legal provisions that came before the 12 Tables very obscure and mysterious collection of fragments from the date back to the period of kings.

The thing I want to say is that those of us who study law in the context of early States never escape from the notion that law is completely, socially embedded. It is absolutely essential to any kind of understanding of how a society operates to see the laws, particularly normative law, which is constructive as coming from within social norms and social behaviours and practices. And so there is, at least for those of us who come from the tradition that I belong to an impossibility to think about law as something other than the product of, embedded in and illustrative of society, and therefore part of a conception of what social justice is that's highly contingent and contextual. but nevertheless essential. And one of the very interesting issues that we grapple with in early State formation is how decisions are made and how they are sustained over time. And in the end. for most of us. Law is somewhere in that mix really quite centrally.

Now I saying this because I think one of the things that a centre for law and social justice will do is continue a conversation about the relationship between law and society, which is mutually supportive and mutually constructive, which I think is exceptionally important. Because if it's the case for an early State that law is essential to protect and preserve a decision making process that is fair and reasonable, it's all the more the case in complex societies, such as the ones that we live in now, which are not bounded solely by nations of a sovereign state, but are embedded within really complex international and global relationships which need to be governed to need to be subject to legislation, but also need to be embedded in long-term views of our benefit welfare, and indeed, social justice.

It disturbed me enormously to see attacks on law and legal profession over recent years in our country, but obviously much more dramatically in other countries. Because that ultimately leaves no space for democracy, or indeed for the rights and obligations which are necessary to have a peaceful and civilized state and society. So I don't think there can actually be very many more important things for us to talk about than the legal framework within which we will live our lives today, tomorrow and generations to come. Which is why I was really excited to be able to work with colleagues across UKRI, particularly with our fellow council ESRC to bring together a group of expertise, but also a determination to join parts of the legal community which have thus far been slightly split by the artificiality of the divisions which exist within UKRI, which have plenty of good reasons and justifications in themselves, but are perhaps obstacles to seeing the rich interconnection of ideas which are necessary to make sense of what law is in a contemporary society.

It's brilliant, therefore, that we're able to start talking seriously about a major investment in a centre which will deliver collaborative, interdisciplinary and challenge led research, which will champion arts and humanities methods to legal scholarship, but embrace and enhance the interdisciplinary nature of law, and which will develop support for legal scholars at all career stages, following different and diverse career routes. That seems to me to be completely aligned to the notion of UKRI as a funder of brilliant ideas, a supporter of brilliant people wherever they are found in the research and innovation ecosystem. To do that with an eye to place, so that we are genuinely looking right across the UK and all of the diversity of place that we have, but also globally and internationally. And to do so in a way that allows for innovation for the fresh ideas and the transfer of knowledge and expertise which is as important as an economic innovation, a social innovation which then leads to economic fairness and understanding. To do this all without any notion that we're taking a particular political standpoint, one way or the other. But to do so based in the fundamental principle that we want civic community to thrive for the benefit of individuals and for a long-term future, and to do so not just for one generation, but for many generations respecting those who come before us and those who will come after us. Two themes really dear to the heart of AHRC: Community and civic discourse and intergenerational justice. where they cross over one of the places they cross over absolutely is in the way that law and social justice play out against each other for each and every one of us as citizens in this country.

So I think this is a wonderfully rich and exciting opportunity for AHRC, ESRC, and UKRI to work together to show that we are listening to community that's looking for a more joined up approach to our funding and to think about something which is completely and absolutely fundamental to our lives today and our futures. So I really look forward to this conversation. It will be very exciting, and if at any point in time anybody wants me to chip in with a bit of the 12 Tables, I'm more than welcome to tell you all about the way in which anybody seeking evidence goes and stands outside his door and shouts every 3 days. That was the way that evidence was gathered in early Rome. Fortunately we don't have to do it that way. But I've got lots of other things or funny things say about early Roman law. Should it become relevant at any stage. Jaideep, I'll pass back.

Jaideep Gupte

Thank you, Christopher. Particularly for the wise and wonderful ways that evidence used to be. Used to be gathered. I hope it won't quite be the nature of applications we receive, but always good to keep history in our sights. I've also noticed, colleagues, that the number of participants has gone up considerably since I started up top. So just to say that we will, in the second half of the webinar, return to the details of the funding opportunity. I noticed one of the early questions was on those, we'll address those in the second half of the webinar. But now to the panel conversation that we have in store for you. And now the purpose of the panel today is to help set out the contemporary political, legal, academic, indeed, social context in which AHRC's proposed centre for law and social justice will have to work. So our aim today is to help applicants think ambitiously about the impact the centre should have on people's lives. Very much in lines that Christopher has just led us to think and to be bold in developing partnerships and ways of working. And, of course, it also offers a chance to test AHRC's thinking and positioning with regards to what the centre will deliver, how it will deliver, and what success might look like. So, in terms of the format for the panel itself, I will first introduce each panelist to individually sort of offer their opening thoughts, and we suggested in 5 to 10 minutes. And then following that, we aim to have a bit of a reflective conversation across the panelist, to ask, or indeed ask and answer questions of one another. And if I can ask Christopher to join us for that, though I know, Christopher, that you have to leave us slightly early which is, which is fair enough, given your diary.

So with that I would first like to invite Professor Ambreena Manji. Ambreena is a Professor of Law at Cardiff University, since 2014, and prior to that she was Director of the British Institute in Nairobi. She now serves as Cardiff's Dean of International for Africa, and indeed has been a member of AHRC's governing council since 2020. I should also mention Ambreena's important role in helping us steward this opportunity and indeed, driving the Council's attention to this important area of work. Ambreena if I can ask you to offer some background on how AHRC developed the idea behind this investment? And perhaps reflect on what we know about legal research in the UK.

Ambreen Manji

Thank you very much. Jaideep. I thought what I would do is to provide colleagues with some background to this AHRC investment, and to tell you a little bit about how we've reached this point. We began working on a potential AHRC investment in law and legal studies quite soon after I joined council in 2020. And in 2021 we held a roundtable composed of senior and early career colleagues to discuss the idea. And then, quite soon after that, in 2022, we commissioned a scoping study by a competitive bid which has informed our thinking to date. And we were fortunate that the timing of our work at AHRC on law coincided with the publication of the REF 2021 sub panel report, because this has allowed us to survey the state of the discipline, and to consider quite precisely how our investment could have a lasting influence on the intellectual agenda.

So we already knew, of course, that legal academia is lively and diverse, and that it could respond in an agile way to opportunities when they arise. We know that, for example, from the way in which colleagues responded to the covid pandemic. And we know that legal researchers make a significant contribution to the research base, to the economy and to society. The question for me as a member of the Council of AHRC has always been, how might this potential AHRC investment contribute to developing our discipline? Now we know that as well as the continued growth and diversity of a number of subfields in law, that there has been real evidence of diverse methodologies and theoretical framings in the work that we do, so that the Legal Academy is broader now and more dynamic than it has ever been. There's real evidence of rigor in the variety of approaches that legal researchers employ from theoretical to conceptual to more social justice and reform-focused studies. And if you look at the REF sub panel report, it shows very clearly that what was found were many examples of areas of research that attest to real vitality in our field. And it's interesting to note for our purposes that much of this work was clearly inflected with human rights and broader social justice considerations encompassing, for example, issues of poverty, inequality, housing, environmental harm, consumer protection.

And the sub panel report describes what it describes as a subtle reconfiguration in the substance and scope of most traditional areas of legal research, whilst also noting importantly that legal researchers remain importantly rooted in our discipline, in the methods, approaches and concepts of our discipline and try to engage with those conceptual tools and underpinning normative frameworks. And we know that there's much continuity in our discipline, that much of our research has sought to contribute to understanding fundamental issues affecting society or respond to major topical concerns. And the panel described in its report a kind of blurring of the established subdisciplinary categories, and the development of a range of new subdisciplinary clusters and frames. What was very apparent from the last assessment was the agility with which legal researchers can adapt or transform the legal conceptual framework to meet new challenges.

