

June 2025

Independent Evaluation of the National Capability in Behavioural Research

Baseline report

Cristina Rosemberg, Alessandro Sica, Guillermo Larbalestier, Alexander Holmes



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Executive summary

This report

This report presents the baseline evaluation of the National Capability in Behavioural Research (NCBR), commissioned by the ESRC to Technopolis.

The overall evaluation includes an Evaluation Framework report (delivered in January 2025), a baseline evaluation (this report), an interim evaluation (between October 2025 and March 2026) and final impact evaluation (in 2029).

Programme design and context

NCBR is a programme funded by ESRC that aims to harness, connect and extend the UK's existing capacity and capability to research fundamental questions about human behaviour within wider social and economic contexts. NCBR aims to address major societal challenges, which could include topics ranging from climate change and public health threats to the risks associated with technological transformation and political shocks.

With a total initial investment of £17 million, NCBR comprises a central 'hub' (Behavioural Research UK, BR-UK) designed to connect stakeholders and drive interdisciplinary innovation in theory, methods and applied behavioural research (BR). This is complemented by 'spokes' to be established over time to deliver key elements of the national capability. To date, the Centre for National Training and Research Excellence in Understanding Behaviour (Centre-UB) is the only spoke that has been established. This is a Centre for Doctoral Training Plus (CDT+) in Behavioural Research that aims to build a critical mass of interdisciplinary researchers with the knowledge and skills to transform our understanding of human behaviour. Both BR-UK and Centre-UB include a post embedded within a government organisation to help catalyse the exchange of knowledge and people between the research community and public sector. The hub post sits within the Government Office for Science (GO-Science) and the CDT+ post sits within Government Skills (previously the Government Skills and Curriculum Unit) in the Cabinet Office.

Methodology

The overall evaluation of NCBR is based on a theory-based mixed methods approach, grounded in the assessment of the programme-level Theory of Change (ToC), as per the recommendations of the HMT Magenta Book for the evaluation of complex programmes.

For this baseline evaluation, a total of 170 individuals have input to the study via a survey, of which 22 were associated to BR-UK, 28 to Centre-UB, and 120 were classified as wider stakeholders. In addition, the evaluation team has drawn from insights gathered from nine interviews with NCBR stakeholders, as well as programme monitoring data and relevant outputs (e.g. research briefs, blogs, webinars, etc.) generated by BR-UK and Centre-UB to date.

Baseline and early evidence

This report found that NCBR has successfully established the first elements needed to build national capability for BR and to connect and convene stakeholders across different sectors to address key societal challenges. These efforts can be seen in the establishment of BR-UK and Centre-UB as hubs for collaboration, knowledge exchange and capacity-building. However, the familiarity with the investments among wider stakeholders appears to be

somewhat limited. We would expect this degree of awareness and engagement for both BR-UK and Centre-UB to improve over time.

BR-UK has taken significant steps in helping to identify and understand the needs for BR to advance in the UK as a product of its capability scoping studies. Those directly involved with NCBR recognised these efforts when asked about the extent to which NCBR had to date generated knowledge about the UK's BR capabilities. Respondents from the wider stakeholders group, however, were more divided in their responses and expressed more uncertainty due to their lack of familiarity and engagement with the programme.

We have considered different elements when assessing the current capacity to embed and deliver effective BR. Firstly, we found that respondents referred to the availability of BR evidence to meet professional needs as somewhat limited. Secondly, the access, quality and relevance of the available data and data infrastructures to conduct BR was generally considered good. Thirdly, the level of collaboration between institutions and across sectors was largely referred to as moderate, as were the strength of existing networks within the UK BR community. Overall, our findings suggest an adequate baseline position, which is relatively stronger among NCBR members. Respondents felt confident that NCBR will contribute to make improvements in the BR ecosystem and generate knowledge about the organisations and networks active in the UK BR landscape to create a more active and collaborative BR community.

