

Equality Impact Assessment – JPI MYBL (2024) Call Labour force shortages within long-term care

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

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

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

Our leadership and building on good practice

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

Current good practice relevant to the Labour force shortages within long-term care call includes:

- Considering call eligibility criteria and submission processes
- Ensuring EDI is reflected in panel meeting via membership and guidance issued to all panellists
- Awards to UK component will include UKRI terms and conditions, which contain recognition for sick leave and all forms of parental leave

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

- 1) Ensuring that the eligibility criteria are clear and objectively justified
- 2) Ensuring that the submission, peer review and awarding processes are free from unintentional bias
- 3) The identification of any potential barriers to participation in the call and the assessment and awarding process
- 4) Ensuring inclusivity practises in the online panel meeting including:
 - a. Meeting duration - appropriate duration to facilitate good environmental conditions for assessment and inclusion
 - b. Broad ranging panel membership
 - c. Meeting management/Chair/robust assessment criteria

Question	Response										
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	Labour force shortages within the long-term care sector										
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>This is a call for proposals from a consortium of funders across Europe (a subset of the members of the JPI More Years Better Lives or MYBL). The processing of applications will be led by a funder in Germany. ESRC has taken part in decisions about the call alongside other funders. ESRC will issue grants for successful UK applicants.</p> <p>The JPI MYBL want to fund research on three interrelated aspects of the labour force shortages in the long term care sector within the framework of demographic change, ageing and care of older people. Proposals must address all three research topics: 1) Working situation 2) The role of AI 3) Cross-national differences and similarities within different welfare systems.</p> <p>Within all the topic areas we are further interested in ‘what works’ that is, potential and/or promising practises at regional or national initiatives that improve the likelihood of retaining and increasing the numbers of care workers and supporting them in their everyday work.</p> <p>Timetable:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="536 1039 1490 1317"> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="536 1039 1011 1077">Submission deadline</td> <td data-bbox="1011 1039 1490 1077">14th May 2024 (15.00 GMT)</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="536 1077 1011 1144">National eligibility checks completed</td> <td data-bbox="1011 1077 1490 1144">Late May 2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="536 1144 1011 1182">Evaluation and Rebuttal stage</td> <td data-bbox="1011 1144 1490 1182">June/July 2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="536 1182 1011 1220">Panel Meeting</td> <td data-bbox="1011 1182 1490 1220">September 2024</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="536 1220 1011 1317">Outcomes communicated to coordinators (approximate date)</td> <td data-bbox="1011 1220 1490 1317">October/November 2024</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Submission deadline	14th May 2024 (15.00 GMT)	National eligibility checks completed	Late May 2024	Evaluation and Rebuttal stage	June/July 2024	Panel Meeting	September 2024	Outcomes communicated to coordinators (approximate date)	October/November 2024
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3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	<p>Office wide: We have included the team responsible for grants delivery in our early decision making for this call to understand 1) the new funding system functionality 2) understand implications of staff available to support this activity and to have early recommendations ready for applicants' eligibility checks.</p> <p>Cross-funder: As part of the consortium for this call funders collaborated regularly within both in the Joint Secretariat and Call Steering Committee functions in advance of call opening, to try and mitigate EDI issues such as lengthening of submission deadlines and panel assessment to accommodate national holidays.</p> <p>Expert input: the call was initially scoped by advisory groups to the JPI which include both academic and a range of non-academic experts from across Europe.</p>										
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of specific groups that are particularly affected by issues highlighted in the call on labour force shortages. • Potential applicants (social scientists at all stages of their careers) and users of research in academia, public, private and third sector organisations. 										

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewers and commissioning panel members. • ESRC staff involved in the programme.
<p>5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will monitor the impact of the commissioning process and timetable through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discussing implications (e.g. of changes in timetables) regularly with other funders ○ Reviewing sign up for webinar to promote call, record this for those that cannot attend and encourage wider dissemination if necessary • We will monitor the impact the involvement of different groups in the call though: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ESRC will write a short commissioning report. As the submission platform and data is managed by Germany, we will only have information on characteristics/ groups involved in successful UK bids. • We will monitor the impact of awards funded through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Likely impact of each proposal's planned activities will be scrutinised during specialist peer review and panel assessment, as part of the assessment process. ○ An investment manager will be assigned to the portfolio of awards and undertake oversight and monitoring activities. ○ There will be additional monitoring by the programme secretariat located in the Netherlands (ZonMw) of successful projects. ○ Brief annual progress reports (in English) from projects at the beginning of the second and third year of the project, as well as a final scientific report no later than two months after the end of the project.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

Summary

- This call involves international funders, and we acknowledge that different countries will have different policies relating to EDI. As a UK based organisation, ESRC will adhere to the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation. Our German counterpart hosting the submission platform will adhere to good EDI practices and have given ESRC assurances that processes are equitable.

Eligibility and criteria (UK applicants)

- The call is open to all eligible research organisations (RO). UK applicants are eligible for funding whether or not they are established members of a recognised RO, but applicants who are not an established member of a recognised RO must be accommodated by the RO and provided with appropriate facilities to carry out the research.
- In relation to UK Early Career Researcher (ECR) applicants track record is not a funding criterion for the call. Whilst track record may play into panel decisions it should not be emphasised to the extent that innovative / potentially high impact work by less established researchers is disadvantaged.