So the continued vitality and sustainability of our discipline is clear, and it's clear that we are also able to develop, to innovate, to develop new legal methodologies as we work. Evidence of that can be found, for example, in the Feminist Judgment rewriting project just to name one. It's important as well to recognize, that that the panel found excellence across the range of methodological and and theoretical orientations that we use in the legal academy, from doctrine or to contextual, from historical to comparative, from socio-legal to social-theoretical. And it's that hybrid nature of law to use the panels terms that that we wanted to to draw on as we develop this this investment, the fact that we are able to do multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research. Now, considering the consortium model in ambitions for the AHRC Centre it's also interesting to note that the sub panel received considerable cross referrals from other sub panels, confirming for us that many legal researchers work in departments other than law. And I think that's important for us to think about as we think about this investment and the sorts of consortia that we might be able to build. And considering the focus that we have in this investment on social justice, we should note also, that the REF panel showed real evidence of the scale and extent of the impact that legal research continues to have in shaping and supporting social, economic, political, and cultural institutions and practices. And it's evident that legal academia is very accustomed to working with organizations and activities outside academia. So that we take an increasingly, this is to use the sub panel report's wording. We take an increasingly outward looking stance, and that's vitally important to the way that our discipline is now formed. So that if you look at the range and type of impact achieved by legal researchers. There is everything evident there from influencing judicial decision making, to engaging directly with law reform bodies, to speaking with and influencing the work of public policy bodies, public services, NGOs and political decision making.

I thought it was interesting that from an AHRC perspective, that there's been much less work evident in shaping or influencing cultural or public understanding of law. And I think, back to William Twynning's work on the importance of Legal Academia, enhancing the public understanding of law, and the way that scientists have been very astute and very and clear about articulating the public importance of science. So there's work to be done, I think, in articulating how legal research can shape and influence cultural and public understanding. Interesting also to note, just as I wrap up, that the case studies that the REF panel saw were very, very concerned with generating impact overseas and internationally, but sub panel also spoke to the importance of generating local and regional impact. So that there is a tie here with the AHRC agenda on place, and on the importance of contributing to the regions in which our higher education institutions are located.

And finally, just to say that we should be aware as we develop this investment, that although many of the environment statements in the in the REF, and the REF is just one source of evidence, but I think the sub panel report is certainly a useful source of evidence about the health of our discipline. One of the key factors in reading the environmental environment statements was that there has been by all of us in legal academia a real articulation of a commitment to interdisciplinarity. But actually the best examples of this were provided where interdisciplinarity was embedded in the overall research culture. And so in developing this investment, I think it's really important to think about not just a averring to our interdisciplinary commitments, but to evidencing them in the way that we develop our plans for enhancing research culture in a centre. And that will include working with scholars across all career stages. So legal academia in the UK is hugely impressive, is very diverse, not just in its contributions to scholarship, but also in the contribution that it makes to legal political life, civil society. Legal researchers are accustomed to reaching outwards beyond their own disciplines, to working beyond academia. Our discipline is marked by a rich diversity of methodological and theoretical approaches, so that you could say nowadays that interdisciplinarity defines us. And we're outward looking, and that we're committed to equality on the global and the local stage. And we're committed. We have amongst us very committed young colleagues who care

deeply about social justice, and who have made this fundamental to their work, and this chimes very much with the AHRC's commitment to intergenerational justice. We're clearly able to respond to challenges, new challenges facing us. And our research is informing and shaping key agendas. This AHRC investment hopes to contribute to the diversity of legal research and to its continued vitality and societal relevance. So I'll leave it there.

Jaideep Gupte

Thank you so much Ambreena. Really important, thoughtful comments. Particularly enjoyed the point of embeddedness, of interdisciplinarity. And colleagues I can see questions coming into the panel. We are taking note of them, but without further ado I would like to welcome the Right Honourable Baroness Hale of Richmond. Lady Brenda Hale, you spent 18 years or so in academia, becoming a Professor of Law. You were then a law commissioner, then a judge, and most of you on the webinar will know that in 2017 I believe you took up the office as President of the Supreme Court, where you remained until your retirement from the role in 2020. Brenda if I could ask for your opening reflections on the legal academic community, perhaps its contributions beyond the academy. Brenda over to you.

Brenda Hale

Well, thank you very much. It's a joy to be with you, and I must say it's a very long time since I heard anybody talk about the 12 Tables? And as the person who kept Roman law alive in the University of Manchester for many years, that was a delight to hear and it also emphasises how legal scholarship has always been interested in history. I'd like to give a huge welcome to this initiative from the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Legal scholarship has changed enormously over my professional lifetime. But at its core is something quite different from other disciplines. The science of determining and explaining what the law actually is from a variety of different sources of law. What we now call doctrinal legal studies. It comes as a surprise to many non lawyers that this is often no easy task. After all the diet of the UK Supreme Court and I sat, I had the privilege of sitting on, the top court for the United Kingdom for 16 years. The diet of that court consists of cases involving arguable points of law, of general public importance. That is, ones to which we don't know the answer until the court decides it, and there are plenty of those. Added to this legal science were always legal history, the route whereby the law arrived in its current condition, and legal philosophy. What is law? What is it for? And what should it be for? This has always involved thinking deeply about what we mean by social justice and individual rights. But such studies didn't fit neatly into the agenda of research councils or research frameworks, until recently.

So legal scholars began to diversify principally into socio-legal research and contextual studies which might attract funding from the ESRC or the likes of the Nuffield Foundation. We began to find out a lot more about how the law worked in practice, and about the difference between the law in books and the law on the ground. We also learned a lot more about the social and political context in which the laws, especially new laws, were made. The Legal Academy became, as Ambreena has said, more and more versatile and agile, and that can only be a good thing. But I think there was also a gap. Such studies might influence policy makers, but they were less likely to influence the judges who decided real cases involving real people. Unlike, for example, the doctrinal scholarship of the great academic criminal lawyers like JC. Smith or Glanville Williams, which was influential in some leading criminal law cases, And I also agree with Ambreena about the lack of public

understanding, of the importance of law and the justice system to everybody in their everyday lives. That is something that scholarship did not often address.

So this initiative of the Arts and Humanities Research Council can begin to fill those gaps. It can enable the Academy to focus on some really big questions. First and foremost, of course, what do we mean by social justice? How is it reflected in the laws we currently have, and how can it be translated into workable laws which we don't yet have? These are not new questions, but this is a great opportunity to take a fresh look at them. Social justice means a great many different things to different people. But I think that at its heart is some notion of equality. That individuals should have equal rights and respect, but also that socio economic goods should be distributed fairly. Not necessarily equally, but in a way which reflects a basic sense of fairness. Now, the most obvious context in which such questions arise is the welfare state. The distribution of welfare benefits, and services, and I hope you'll expect that Ruth will be saying something about this. But they arise in many other contexts, too. In my own area of family law, for example, we could be asking how our family laws currently reflect such notions of fairness and equality? Do they expect different contributions to family life from different partners or parents? Do they reward the different contributions which partners or parents may make to family life fairly and equally? If they don't, why is that? How did we get here? And how might we go about improving them? We could expect such studies, perhaps, to influence the decisions which judges make, but certainly to influence the decisions which lawmakers make. And we are coming into an area where lawmakers may very well be considering them.

Another area might be consumer law. We could be asking what the fair balance is between the interest of the producer in making a reasonable profit, so that it is worthwhile actually producing the goods or services in question, and the interest of the consumer in paying a fair price for those goods or services. We can investigate this in all sorts of contexts. Not just the ordinary consumer context, but there is increasing interest in the regulated utilities, such as energy and water, as well as those more familiar consumer goods and services. And that brings us to the digital world. There must be so many research questions here. Is it possible to ensure that the ubiquitous algorithms which we encounter every day in our ordinary lives promote equality and fair distribution rather than perpetuate old inequalities. So I just mentioned these 3 examples because there are many, many more. But it's an opportunity for some really big ideas and for collaboration between different disciplines and different locations, but rooted in the discipline which make up the arts and humanities. And that is really exciting. Thank you.