Evidence related to the uptake of BR in the design and implementation of public policy in the UK is still limited at this stage. Survey respondents explained that BR is not very frequently used in the design and implementation of public policy in the UK due to a combination of structural barriers, limited understanding, and competing priorities. Respondents also reflected on the limited access to the research itself by policymakers, which does not always include actionable insights, as well as the short timelines that are typically associated with policy development. However, there was consensus that there is a growing interest in using BR for evidence-based policymaking in areas like public health, taxation and energy consumption that are encouraging the integration of behavioural insights more widely in the design of policy. Initiatives within NCBR that are having an impact in this area include BR-UK's rapid response and 'Ask BR-UK' functions, as well as the embedded posts in GO-Science and Government Skills.

Finally, there is early evidence that NCBR has contributed to increasing the capability of researchers to conduct leading-edge, multi- and interdisciplinary research that incorporates BR. The survey measured the changes in capabilities of the respondents' organisation across three different areas:

- Capacity of your organisation to embed and deliver effective BR
- Engagement of your organisation in partnerships and/or collaborations for using BR
- Capacity of your organisation to identify funding opportunities and secure funding for BR

Our analysis shows that there are positive changes in self-reported capability between the pre-NCBR position and the current position across the three areas and across all different respondent groups, in particular among Centre-UB members. Respondents from Centre-UB and BR-UK explained that engagement with NCBR has enhanced their ability to conduct and translate BR, organise partnerships and collaborations, and increase their organisation's visibility. For the wider stakeholders, however, the impact of NCBR appears to be limited, which is expected at this stage.

1 The evaluation of NCBR

The **National Capability in Behavioural Research (NCBR)** is a programme funded by the **Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)** that aims to harness, connect, and extend the UK's existing capacity and capability to research fundamental questions about human behaviour. Its objectives are to:

- **Facilitate evidence-based decision making** through timely, high impact, and independent research on human behaviour that meets the needs of policymakers, industry, and civil society
- **Build a critical mass of researchers** with the knowledge and skills to transform our understanding of human behaviour by applying a diverse range of relevant methods

NCBR comprises a central 'hub' (Behavioural Research UK, BR-UK) designed to connect stakeholders and drive interdisciplinary innovation in theory, methods and applied behavioural research (BR). This is complemented by 'spokes' to be established over time to deliver key elements of the national capability. Additionally, posts embedded within government organisations are intended to help catalyse the exchange of knowledge and people between the research community and the public sector. A more detailed overview of the programme is presented in Section 2.

1.1 Study objectives

Technopolis has been commissioned to undertake a process and impact evaluation of the NCBR programme, with two key objectives:

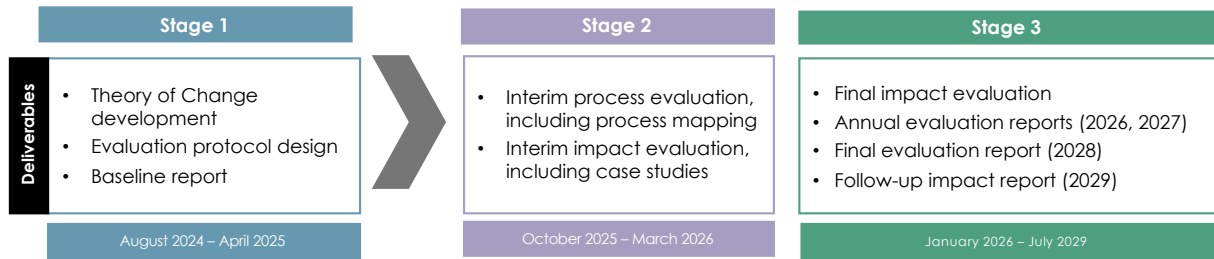
- The **process evaluation** aims to identify how the programme can be delivered most effectively, identify gaps and provide recommendations for improvements to the programme to inform the future delivery of this programme and others
- The **impact evaluation** aims to understand the extent to which the programme has achieved its objectives, its impact and any unintended outcomes for delivery partners, participants and the wider economy, and to assess the programme's value for money (VfM)

In line with the initial Invitation to Tender, our aim is to:

1. Assess the extent to which NCBR has met the overall programme aims and objectives.
2. Establish a baseline and framework to assess the impact of NCBR on the use of BR and evidence in policy and practice, and national capability in BR.
3. Collect qualitative and quantitative evidence on wider social and economic impacts of the NCBR and its activities.
4. Explore the effectiveness of the NCBR delivery model, including generating learning around the extent to which different programme elements are complementary and the effectiveness of the NCBR posts embedded within GO-Science and Government Skills.
5. Capture learnings from the set up and delivery of NCBR to inform the stage gate review for the hub and ongoing programme management and governance.

