

Equality Impact Assessment – ESRC Cohort and Longitudinal Studies Enhancement Resource (CLOSER) call

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	Cohort and Longitudinal Studies Enhancement Resource (CLOSER) – invitation only
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	This call funds the Cohort and Longitudinal Studies Enhancement Resource (CLOSER) from 2024 to 2028 to continue to deliver its current objectives which serve the biomedical and social science communities, as well as contribute to the delivery of activities specified in the Population Research UK Prospectus and support the delivery of ESRC’s Data Infrastructure Strategy.
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	We have engaged with the ESRC Expert Advisory Group for Data Infrastructure, Skills and Methods on some aspects of this call.
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultees • Applicants • Panel members • ESRC staff supporting the panel and delivering the resource • Existing UKRI investments • User communities and stakeholders, especially the longitudinal studies community.
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment process • Progress will be monitored through regular reporting and meetings with funder • Researchfish for capturing information on achievements • Evaluation and objectives agreed as part of the commissioning process

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	Potential negative	The Funding Service is compliant with relevant accessibility standards.	<p>Solicit information from panel meeting 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; • Where there are particular constraints consider opportunities for participants to engage in a different way (e.g., tele-conference); • Adequate lighting, alternative document formatting and potential use of screen readers (ensure any images are well described so that text-to-speech applications can recognise them) 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 etc.

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the length of any online meetings, shorten if necessary, and ensure that plenty of breaks are built into the agenda; • Consider (on a case-by-case basis) paying T&S for carers or support workers to attend alongside the participant, where this is required and not covered by the Individual's own employment contract. • Ensure that staff have had sufficient EDI training so they can respond effectively to the requirements of all participants.
Gender reassignment	Potential negative	<p>UKRI records may show the wrong gender.</p> <p>Trans people may be absent from work as a consequence of transition.</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.</p> <p>UKRI terms and conditions are flexible in nature and permit absence as a result of medical treatment. We would expect that absence related to transition would be covered by the Research Organisation's relevant policies and strongly encourage ROs to treat absence relating to transition like any other health-related absence.</p> <p>At virtual panel meetings, members may wish to</p>

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			<p>include pronouns in biography.</p> <p>We will work to ensure the use of gender-neutral language where possible in our documents.</p>
Marriage or civil partnership	None identified		
Pregnancy and maternity	Potential negative	Parental leave may prevent people from attending the panel, or feeling that they cannot participate due to caring for children/attending appointments.	<p>Provision for parental leave (including maternity leave, paternity leave and leave related to surrogacy and adoption) are covered in the UKRI terms and conditions.</p> <p>Dates will be agreed and publicised in advance to allow meeting attendees to make arrangements to attend.</p> <p>We will ensure the use of gender neutral language – parental leave, irrespective of sexual orientation.</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>Regular breaks in the panel meetings for parental duties including</p>

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			<p>breastfeeding/expressing if required.</p> <p>Reimbursement of additional childcare costs if the meeting participant is otherwise unable to attend (this could include childcare at the venue, additional hours of childcare in the child's usual setting or paying for a relative to travel to care for school age children)</p>
Race	Potential negative	There could be potential for discrimination because it is known to somebody (either a panel member or a research applicant) has a particular race.	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. The panel chair will restate considerations of unconscious bias by briefing the panel at the start of the meeting.
Religion or belief	Potential negative	There could be potential discrimination because it is known that somebody (either a panel member, a research	Ensure that religious observances are taken into account when planning panel meetings. Considerations might include:

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		<p>applicant or research participants) has a particular faith or belief.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling meetings to avoid major religious festivals; (if impossible to avoid, otherwise consider mitigations – i.e. during Ramadan ensuring that meetings finish early so that participants are able to get home to break their fast, awareness of the sensitivities around approaches to meals during periods of fasting); • Not scheduling meetings such that they would require commitment on Friday evenings (Jewish Sabbath) or on Fridays (Friday prayer, Islam) • Allowing prayer breaks if requested
Sexual orientation	Potential negative	<p>There could be potential for discrimination because it is known to somebody (either a panel member or a research applicant) has a particular sexual orientation.</p>	<p>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. The panel</p>

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			chair will restate considerations of unconscious bias by briefing the panel at the start of the meeting.
Sex (gender)	Potential negative	<p>There could be potential for discrimination because it is known to somebody (either panel member or a research applicant) has a particular gender</p> <p>Use of language can present a barrier to participation and it may be perceived that those with caring responsibilities are disadvantaged.</p> <p>Panel members may be disadvantaged and unable to attend meetings if they have caring responsibilities</p>	<p>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. The panel chair will restate considerations of unconscious bias by briefing the panel at the start of the meeting.</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 no higher than 60:40 split)</p> <p>Ensure that the meeting location is suitable to allow easy return home</p>

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Age	Potential negative	Early career researchers* may be disadvantaged as they don't have the same track record to draw on as an experienced researcher. (*It is assumed that early career researchers are generally younger than their more experienced peers, although this by no means always the case. This is why this point has been included under 'age').	Panel members will be appointed based on their expertise in subject and geographical areas without restriction on career stage. They will also be briefed to make clear that they should be assessing the application in front of them and not reading between the lines. They should assess an individual's capability to deliver their proposed research. Use of a variety of different communication strategies including social media to ensure that our messages reach the widest possible target audience.

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

Question	Explanation / justification	
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	X	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* *EIAs should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events.	Yes
Date completed:	24/10/2023
Review date (if applicable):	N/A