Jaideep Gupte

Wonderful. Thank you so much, Brenda, for those profound thoughts that that really are compelling us to think ambitiously and boldly. Not least, in regards social justice, but equality, rights, respect, right through to the digital, Brenda. And I'm sure of supreme interest to those in the webinar, but also, as Christopher mentioned, this cuts right across what it is AHRC is doing as a research council. So we'll be sure to take this back to our colleagues there, but it also sets up the perfect bridge for me to introduce our next speaker, the Baroness Lister of Burtersett. Lady Ruth Lister is Emeritus Professor of Social Policy at Loughborough University, and has had a long history of work on poverty, social security, gender, citizenship, asylum, and refugee issues. She's also held various roles on relevant committees, commissions, charities, and remains honorary president of the Child Poverty Action Group. Ruth, with that introduction. May I ask you to frame your opening remarks around how the academic community is engaged with social justice.

Ruth Lister

Thank you. Thank you. Jaideep and it's a great pleasure to be here. Great pleasure to follow Brenda, and like her, I very much welcome this initiative. My perspective reflects both my academic work in social policy, which, like legal studies, draws on a number of different disciplines, and my earlier work for Child Poverty Action Group, as well as my current work in the House of Lords. Justice is fairness which Brenda mentioned, and it is itself a highly contested political concept. As it's used by the Chancellor just this week with reference to increased conditionality and social security underlined. And it's worth just noting here that research suggests that the application of conditionality, whatever one thinks about the principle, but the application in terms of sanctions is often, it's far from fair in its impact. Anyway, justice is fairness is, of course, a key concept in legal studies, particularly in relation to procedural justice in the legal system. Social justice, as the name implies, embraces a wider social understanding. As recognized the point made by Christopher in terms of it being the law being socially embedded.

Broadly speaking, and very much oversimplifying, we can identify 2 paradigms of social justice: the distributional and the relational. Both of which, I think, embrace what Brenda said about equality. The distributional, which is the more common, was summed up by the political theorist, David Miller, as how the good and bad things in life should be distributed among the members of a human society. So it covers, for example, the distribution of income and wealth, of services, also environmental goods and bads. The relational is concerned with the nature of social relations, including in the legal system. It involves the dimensions of, for instance, recognition, respect, discrimination, representation, and voice. And if the distribution is about the what the relational is about the how. And the need to take on board both paradigms is summed up very well by Mark Peel, an Australian researcher, on the basis of the research he carried out with people living in poverty. To quote: their justice was distributive and procedural, and intimately connected with dignity and self-determination. Justice was about being respected, trusted, and listened to, because what you had to say was important. If social justice is a response to poverty, they argued, it must be a response to poverty's psychological and emotional wounds, not just its financial consequences. So a relational social justice perspective has implications as well for how research is conducted with a growing emphasis on participatory research involving marginalized groups as subjects who can contribute to the research process rather than just being objects of the research. And this speaks to social justice as recognition, recognition of the expertise born of experience, and voice, enabling the voices of marginalized groups to be heard in the research process.

Now a key aim for the proposed centre is to bridge the gap between written law and law in action. Those social justice paradigms are highly relevant to this. So, for example, the distributional paradigm raises questions about the availability of legal advice and assistance, especially in civil law after cutbacks to the legal aid scheme. And how far will immigration bail safeguards for those subject to detention under the new Illegal Migration Act provide protection if there is a shortage of lawyers able to provide the necessary assistance. The gap between written law and law in action can be particularly wide when it comes to welfare rights. both in terms of knowledge of one's rights and how to claim them, and the operationalisation of those rights. And, according to a recent CPAG study, the digitalization of Universal Credit has played insufficient attention to rule of law questions resulting in numerous examples of procedural injustice. And one of the messages from domestic violence and abuse charities is the need for adequate training of the police and service providers, such as local authority housing departments if legal rights, including those relating to economic abuse and non-residential abuse, are to be properly enforced.

From a relational perspective how members of marginalized groups are treated by public services, including legal services, is absolutely crucial. Too often people living in poverty, for example, feel

they are treated as less than human by the services of the welfare state, to which they are more likely to have to navigate than the rest of the population. To what extent does this contribute to the gap between written law and law in action. Important to is language, particularly that used by politicians in the media. Again, if derogatory language is used to describe social security claimants, how does that contribute the gap between written law and law in action, for example, dissuading people from claiming because they don't want to be branded as skivers or whatever. And we have a recent example of how the law itself can deny rights recognized in international human rights treaties. At a stroke the Illegal Migration Act has turned asylum seekers with rights under the International Refugee Convention, into illegal migrants, with implications not just for their rights, but also for political and wider public debate about asylum.

And this last example reminds us that social justice is in the in the academic jargon multi-scaler. I.E it can be investigated at a number of levels from the global, which and Ambreena talked about, through to the domestic sphere, again crucial to understanding domestic abuse and violence, and how the law like deals with that. And I should add that how social justice experienced also reflects the impact of intersectionality. So, for instance, how injustices arising from poverty are experience can be affected by the interaction of factors such as gender, ethnicity and disability. So, in conclusion, I just want to reiterate the point that if we understand social justice as relational as well as distributional, and it has to be understood as both I would argue, it has implications for how we do research. Pointing to a more participatory approach that learns from the subjects of research. And I'll leave it to that.

Jaideep Gupte

Thank you Ruth for your equally profound comments there, but particularly took note of your thoughts on how we might assist in in making marginalized groups and their everyday challenges more visible without adding to their vulnerability. Ambreena, Brenda, Ruth thank you for setting what is quite a profound and exciting stage for us in this conversation. Christopher, if I can ask you to rejoin us and what I would like to do at the outset is to ask Christopher, you, and Ambreena I'm going to claim you as an AHRC voice as well, just for a moment to reflect on the challenges that Brenda and Ruth have put to us. And to formulate that as a question. So I think the question here is now that we've heard their opening comments, Brenda and Ruth, how might we position the centre to ensure that AHRC's investment in legal research has the widest possible impacts on people's everyday lives, society, indeed, also thinking about future generations. So big question, no doubt. But if I can ask you to offer some reflections. 5 min each. Christopher, can I come to you first?

Christopher Smith

Thank you. Was, absolutely thrilling to hear those comments, and just the breadth of what we are embarking on here. Think the place where I would like to start is one of the things that has been characteristic of UKRI over recent years as a whole is a steady attempt to try to redefine what it is to be a researcher. So there's a traditional view that, you know, research is that people in universities right? And we know that's not been true. But trying to actually expand that community and think about intelligent and genuinely effective ways of expanding that community is taking some time, some hard work. I'll make simple reference to the involvement of people who fall under the heading of technicians but including in that librarians and archivists, and making them able to be Co-

investigators on schemes. That then extends to, well, okay, so we're doing research but who we doing it with and what for? And you start to think about how you co-create research. How you ensure that research is not something which is done to other people, but it's something that is done with people, who are themselves actually actively participating in the discovery of new ideas and new knowledge and new approaches.

So there is another legal, legally related, investment which AHRC has, which is the modern slavery policy and evidence centre and one of the real, really transformative things that I think that that centre has done is to involve people with lived experience of slavery in processes of actually choosing which projects should go forward. So they become part of the Peer review assessment process. They're not the objects of research, but they are actively driving the direction of research and contributing towards the formulation of problems and challenges. And I suppose that my thought was stemmed from both Ruth and Brenda's comments about the range of touch points that a conception of law in context of social justice comes to. That one of the things AHRC can genuinely do and has shown it can do is to make sure that this is a project which is not confined to a small group of professionals in one part of the subject, but is genuinely actually being driven by a notion of co-creation. That, I think, is one of the things that arts and humanities methodology increasingly are demonstrating to other parts of UKRI. And I think we are leading the ground. That's where I would go. Ambreena will have a more informed view, I'm sure.