The study is taking place in three stages over the period July 2024 to June 2029. Key deliverables for each stage are shown in Figure 1:

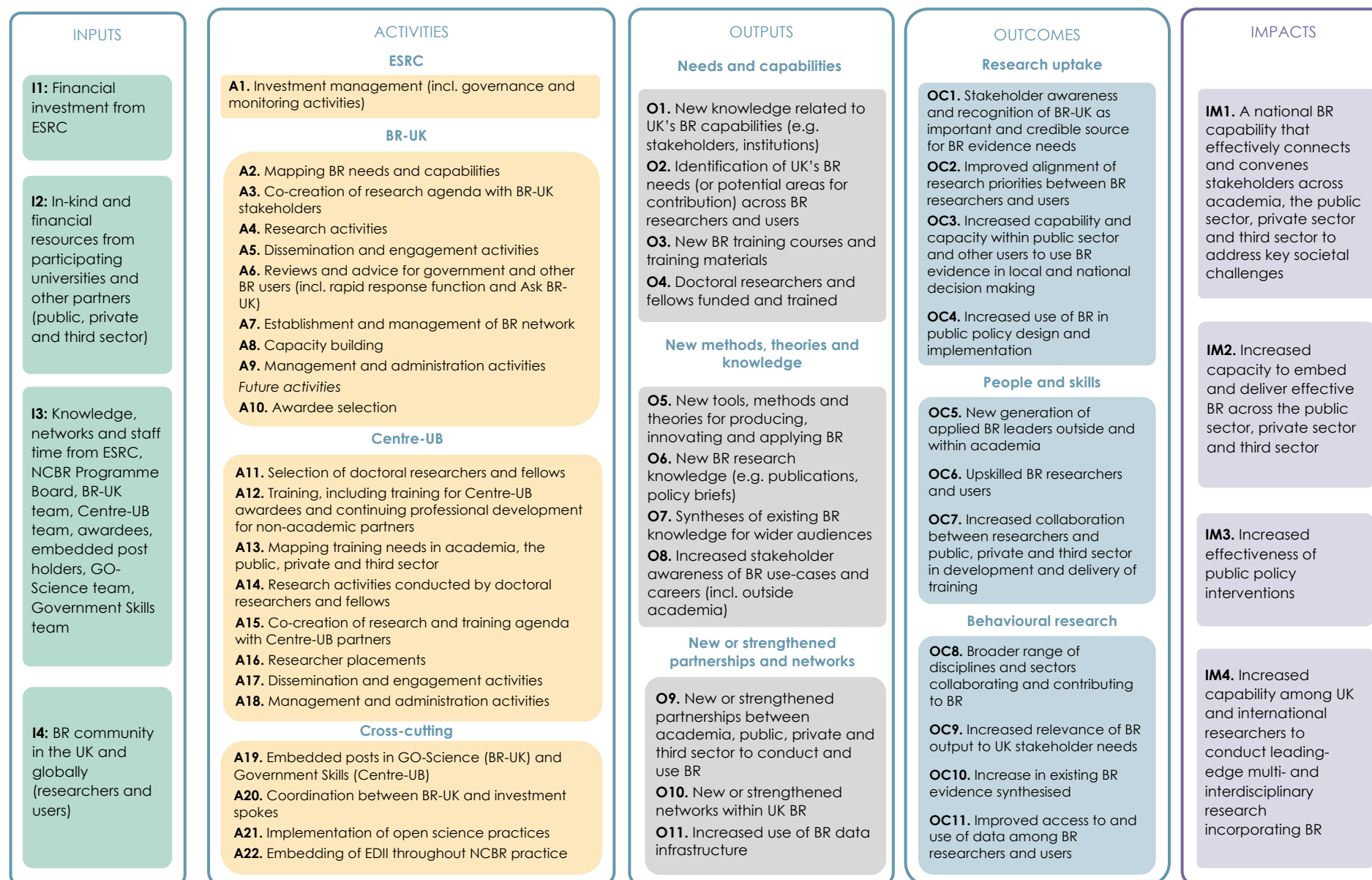
Figure 1 Evaluation stages



1.2 Methodological approach – Theory of Change

To undertake this evaluation, we are employing a theory-based mixed methods approach grounded in the assessment of a programme-level Theory of Change (ToC), as per the recommendations of the HM Treasury Magenta Book for the evaluation of complex programmes. This is a programme theory that explains how an intervention is expected to produce its intended results. It has a logic model as a starting point, which sets out how the various inputs and activities of NCBR are expected to result in a series of outputs, which then lead to a series of intended outcomes, which in turn contribute to wider and longer-term impacts. The ToC for NCBR developed by the evaluation team in consultation with ESRC and NCBR can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Theory of Change (ToC) for the National Capability in Behavioural Research



1.3 Data sources – baseline review

In line with the Evaluation Framework, the baseline review consists of a survey aimed at stakeholders involved in BR-UK, Centre-UB and more widely in the BR ecosystem in the UK. This is complemented with a series of interviews with NCBR stakeholders that includes members from ESRC, the BR-UK and Centre-UB leadership teams, and representatives from the Government Office for Science and Government Skills within the Cabinet Office. Where relevant, we also refer to monitoring and administrative data, as well as the information available from BR-UK and Centre-UB websites related to their latest activities and outputs.

1.3.1 The survey

The survey questionnaires (presented in Appendix C) included a mix of contextual questions to understand the current state of the UK's BR ecosystem and gather evidence on early outcomes resulting from the first year of implementation of NCBR. Where possible, the latter tried to capture changes and trends by comparing the situation before the programme to the current position.