Panel recruitment

- As part of the cross-funder Joint Call Secretariat responsibilities, ESRC will lead and manage the commissioning panel process. We will aim to ensure that:

- The composition of the commissioning panel is diverse, with at least a 60:40 gender balance.
- Where possible, the Chair and Vice Chair of the commissioning panel are not the same gender.
- Panel membership is diverse. Final decisions will consider trying to balance the panels by gender and geography and seek to ensure a diversity of career stage and institutions.
- Whilst panel members are appointed, first and foremost, based on expertise 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.
- Required breadth of subject expertise is met with high quality candidates.
- The panel assesses the application in front of them and not to 'read between the lines' or give the benefit of the doubt based on the reputation of the individual applicant or team, as this would be a form of confirmation bias.
- Panel members will moderate and assess the quality of peer review and to agree final scores for each proposal.
- All panel members will be briefed on unconscious bias and encouraged to feel empowered to constructively challenge potential bias where they identify it. The panel Chairs and panel secretaries play a particularly important role in this respect.
- An implementation intention statement will be read out at the beginning of the commissioning panel meeting which sets the tone for discussions and requires that panel members pay close attention to the scoring criteria and definitions.

Standard Grant Terms and Conditions for successful UK component of awards:

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

Equality assessment of call eligibility, submission process and terms and conditions of UK component of awards			
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)
Religion or belief	Potential negative	Window in which call is open for applicants to write proposals falls across 2024 Easter holidays and some national holidays in other countries as part of consortium.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional time was added to submission timeline to compensate for call being open over the Easter holidays • Information webinar outside Easter holiday period will deliver information as well as
Sex (gender)			

		This may also impact those with additional caring responsibilities	<p>background and provide platform to answer possible queries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webinar will be recorded and captioned so those who could not attend are not disadvantaged
Sex (gender)	Potential negative	Use of language can present a barrier to participation, and it may be perceived that those with caring responsibilities are disadvantaged.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure use of gender neutral language in call specification, guidance, etc.
Age	Potential negative	<p>Early career researchers* may be disadvantaged in making application as they don't have the same track record to draw on as an experienced researcher.</p> <p>(*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').</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track record is not an explicit criterion, given likely relationship to career stage and hence (indirectly) age. • Panel members will 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.

Gender reassignment	Potential negative	Trans people may be absent from work because of transition and UKRI records may show the wrong gender.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UKRI award terms and conditions are flexible in nature and absence because of medical treatment. • We would expect that absence related to transition would be covered by the Research Organisation's (RO's) medical leave policy and strongly encourage ROs to treat absence relating to transition like any other medical absence. • Consideration needs to be given at UKRI level as to how records (including Gateway to Research and other communications materials) might be adjusted.
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Equality assessment of commissioning panel (which ESRC will manage)			
Protected Characteristic Group	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
Disability (both mental and physical)	Potential negative	Panel meeting attendees with neuro-disabilities may experience difficulties with concentration and focus during assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solicit information from panel meeting participants (in confidence) about any additional requirements they may have in order to fully participate online. • Panel meeting will be held online to secure accessibility for all. <p>Depending on the needs identified, considerations might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closed captions will be used for those who are hearing impaired • Ensuring that plenty of breaks are built into the agenda • Alternative document formatting and potential use of screen readers for the visually impaired;

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of documents in sans-serif, dyslexia-friendly fonts; and dyslexia-friendly formats; • Avoiding colours etc that may trigger migraines, epilepsy and are not suitable for colour blindness;
Pregnancy and maternity	Potential negative	Panel review falls across August holiday period (UK national school holidays in England and Wales; also often national holidays in other countries involved in call)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional time has been given to allow panellists to review documentation • Multiple dates will be offered for panel meeting to accommodate caring responsibilities. • Dates will be agreed and publicised in advance to allow potential attendees to decide to attend. • Panel meeting will be held online and regular breaks that would support breastfeeding/expressing people will be made if necessary.
Race (including ethnicity)	Potential negative	Panel membership may not be diverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collectively with other funders we will aim to appoint a diverse panel membership. • We will reflect in unconscious bias briefing for panel. • Ask individuals to introduce themselves before a meeting to ensure correct pronunciation of names
Religion or belief	Potential negative	There could be potential discrimination because it is known that a panel member has a particular faith or belief.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious observances will be considered when planning panel meeting dates • Panel meetings will avoid major religious holidays • Allowing prayer breaks if requested • Reflect in unconscious bias briefing for panel.
Sex (gender)	Potential negative	Panel members may be	

		disadvantaged and unable to attend meetings if they have caring responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the panel has gender representation (aiming for a 60:40 split) • Panel meeting will be held online to secure accessibility for all.
Age	Potential negative	Panel members may look unfavourably on ECR applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel members will be briefed so that they assess the application in front of them and not reading between the lines. • They should assess an individual's capability to deliver their proposed research.
Other characteristics not protected under the Equality Act	Potential negative.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESRC is committed to go above and beyond bare compliance with Equalities legislation to ensure that our processes are as fair and equitable as they can be. For instance, we wish to ensure that potential applicants and stakeholders are not disadvantaged by geography, institutional status etc. • ROs need to be clear of their duty of care. • The Research Funding Guide states: <p>'The Research Organisation is responsible for compliance with the terms of the Equality Act 2010 including any subsequent amendments introduced while work is in progress; and for ensuring that the expectations set out in the RCUK statement of expectations for equality and diversity are met.</p> <p>Applicants should be alerted to the fact that if they wish to participate in an ESRC-led activity but find that they are barred from doing so as a consequence of ED&I considerations they should contact the office for advice.</p> <p>We work to ensure that panels are balanced as far as possible (within the constraints of quality and appropriateness) across the range of</p>

			protected characteristics, and across broader characteristics including participation from post-1992 and Russell Group institutions, ensuring that we have a good geographical spread of panel members across the four nations of the UK, and across a diversity of career stages and paths’.
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Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	See the potential negative impacts outlined above.	
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will proceed .		
2. You can decide to stop the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. You can adapt or change the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias	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.	x	

Will this EIA be published	Yes
Date completed:	20/03/2024