Jaideep Gupte

Thanks, Christopher. Ambreena. Your thoughts on how the centre sort of positions impact in that widest possible sense that Brenda and Ruth have challenged us to consider.

Ambreena Manji

Well you won't be surprised as an African scholar, not an Africanist, but an African scholar, that I know at first-hand what the pitfalls are of doing research that isn't co-created. And I think we need to be really clear about the need to support researchers, not just in the doing of the research together, but actually in the co-creation, in the conceptualization of what are the important questions to be asked with colleagues and with people way beyond the academy. And I think doing that in a way that is equitable is a huge challenge. I think we are only starting to learn how that might be done. And we're only starting to learn about that in international research. But there are lessons there, I think, for us also, in the sort of research we do as a legal academic community. How do we go about conceptualizing the questions that we ask, together with those who traditionally be seen as research subjects alone. And how do we do that in a participatory way. And I've benefited hugely from being involved with the modern slavery discussions, modern slavery centre discussions, and thinking about not just lived experience, but also lived and felt experience, which I think is also really powerful way to frame and think about these issues. So I agree with Ruth and Christopher, this is something that we should be ambitious about in what we ask of the social justice centre.

Jaideep Gupte

Thank you both for that. I wanted to now come back to Brenda and to Ruth, and perhaps shift our gears a bit to the future. So, looking ahead, and

Ruth Lister

Before we do that, could I just respond to that? I'm really encouraged by what you said, but I think it's really important, and this might be for the second half of the meeting, but to do it in the way that Ambreena talked about is very expensive. It takes time, it takes money, and too often funders don't adequately take that into account. So I think if this is what I'm hearing you say is so central to your vision for how this money is spent, I think that is really important to remember that, and to tell people not to skimp through kind of trying to rush through that stage. Because, as Ambreena said, it's really needs to be that the more it can be participatory from the conceptualization stage the better it's likely to be as a piece of research. The better the impact is like to be sorry to butt in.

Jaideep Gupte

Not at all Ruth, a really important intervention there. And if I can add that our teams have also been on quite a sustained learning journey in terms of how we can ensure that our mechanisms are set out in order to enable that type of initial co-creation and the investments that's required at the stage Ruth that you so helpfully have pointed out. So please do push us to make sure that our investment mechanisms are indeed responsive enough to those sorts of ideas. And I suppose, taking that as a lead to what success, how we might measure success in 5 to 10 years time. And there's been a couple of questions that have come in that help me, I suppose, contextualize this a little bit, Brenda and Ruth. So if I can ask you to suggest to us what success may look like in terms of, one of the questions that an audience members posed is that they've noted that we often allow politics to define law, when law and legal rights should and must override politics. So that's an inflection point on how we might look to change that dynamic, perhaps in 5 years' time, or perhaps that dynamic isn't quite as prevalent as the question suggests. And another question, Brenda, is that social justice should empower all not a few select. So how in terms of those 2 inflection points, how might you view the centre's success in 5 to 10 years time?

Brenda Hale

Well, to state the obvious, perhaps. I, somebody like me, with my very varied professional background, would regard it as a success if actors in the justice system, i.e. the judiciary, the lawyers, and particularly the leaders of those groups, were talking about and thinking about the products of this research, of the various projects that you had stimulated and funded, and in 10 years' time might have reached a conclusion. Now that doesn't happen at the moment and if you want to make progress with the justice of the justice system, it seems to me to be pretty important to try and get the justice system interested in the products of research. In fact, I wanted to comment on the whole idea of co-creation. Obviously, we were thinking in terms of people who need more social justice, and that it's important to involve them. Yes, so. But I think it's also important to involve the actors in the justice system in the co-creation of projects. I would say that, wouldn't I?

Jaideep Gupte

You would, Brenda, but it's really good to remind us of that, as a collective, because often we are driven by, or tend to be driven, by what's in the popular conscience and forget the fundamentals of what it is we're doing. Ruth, can I place the same question on you in terms of success in 5 to 10 years?

Ruth Lister

Difficult question. And Brenda's absolutely right in terms of the impact on those within the legal system itself. I suppose I would want to look for impact on politicians, you know, whoever's in power at that point. I think that your theme of the gap between, you know, written law and law in action is so important because, I mean I referred very briefly to that question of conditionality, but I mean, there has been research that's been done on the way sanctions are applied, which it really helped, and I still see it sort of cited in the media. You know, when the whole question of conditionality comes up. So it's kind of also, I think, the impact on the kind of general public debate. That the research that comes out of this funding should have that kind of impact to widen understanding of the way law actually operates, particularly for marginalized groups. And that it should be of value to civil society groups, I mean, both in sort of legally, those within the sort of broad legal system, but also outside it. That it's research that can be useful to those groups. And one point perhaps I should have made that just struck me, and we haven't talked about is, we do have different legal systems in different nations of the UK. And it is important, I think, that the research reflects the different ways that the legal system is operating in relation to social justice in the four Nations.

Brenda Hale

Yes, I would very much endorse that. Coming from a court which dealt with cases coming from all parts of the United Kingdom, and being a family lawyer who is very well aware of the differences between family law in Scotland and family law in England, Wales, and actually mostly in Northern Ireland as well. And there's some lovely work that could be done between looking at the social justice of the family justice system in different parts of the United Kingdom. I think that would be a great project. And it might influence some politicians Ruth, too, and you probably know who I'm talking about.

Jaideep Gupte

Indeed, Brenda. Christopher, can I ask you to come in on this?

Christopher Smith

So just a couple of things. Obviously, we often hope that research moves more dials more quickly than it tends to. And there's degree of realism that has to set in. Even the modern slavery policy and evidence centre is very slowly and very incrementally being able to move things forward after five years of really concentrated activity. So there will need to be some sort of focus on you know what it is it will really look at so that one particular thing can actually move. But I want to move from that to say something which goes against my first point of what I was saying, which is to set a very, very large ambition. And it's about law itself. It seems to me that one of the things that good would look like, or success would look like from this, is firstly a conception that it is extremely difficult to have any notion of social justice without law, and, secondly, a degree of confidence that the legal system that we have does contribute to social justice in our society. Now this is not to be polyanarish and suggest there aren't significant challenges, of course. but it does seem to me that if you run the counterfactual of where we would be without a functional legal system. You do not end up in good place. But I'm not convinced that everybody is absolutely as seized of that truth as they should be.

And so for me, at least one of the outcomes of this that I really hope we can get to is more of a public awareness, and public awareness has been raised I think by Ambreena, more of a public awareness of the absolutely fundamental contribution of law. Not just theoretically, but in practice. And across the piece. Because I think that there is a risk, of people. Remember that marvellous comment: that's your GDP. This is your law, and we've got to get past that, I think, if we are to recreate some of the notion of a civic discourse that holds our communities together.

Brenda Hale

Could I say how very much I agree with that? That I would, of course, wouldn't I. But it is frequently forgotten by politicians, by policy makers, and by the general public that the justice system is as important a public service as are the various manifestations of the welfare State. In fact, some people would say they're prior to that. Justice, defence of the realm externally is the first duty of government. The rule of law and keeping the peace and maintaining social justice at home is maybe also first or certainly second. And this is a really important message to get across, and it's nowhere near being got across at the moment.

Ruth Lister

If I could say I mean I wouldn't want to argue with that, and clearly it's important, but then one needs to balance that with, you know, if the research is kind of illustrating this gap between the law as written, and the law in practice, there is a danger, then, that that could work against what you're what you're rightly arguing for. So that that has to be thought about in terms of presentation of research findings.