The survey was distributed to individuals associated with BR-UK, Centre-UB, and a group of wider stakeholders in the BR ecosystem. The survey was launched in February 2025 and remained open for four weeks, closing in March 2025. The survey produced 170 responses, of which 22 were associated to BR-UK, 28 to Centre-UB, and 120 were part of the wider stakeholders group.¹

Key demographic information collected on the respondents indicates that:

- 81% (138 of 170) of respondents identified as academic and non-academic researchers engaged in BR, 15% said that they are not researchers but apply insights from BR in their professions, and the remaining identified as individuals in other roles involved with the programme or in the BR ecosystem who do not directly engage in BR in their professions
- For individuals who identified as academic and non-academic researchers engaged in BR, the discipline most closely aligned to their research is psychology (51%, 71 of 138), followed by public health (14%), sociology (5%), and economics (5%)
- 58% of respondents said they were employed in academia or a public research establishment; 29% in other public sector organisations; and 9% and 2% in private organisations and the third sector, respectively
- 62% of all respondents identified as female compared to 35% as male; the remaining 3% identified with another gender or preferred not to disclose it
- 85% of respondents did not consider themselves to have a disability compared to 9% who said that they did; the remaining 6% preferred not to say
- The sample was predominantly from a white ethnic background (80%), followed by Asian or Asian British (7%), mixed (2%) and black or black British (1%); the rest of individuals identified as 'other' ethnic group (4%)

¹ The weblink to the BR-UK survey was distributed by BR-UK to 60 members. Centre-UB distributed weblinks to the Centre-UB survey and the wider stakeholder survey to 289 individuals. The weblink to the wider stakeholder survey was distributed with the help of the Behavioural Insights Team and posted through BR-UK's social media and networking platforms. A response rate for the wider stakeholder survey cannot be calculated as the total number of recipients is unknown.

The findings from the survey will be tracked over time to capture how they change in the next stages of the evaluation. Respondents were allowed to skip questions, resulting in varying degrees of completeness across questions. This is noted accordingly in charts and figures.