Jaideep Gupte

Indeed, Ruth, and one of the questions that's come in that I think kind of edges towards the logistic functionality of it, and we'll need pick this up later on in the Webinar, but a colleague has asked whether the ambition of what we've set out on stage here involves several smaller projects and an umbrella that connects them? Or is this a research endeavour? Do we have a sense of the sort of size and shape of this? And I can have that as an open question to any but Ambreena, perhaps come to you first.

Ambreena Manji

I don't have a fixed idea, and that's partly because I want colleagues, to suggest to us how they think this might look based on their own experience and their own expertise, and where they are in in terms of their institution, and what it can support. But I would say that, you know, there are many different ways in which you could envisage the architecture for this, and my view is that we're as a council still open to suggestions about how that might look. The key thing is that we hear the case clearly articulated to us. And because this is such a new investment, and because we're at an early stage as a council in terms of our engagement with law. Then it's for colleagues to kind of to influence our thinking and to make suggestions to us. That would be very much my view at this stage.

Jaideep Gupte

Thank you Ambreena. Brendan, Ruth and Christopher do jump in on that point as well on size and shape, although, as I said, we will pick that up in the latter half of the webinar. There's another question that I'll just squeeze in here, that's come in, that, I think is quite important, because all of the speakers have touched on this, but I don't think we've explicitly address instances when the law may actually impede social justice. So the question asks about particular areas of law or its relationship to powers, gendered, racialized, classed hierarchies. How might we contend with that sort of space? And might we come to some resolution through this endeavour. Ruth or Brenda?

Ruth Lister

Well, yeah, that's a very good point. In a sense, I was, I think I was, kind of implicitly saying that when I was talking about the Legal Migration Bill. Because I think that will make in effect make asylum seeking unlawful. And, as I said, turned what were lawful asylum seekers into illegal migrants. It goes right against principles of social justice, I would argue, and puts it in the sort of global context. So I think, while I think you're right to have this theme of the gap between law and practice and look between written law and law in practice, I think the investment of your money must also be looking at the extent to which the law itself is contributing to injustices, so that it may not be that it's the way the law is being operationalized. But there are yeah examples. So I think that has to be potentially part of the agenda. If that's what you know, it's up to the people who are putting in for the money to you know what they want to look at. And in terms of just the shape and size, I mean, I think it's very much as Ambreena said. I mean the case that people make. But I was quite encouraged when we had our initial discussions that you were saying, it doesn't have to be a single centre. It can be a kind of network. And I'd have thought something like this which is covering such a broad area. You could probably get more through a kind of network, particularly if it could involve the 4 nations. So you get all those different perspectives. I think that that could be immensely valuable.

Brenda Hale

Well, I would always also say clearly, there are plenty of examples where the law itself does not reflect social justice, where the law itself is unjust, does not reflect basic ideas of equality and fairness. And that is a contribution that the lawyers, the ordinary everyday lawyers, can make to pointing these things out, some of which are relatively obvious and high profile. Don't think we need to say anything more about the Illegal Migration Act, where I always say to myself does illegal govern the word migration or the word act. It's one of those things. It's a very obvious example. But there are plenty of other examples where the law has produced an unfair, unjust result, and that needs pointing out and thinking, what can we do to improve it? That's always been a feature of legal scholarship. For decades from when I was a law student, and it should still go on, and it may be a feature of any project that you might want to fund that would have that bit to it as well as working it. Even if there's absolutely no gap at all between the law as written and the law in practice. Far from it. So I do hope you do allow people to pursue that. I think there are certain areas where we know really quite a lot already. And so in typical research funding way, you are going to need people to say, well, this is what we know about this area, and this is what we don't know about this area. And if one thinks of the criminal justice system, we know an awful lot about the racial bias in the criminal justice system. What we need to think about are what are proper ways of attempting to tackle that

and there are lots of different perspectives that can go into that. So don't reinvent the wheel. This is another thing to say.

Jaideep Gupte

Thank you, Brenda and I think both yours and Ruth's comments just now, I think, help position the scholarly weight of this to our peer review college as well, indeed, are another community that will be so central in helping deliver an impactful piece here. And indeed, taking sense of the current frontier of knowledge is going to be quite important here as well. And I suppose one of the questions that's come in and this is probably the last one given time, because I do want to give each of you the opportunity, if you'd like a minute just around any closing comments. But one of the questions that's come in that relates to recognizing where the frontier of knowledge is, and where academia sits at the moment. Is the capacity within Academia to actually deliver on this ambitious platform. Ambreena, did you have a sense? I know some of our early discussions were around the appetite, the demand for investments such as this. Are you reassured, given the breadth and depth of the conversation we've just had in academia's ability to respond to this?

Ambreena Manji

I am, and just to emphasize for colleagues that it was key to our thinking, you know, would our law schools be able to absorb this kind of investment. And it was key to our thinking that actually, an investment of this scale in one place alone would actually cause enormous pressures. And this is why we've come to this consortia model. You know our thinking has evolved over time to the idea that we should try to encourage as much thinking across different law schools as we can. So Ruth's idea of a kind of network is, I think, really important. It's in that way, that I think that legal academia could rise to this challenge. My opening remarks were really about how ready the academic community is in law for just this sort of investment.

Jaideep Gupte

Thank you, Ambreena. Ruth, any final comments from you?

Ruth Lister

I don't think so. I have hope that for those who are present that we've given them lots to think about in terms of any applications. But I think just the discussion we had at the end about how law itself can contribute to social injustice does actually kind of take us back to the importance of conceptions and theoretical understandings. Because it can be very contested. So I mean, as I said, in relation to conditionality and to what is fairness, but you know running all the way through social security law things that you know, I would argue, unfair, unjust, but current government would argue, would make an argument about them being about fairness and justice. Fairness between taxpayers, and so called hardworking families. And the hard working families, and you know people on benefit that kind of thing. So we can't take it for granted that there's a shared understanding of what is socially just or unjust, and that may be part of what the project is about is unpicking the meanings of those and what it means to you know, people, you know, who are not politicians. And you know, everyday people is the phrase sometimes used these days.

Jaideep Gupte

Thank you Ruth, that's really helpful, Brenda. Can I give you the floor?

Brenda Hale

Yes. Well, I thoroughly agree with what Ruth has just said, which I think I was trying to hint at in my initial remarks. You know, unpacking what we mean by, and what the general understanding is is really important, and what the different understandings are, and how, if at all, they can be reconciled, or reflect a much greater understanding. But could I just lob another thing into the mix which is. you are the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and it seems to me that there is an unexplored connection between the creative arts, literature, visual art, music and law and social justice, and I think there will be a wonderful project to be done looking at those connections, and how they've developed over the time. Easier with literature than it is with visual arts, but by no means unimportant. Wonderful study of the history of the Divorce Reform Act, 1969. Beautiful book about that included chapters about films and how they addressed the issues that were addressed by the Divorce Reform Act and its subsequent history. So can I put in a plug for this cultural life as well.

Jaideep Gupte

Thank you Brenda, it joys me to no end that that you've plugged us in that way. I'll keep a recording of that, Brenda, if I may, and I'll play it back in numerous instances. Christopher, that's probably a great bridge for you to offer any closing remarks.

Christopher Smith

So my enthusiasm and excitement for what this could produce grows and grows. I think it's very interesting to think about how we manage the conversation around the gaps between the provision of the defence which law offers, which Brenda referred to, and the potential for inequity within law itself. That obviously is an area of focus. I think that a self-aware and self-critical discourse is mature discourse right? So the development of knowledge about a discipline depends on you being able to recognize the gaps within that discipline, and where it falls short, and again coming back to the kind of the positive around this. It would be really fantastic if we were able to develop the grounds for a better debate about the fact that many of our systems are imperfect. Necessarily they cannot be perfect because our societies are imperfect. The improvement is something that we are striving to, and that's somehow or another should be. And we need to find ways of ensuring it is baked into the development of a of a discourse and a discipline. That is necessarily involved in a generous view of inclusivity. But it's also aware of, as Ruth said, that much of this is embedded in really quite complex arguments about who feels involved, including who doesn't. That actually, just through to finish on Brenda's lovely point, law is quite a performative activity and actually thinking about the performative aspects of this through creativity is quite a good way of getting at some of these difficult debates, some of these complicated trade-offs that we have to make, but to do so in a way that is far more positive and productive than a simple set to that that doesn't actually move us forward, but simply entrenches people in received positions. It seems to me that a mature and well supported legal discourse, embedded in an understanding of its performativity, should give more confidence for

everybody to move towards a less imperfect, more inclusive social justice system. So that's my hope. I'm going to be optimistic today.

Jaideep Gupte

Thank you, Christopher. There's no world in which I can hope to outdo that as a final word. So I'll only say, thank you Ruth, thank you Brenda, thank you Ambreena, thank you Christopher, for that most exciting conversation. Colleagues, I will, as I've promised, offer all of you a quick 5 minute comfort, break and we'll return so you can ask your more directed questions on the investment opportunity to the AHRC Team. Panellists, please stay with us if you so like, but we recognize that you may need to head off to other things. So if you are, goodbye, but we will certainly keep you updated on how this conversation develops, and how the opportunity itself lands. Thank you. Colleagues. So 5 minutes from now or if I can say 25 past we'll return with the AHRC team. Thank you.

[Recording paused for comfort break]

Jaideep Gupte

I was just about to say that we're going to also record the second half of this webinar, indeed, to make sure that we pick up on the questions that you have, and play them out also in an FAQ format. So it's accessible to a wide pool of applicants. Thomas, if I can hand over to you to introduce yourself and I know you have a set of slides to walk us through, please. Thank you, Thomas.

Thomas Booker

Thanks very much. Yes. Hi, I'm Thomas. I'm a senior investment manager at the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and I'm going to be speaking alongside my colleague Bethan, who will hopefully be back on screen in a moment, there she is. And we're just going to take you through, well really highlight, a few of the key details from the funding opportunity. There's nothing new in here. It's all up on the website in amongst the details of funding opportunity. Or there are some details which could be found in the application form itself. So anything we say you can find in those 2 places. We're just highlighting some key points. Bethan, if I could hand over to you to kick things off. That'd be great.

Bethan Rees

Brilliant, right. Hello, I'm Bethan. I'm an investment manager for AHRC working on the Centre for law and social justice. And the first thing I want to do is just go through some key features that we believe should be involved in the creation of the law and social justice centre. So we believe that it's essential that this centre brings together multiple institutions within and beyond higher education sector, in mutually beneficial ways which maximize the expertise experience, and connections of each, and ensure capacity needed to deliver and capacity built through the investment is spread across the sector. The centre will need to have a deep nuanced understanding of equality, diversity, and inclusion, both with regards to the focus on social justice, but also in the work it will do,

supporting and developing legal scholarship. We want proposals which show a deep understanding of the needs and opportunities, and which are designed around an ongoing dialogue about EDI from conception. In a similar fashion to this we see effective public engagement as essential to informing and shaping the research and ensuring that it is likely to deliver benefits to the widest possible group of people, and we expect to see more than just a one-way transmission of findings and highly encourage public engagement focused on collaboration and the development of shared research goals. Then underpinning this is a need for equitable working and partnerships which are mutually beneficial and mutually driven. These should go beyond academia, bringing in policy, practice, service users and communities and things of that kind, and can take different shapes, depending on the nature of the partnership. But as a minimum we expect them to be mutually beneficial, and to have informed the development of the proposal. So it's a research with rather than research on. The centre will be working in a shared space which cuts across the arts and humanities and social sciences, and we want to see proposals which reflect that reality and which will build up the arts and humanities approach to legal scholarship in a connected way. We are also keen to see proposals which are innovative in developing new connections between legal scholarship and wider arts and humanities disciplines which have perhaps not been explored as deeply before. An important focus of the centre is on the careers of legal scholars and identifying barriers or challenges to flexible career paths and career progression and working with others in the sector to break down those barriers. There's a strong link to our EDI ambitions around the centre. And we want proposals to have a clear sense of the current state of the sector and a long-term plan for engaging with others to further understanding and find solutions. We're also keen to see the centre build support for career paths that move between research, practice and policy. As we believe that it will benefit legal scholars as well as research policy and practice themselves. Now for the centre to have the impact that we want it to have, it will need to find a way to work with others outside of the core team and partners to develop and implement outcomes. Wherever the centre is based, we expect it to work across the four nations of the UK and to engage with international stakeholders as appropriate. And finally, while we're not expecting the centre to be completely self-sustaining at the end of the initial period we do expect the work it conducts over the 5 years to have a lasting legacy, and we expect the centre to be moving towards a place where it's well established and capable of sustaining itself, and we wouldn't want those long term plans to be reliant solely on UKRI funding.

Now to reflect on the timeline. This timeline is available in the funding detail, so I won't go over it in too much detail. The key thing to highlight is that due to the nature and scale of this investment there are 3 stages to our selection process. The first will be an outline stage which is currently open, and that closes in January. A full application stage which will open around March next year, and we'll close it in July. Then an interview stage which will take place in early 2025. The exact dates for each stage we will be sharing those as we move throughout the process. The outline applications will be subject to assessment by an expert panel. Full applications will undergo written review, followed by shortlisting moderation, style panel. And then shortlisted applicants will be assessed by an interview panel. A couple of things to note for those who are successful in moving through from the outline stage to submit full applications that aren't listed on the timeline is that we are in the very early stages of exploring the possibility of running a workshop with applicants in which we would hope to bring in some other key stakeholders, and hopefully would present an opportunity to share ideas of priority and offer guidance on any key points of feedback from the outline stage. And there will be an opportunity to respond to written reviews. So, depending on how quickly we can secure reviews for the full applications at some point in that July November period you'll need to submit that response. And now I'm going to hand over to Thomas for the rest of the presentation.

Thomas Booker

Thanks very much, Bethan. So I've got a couple of slides to briefly go over what we're looking at at the outline stage, and then a couple of slides just to highlight some key points in the funding that we're making available. Hopefully, some of you will have had the opportunity to already get onto the funding system. The application form is available, and you would already know, that this is what we're asking for at the outline stage. And in the application form you'll find the exact details of what we're asking for for each of these, and also what we're asking the assesses to look at for those particular sections. And I suppose, just to note as well that these will all in some way be reflected in the full application stage as well, obviously in a lot more detail at that point. But the work you put in now, if you are successful in moving through to the full application stage, it will hopefully help contribute to development of that so you're not having to do extra work. Just to go through them very quickly. So the summary as you might expect is just to provide us a simple overview of what you're proposing to do with the centre. And the vision is sort of setting out what you're hoping to achieve, and how that will address the three objectives that we have for the centre and also the kind of underlying principles around EDI, equitable partnerships, and public engagement. The approach is how you're going to achieve what you set out and also looking at how you've embedded key things like EDI, equitable partnerships and public engagement again. And we've also asked in that section for a kind of a brief logic model and a kind of high level project plan again, just to show how you're moving from what you want to do to the impacts that you're hoping to have. Consortium capabilities as you might expect is your opportunity to tell us about the people and organizations that will be part of the centre. How they meet the requirements we've set out with regards to things like interdisciplinarity, partnerships beyond academia, and involving different career stages. And also an opportunity to say why it's the best mix to support the vision and approach that you have for the centre as you set it out. We've asked for some outline budget figures. So that's what the resource and costs are. These are headline figures at this stage. They don't necessarily need to be exact. and they won't have to be fixed at this point. So there can be some flexibility between the outline stage and the full stage. But you do need to remain within any of the funding limits we've set which I'll talk a little bit about in a couple of slides time. You then have an opportunity in the narratives to kind of talk about why you've allocated funding the way you've allocated it, and how that supports the vision and approach that you have for your proposed centre. And then finally, given a really important section, given the subject matter, and that's the ethics and responsible research and innovation section, which is your opportunity to explain the ethical and safeguard issues that you've already identified and how you'll support those. But also how you'll monitor for future issues and make sure that the Centre continues to pay attention to that. I suppose, just to note for those intended to provide or sorry those invited to provide full applications you will be allowed to make some changes between at the outline and full submission stage. And you'll have an opportunity to explain the changes you've made. Part of the reason we have included an outline stage is so that we can offer feedback to help guide the development of full applications. And I think we'd expect to see changes made in order to address any feedback that that's provided.