1.3.2 Interviews

In addition to the data collected via the baseline survey, this report draws on several other sources to provide a more comprehensive overview and perceptions of the current state of BR in the UK. This includes nine interviews with NCBR stakeholders, specifically:

- Four interviews with various members from ESRC linked to NCBR and the wider research ecosystem in the UK, all conducted in September 2024
- Two interviews with the BR-UK leadership team in September 2024 and March 2025
- One interview with the Centre-UB leadership team in September 2024
- One interview with a representative from GO-Science and another with a representative from Government Skills, both in September 2024

1.3.3 Other sources

The analysis also draws on the outputs from the research and wider activities by BR-UK as part of their capability scoping studies and synthesised through blogs and webinars or available via the Open Science Framework (OSF).²

1.4 Data sources – interim and final evaluation

In line with the Evaluation Framework, the evaluation team will design a suite of data collection tools to gather the evidence needed to address the process and impact evaluation questions. Each data collection method to be employed in the evaluation is briefly described below (and in more detail in the Evaluation Framework).

- **Document review.** In the beginning of each phase, we will look for newly published resources and update our document list. Wherever possible, we will make use of existing information and data held by ESRC, BR-UK and Centre-UB including, for example, periodic reporting from the NCBR delivery partners presenting progress and monitoring data to assess progress on the implementation of activities and achievement of outputs
- **Longitudinal survey.** A second and third round of surveys will be directed to BR-UK and Centre-UB participants, as well as wider stakeholders. The questions will, again, focus on capturing relevant elements of the ToC (in line with the evaluation questions and metrics).
- **Stakeholder interviews.** Rounds of semi-structured interviews with key NCBR stakeholders will inform the process evaluation, capture programme effects, support the case studies, and explore the wider effects of NCBR on stakeholders. We aim to conduct approximately 20 interviews to inform the process evaluation and an additional 17 impact-focus interviews during the interim evaluation stage.
- **Programme monitoring and administrative data.** Throughout the impact evaluation, we will analyse relevant NCBR monitoring data to assess performance related to programme outputs and outcomes. The primary purpose of this analysis is to systematically evaluate the quantifiable outputs generated by the NCBR programme, including metrics such as number of publications and number of event attendees.

² <https://osf.io/qcvmz/>

2 Overview of the NCBR

2.1 Background

BR plays a key role in the UK policy landscape and its use within the UK Government has increased in recent years. Over the past fifteen years, there has been ongoing support for behavioural expertise across UK nations and in a range of government departments and organisations. Some of these, such as those in the Government Office for Science (GO-Science) and Government Skills, are directly involved in the programme under analysis. Moreover, BR appears in most of GO-Science's Areas of Research Interest (ARI) documents³ and is highlighted as a key underpinning need in strategies outlining government ambition, including the 2021 Plan for Health and Social Care⁴ and the Integrated Review.⁵

Furthermore, BR was central to the UK's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Academic research and policy analysis conducted on this experience has documented how teams of applied behavioural scientists in the UK Government worked to balance agility and scientific rigour in applying BR to policy challenges during the pandemic⁶ in addition to several tools developed for policy practitioners.⁷ Importantly, however, this research has also pointed to a number of ongoing challenges in this field related to building collaboration mechanisms between behavioural researchers and policymakers, synthesising and communicating evidence to inform policymakers, and conducting meta-analyses.⁸

More specifically, ESRC considers research that improves the understanding of human behaviour as a critical priority theme in its Strategic Delivery Plan for the period 2022-2025. This theme also underpins several of the other research priority themes included in the plan.⁹ ESRC's vision is to establish a national capability in BR with a similar function as the technology and infrastructure capabilities developed by UKRI for other areas of science,¹⁰ aiming to drive a step-change in applied BR in the UK.

2.2 Scope of the programme

The first competition for funding under the NCBR programme was officially launched in July 2022. The design of this five-year programme was built on the results of a scoping exercise conducted in 2021 to better understand needs in the area and which informed the Strategic Outline Case for NCBR.