Thank you very much, Bethan, already moving on to the next slide there. So, as I said, as you guys read the sections of the application form you'll see text which tells you exactly what the assessors are going to be looking for for that particular section. But I think it's worth noting that cutting across those we're going to be asking the panel to consider these 3 questions in making the kind of decision on the final grade and ranking of your proposal. And really these are all related to helping us at AHRC and also the panel to understand how well your proposal responds to our ambitions for the centre. And also in a way to help well we hope it will help us shape our feedback to be as useful as it can be to you and moving through to the full application stage, if you're successful in moving through. And as you can see, this is in the funding opportunity, but it's around fit to what we've asked

for, the strength of your consortium, and how you've considered those underlying principles of EDI, equitable partnerships and public engagement. So hopefully, there's no surprises there.

And next slide, please. Yeah, perfect. Thank you very much, Bethan. So the amount we are making available, as you'll see on the website is 4.75 million at a hundred percent FEC and the maximum contribution that AHRC will make to that is 3.8 million. And we've made this provision that up to 1 million of that 3.8 million that AHRC will provide, can be allocated to support Project Co leads that are international or that come from business, civil, society, community, or government bodies. As well as for the for a flexible funding budget which I'll talk about on the next slide. You can use the funding for kind of any standard items as set out in the AHRC funding guide. The thing to note, and the thing we've tried to highlight on this this page, is that because AHRC's contribution is capped at 3.8 million, the more you allocate to the things that we will fund at a hundred percent, those you know Project Co leads from community, government, business, civil society, and also the flexible funding pot. It will reduce the maximum budget available. And I've just put some illustrative figures up there. But if you were to, for instance, to allocate the full 1 million available to those funds that we will give 100% for it, would reduce the maximum budget to 4.5 million. So it's just something to keep an eye on as you're as you're working through that. Also worth just on the project co-leads from business, civil society, etc. Please do have a look through the guidance that we've included on the funding opportunity, because there are different types of claims that can be cost. Sorry. There are different types of costs that can be claimed by different types of project co-lead. So, for example, with project co-leads from government, we wouldn't ordinarily expect to see salary included. But there are some certain circumstances where that would be absolutely acceptable. And would make sense for the partnership. So do you have a look through the requirements around that and if you have any questions, just drop us an email we would be happy to try and clarify. And also just to really briefly acknowledge that the overall funding amount has come down from 5 million to 4.75 million, and that's just to allow us to account for indexation. Which, for anyone who doesn't know is the kind of the annual uplift to the value of a grant to cover for things like the impact of inflation and so on. It doesn't really affect anything to do with your application. It's just to note that that has come down a little bit.

And then final slide, please, Bethan. Perfect. So I just wanted to finish on a couple of comments on the flexible funding pot, because I thought we've had a couple of questions through already, and it might be worth addressing it. As we've already heard, it's going to be really important, to give the centre some flexibility to kind of react to a changing world and to be able to, you know, explore new partnerships, emerging needs, or to kind of extend work in new and unexpected ways. We have provided some examples of how you might use this and we've obviously set a limit of 500,000 that can be allocated to it. In your application you will need to give some indication of how you think you might use it. So you might, for example, already know that you want to. I don't know, run a funding opportunity to support small scale community led projects. But we would expect to see a good proportion of that budget, I think, to be held for those unanticipated opportunities that come up through the lifetime of the centre. And because it's the nature of the funding is that it's for those kind of unanticipated needs, there will also be some sort of process put in place to agree use of those funds with the AHRC Project Board, which will involve the senior members of staff at AHRC, but also senior members of the of the project team or the Centre Team. I'm going to stop there, because I'm aware we don't want to take up too much time for questions. So if we stop sharing slides, and we will start going through as many of the questions as we can. I think Jaideep you're going to join us as well for this one, just in case.

Jaideep Gupte

Sure, I'm here. Bethan, over to you to systematize the questions and pose them to us.

Bethan Rees

So they should be over on the Q and a document that has been pulled through.

Thomas Booker

Do you want to kick off then with. Well, I didn't know, Jaideep, do we want to come back to that question about the nature of the investment and whether we see this as a network or as a kind of a single investment in a single. Well, we've specified that it can't be a single investment in a single institute but I didn't know if we wanted to say a few more words about that, and just reassure people that we're open to different models. It's for you, as applicants to kind of make the case for why a particular setup would work best in terms of ensuring that those three key objectives that we set out around challenge-led research, career, development and support for career paths. And kind of the underlying principles of EDI, you know, support for equitable partnerships, etcetera. Why, that particular model that you're proposing is the best one.

Yeah, I think just to reassure people. I didn't know if you wanted to add anything to that Jaideep?

Jaideep Gupte

Thomas no, you've covered it there, and I think Ambreena in her closing comments also kind of addressed this in in many ways. But to absolutely underscore and reassure that we're open to innovative thinking here. The reason we've kind of reflected a sense of what the structure of the centre might look like is our recognition that a sort of singular entity might place undue pressure on the host institution. Given the sort of size, shape, ambition, indeed, the sorts of challenges that the panellists put before us. So that's the first reassurance that we're open to innovative thinking and innovative responses from the community. The other and I'll pick up, I'll sort of tie in another question I've seen on the remit of this in terms of how close to the four thematic inflection points around accountability, vulnerability, trust, governance we expect. There too, colleagues, that list is an indication of where our scoping study led us. Ambreena mentioned that we had invested in a degree of scoping before we set about framing the sort of bandwidth of this investment opportunity. But indeed, we fully expect proposals to reflect those themes to the extent that they're relevant to the idea that's being proposed. It's certainly not meant to be a finite, in any way, list of ideas and themes. Indeed you might. Your proposals, your ideas might appear much further field from those ideas, but our scoping did lead us to a sense that the sort of large, unanswered gaps, questions, current contemporary challenges did sort of feature in that list. And I think that suggests also a sense of structure that again underscores that we're open to bottom up ideas and hearing from the community. Thomas Bethan, what's the next question? Sorry I've lost the page where you've totalled them all up. I'll while I try and relocate that page. If you could read out the next question.

Thomas Booker

There's a really quick one, which I can answer very quickly, which is, how many are we planning to support? And it's just the one centre for this particular call. So that's part of the reason why we've

opted for a consortium-based approach to bring together as wide group of people as possible. But the funding is just for the one centre. And then I did see a question. I think there were a couple of questions I've lost now, but around the length of the application form. And I think what we've tried to do is balance how much we're asking of you, at an outline stage, and how much pressure we're putting on you as applicants to kind of deliver the detail I suppose, against our ability to kind of assess to enough of a degree that we can, we can make a decision. And I think because our focus here is more on, I guess like I said the fit to our ambitions for the centre and our kind of hopes for what it will deliver. We've gone for kind of high level detail on a lot of things and then hopefully provided enough space for you to explain how you match up with what we're hoping for. So I hope that kind of reassures people that we've just tried to balance the kind of the needs of the assessment against the pressure we put on you as applicants, and that the full application stage will have a lot more detail. There'll be more sections. Those sections will be longer, and they'll drill down into more depth on the kind of the key points that you'd normally expect to see in an application. So I think we've tried to take out a lot of the stuff that you would normally expect so that we're not asking for too much at this stage. Although I would note that a couple of the sections, I think, are standard word length. So things like the vision, I think, is standard as 500. So I think that's just a standard length now for moving forward. Jaideep, is there anything you wanted to add to that?

Jaideep Gupte

The only point to add to that is, of course we've moved to the new Funding Service and our communities will be more aware of the new funding service than others. We have been one of the first to approach the shift away from JeS and as Thomas said the change is very much in the spirit of reducing burden right across the communities in terms of accessing UKRI funding. So I would hope that we've learned through the early sort of piloting with it. I know Thomas, Bethan and Team have put in a lot of thought in terms of how those forms are structured, and they're well up on some of the issues that our previous applicants have had. And we've said that we're working our way through those. So the hope is that by the time you all are putting in your applications there will be a smooth experience. But please do continue to be in touch with the AHRC team if there are issues relating particularly to the application form, the size and shape, the word counts and indeed, what is intended of each of those sections? And to note, you know, the Peer Review College is also well aware that this is a new form that they are, that applicants are responding to. So you know, just to reassure everyone on the call that we're not looking to for you to kind of predict or read between the lines here we're going to be as clear and as straightforward in terms of what each of those sections require. And the Peer Review College equally will have, very clear and crisp guidance in terms of what is to be assessed.

Thomas, I picked up a question around the number of co-pis people.

Thomas Booker

Yeah so I just saw that one as well. My understanding is and I will double check with the systems people is that, similar to before, there has to be a lead applicant. And so that's why there, there's just the single project lead in this case. But that that doesn't necessarily reflect the nature of the partnerships behind the consortium if that makes sense. And absolutely do approach this is as kind of 2, 3, 4 project lead kind of way of working, and do kind of build those partnerships in ways which make sense to the organizations involved and the capacities they have and the relative role that they're going to have in your in in the centre, that you're, that you as a group. I keep saying you and

it sounds singular, but you as a group are putting forward. So it's kind of one of those weird ones where I will double check but I don't think the system allows it. But that doesn't necessarily reflect our thinking behind it. Jaideep I just noticed Christopher has his hand up, I'm not sure if he wants to come in.

Jaideep Gupte

Exactly, I just wanted to bring Christopher back in. Thanks, Christopher.

Christopher Smith

So I just wanted to be really, I think Thomas is right, we will go and check. I wanted to say that I really recognize this is a difficulty in the way that we set things up and the question was framed in the tension between competition and collaboration. It does seem to be somewhat structural in the way that UKRI has organized itself, and it's not just us, therefore, it's across the piece, and it's got things to do with legal responsibility, grant holder accountability, etc. However, what I wanted to say, and it won't be in time for this, but I have noticed that as we increasingly try to encourage collaboration, having a singular PI is actually not particularly helpful. So I am trying to raise this elsewhere as a policy issue, for all of UKRI. I don't think we'll get this through here, because there is quite a lot to unpack. But this is to say, Thomas, will undoubtedly go and check just in case things have moved faster than I appreciate. But I wanted to acknowledge the comment made. I think it's a very fair comment. We are, I am at least, very cognizant of it as an issue. So thank you for raising it, and this gives me another reason to push at that particular door. Thank you.

Jaideep Gupte

Thanks, Christopher. That was that was very, very helpful. Thomas, I've picked up I think it's a follow-up question to our response on themes. Whether citizens rights is framed in a way to exclude human rights. I could, Ambreena, if you're still on the call, I'm sure you'll have a way to respond to that. And from my I suppose, non-expert position, I would reiterate that those themes, including the way in which they're phrased are not meant to be limiting. But indeed, enablers of the initial stage conversations that you will need to have with your consortia. Ambreena.

Ambreena Manji

Yeah, precisely that Jaideep. So, much of that language comes from the scoping study. But we're not in any way committed to staying only within that very narrow range. It's for colleagues to suggest to us, and if they wish to widen in that way, and if they wish to, for their project to encompass, for example, human rights, to make that case explicitly to us.

Jaideep Gupte

Thank you Ambreena.

I think we've just got time for maybe one, maybe 2 questions if they're short. I'm quickly going to scroll through Bethan's helpful summaries here.

Thomas Booker

There's a question around the assessment criteria, whether it included, whether they would include participatory involvement of frontline services. Although I think the question is cut off halfway through. But I didn't know if we wanted to say something about the fact that there. there is an assessment. Criteria, I think, is within the approaches section around how partnership working, equitable working, and that kind of co-creation participatory approach. I lost my train of thought there. I should say it is reflected in that assessment criteria, and we're also looking at it in terms of the panel that we put together to consider these applications. So, while we will have absolutely have the research expertise in the room, we're also hoping to have a broader range of kind of expertise in terms of lived experience, if possible, policy knowledge. And you know, stakeholders and kind of practitioner knowledge where possible. Obviously, we don't want to make the panel too big, but we're going to try and cover as much as possible, so that we're giving due consideration to those aspects that we've highlighted and that we see as key to the centre. So yes, it is in the assessment criteria. I can't quite remember, I think it's under either approach or vision, I can't quite remember, but it is in there. Have a look at the application form which will tell you where it primarily resides. And again, I just really quickly refer you back to those 3 questions that we're going to ask the panel to consider as a whole across your application. And one of them was around the kind of equitable partnerships and equitable working. So alongside the kind of specific assessment criteria the panel will also be kind of asked to take a view on that, looking across your application as a whole. So I hope that reassures on that point.

Jaideep Gupte

Thanks, Thomas. And there's, I think this also speaks to one of the questions around how proposals that have a very wide aim will be assessed against proposals that are narrower. In, I think, much of the assessment process as we've described, not least from the thematic point of view, but as Thomas and Bethan have described, the process will be to link the structure, size, shape of the proposal, with the idea that is being proposed, and the challenge that's being dealt with, and the authenticity, the plausibility of those links will be very much the sense of assessment. So yes, you know, in you know, in a practical way, the financial limit does, in a sense, suggests the gravity of work that is required. But you know, we're fully open to people being innovative, and in how they use that structure to indeed produce impactful proposals. And indeed, this will speak to the strength of partnerships as well. We are recognizing that partnerships will be quite key to this, and from experience we've seen that where those partnerships come from a place of strength and a place of a true sense of collaboration that the work and the ambition that is proposed tends to be of a more plausible nature. And our peer review colleges will be will be tuned to that. I think, colleagues, that brings us very close to a few seconds away from our proposed closing time.

So what I will suggest to Thomas and Bethan, if you could both just keep track of any questions that I've missed we'll make sure that we attend to those offline. Colleagues, if I can remind you also to be in touch with us. We'll share with participants here, but with our wider network, our emails and

contact information of our team to answer any questions you may have in writing and formulating your proposals. We also again plan to have an FAQ. So that as we answer questions to individual groups, everybody else can also benefit from those answers. And we are excited to hear from you your ideas, and I'm certainly reassured that we're onto something really important here.

Ambreena, I know you're still with us. If you just wanted to say thank you from your end, you are with us. Great! Do you want to say. Thank you. Thanks. You're still muted.

Ambreena Manji

I'm still muted, I'm so sorry. Just to thank colleagues for joining us this afternoon for taking the time to listen to the panel, but also to ask questions to the second section of the webinar, which I think has been exceptionally useful. If there are questions that we can answer, then we will stay available to you all. But just to add my thanks for all the work that's gone into making this possible, Bethan and Thomas especially. Thank you so much to you, too.

Jaideep Gupte

Thank you, Ambreena, and I've just noticed Katherine Warren you're on as well as as Team Head in this area, and thank you to you as well for helping resource all of the work that's gone behind this. There you are, Katherine. Everyone. Thank you. Another thank you to UKRI events team Sue and Mark. Thank you so much for supporting this. I'm sorry I started off a bit earlier than your thumbs up for me to get going at the start of this Webinar, but I think it's been quite flawless. Colleagues. I hope you found it useful, and I will say goodbye for me as well. Thank you. Goodbye.