ESRC has committed an initial £17 million in total investment to the programme, including £10 million to fund a '**hub**' (Behavioural Research UK, BR-UK) to connect stakeholders and drive interdisciplinary innovation in applied BR. This is complemented by '**spokes**' to be established over time to deliver key elements of the national capability. To date, the Centre for National

³ UK Cabinet Office & GO-Science, Areas of Research Interest. [Available online.](#)

⁴ HM Government (2021). "Building Back Better: Our Plan for Health and Social Care." [Available online.](#)

⁵ Cabinet Office (2021). "Global Britain in a Competitive Age: the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy." [Available online.](#)

⁶ Deo, R. et al (2021). "The role of behavioural science in addressing Covid-19 challenges: Examples from local government." Behavioural Science and Public Health Network. [Available online.](#)

⁷ Byrne-Davis, L. et al (2022). "Using behavioural science in public health settings during the COVID-19 pandemic: The experience of public health practitioners and behavioural scientists." Acta Psychologica; Apr; 224. [Available online;](#) Deo et al (2021).

⁸ Byrne-Davis et al (2022); Hubbard, G. et al. (2023). "Behavioural Sciences Contribution to Suppressing Transmission of Covid-19 in the UK: A Systematic Literature Review." International Journal of Behavioural Medicine. [Available online.](#)

⁹ Economic and Social Research Council Strategic Delivery Plan 2022-2025. [Available online.](#)

¹⁰ Behavioural Research UK (BR-UK) Launch Event, 04/03/2024. [Available online.](#)

Training and Research Excellence in Understanding Behaviour (Centre-UB) is the only spoke that has been established. This is a Centre for Doctoral Training Plus (CDT+) in Behavioural Research funded by a £7 million investment. NCBR is being funded using a modular approach, with the core work programme for the hub commissioned alongside the first spoke and additional spokes to be funded in future.

Importantly, both the hub and CDT+ include a **post embedded within a government organisation** to help catalyse the exchange of knowledge and people between the research community and government, therefore supporting the development of the hub and CDT+. The hub post sits within the GO-Science and the CDT+ post sits within Government Skills (previously the Government Skills and Curriculum Unit) in the Cabinet Office.

2.3 BR-UK

BR-UK is composed of a transdisciplinary team from a range of universities and partners, with one Co-Director (Professor Linda Bauld) based at the University of Edinburgh and a second Co-Director (Professor Susan Michie) at University College London (UCL). BR-UK was launched in November 2023 and will run until 2028. It will play a critical role in building NCBR by acting as a connector and facilitator across academia, the public sector, private sector and third sector to strengthen relationships across these sectors. Additional aims for BR-UK are to facilitate evidence-based decision making through research that meets the needs of society, to develop innovative approaches and methods for BR, and to increase use of, and access to, existing data infrastructures. The first 18 months for the hub are focused on scoping, engagement and development of a vision and longer-term work programme alongside early research activities. Implementation of longer-term plans will follow subject to successful stage gate review, which will take place during May and June 2025.

To date, BR-UK has conducted a number of initiatives.

- A multi-part **capability scoping study** aiming to describe and understand the current landscape of BR in the UK, assess national capability, develop a strategy for BR-UK's future work and identify potential priority areas for a commissioning fund.¹¹ Activities and outputs from the capability scoping study include the following:
 - The first phase of a **national cross-sector survey** of behavioural researchers and research users in public, private and third sectors to gather views on current capabilities and future needs and input to mapping activities
 - The BR-UK **behavioural research map**, a dynamic public database of organisations that are conducting BR and current networks for behavioural researchers within the UK¹²
 - A **documentary review** of recent strategies for advancing BR from national and devolved governments, as well as research funders
 - A survey to assess the needs and identify opportunities for BR in **UK start-ups and scale-ups**
- Work to develop **definitions of key concepts** in BR, through a Behavioural Concepts Group, focusing on terms like behaviour, behaviour change, research and leadership

¹¹ BR-UK plans to design and manage a £1.3 million commissioning fund to support projects and activities undertaken by researchers outside of BR-UK that can drive advances in BR.

¹² Behavioural Research Map (BR-UK). [Available online](#).

- Five **demonstration projects** focusing on how existing and expanded frameworks and data can be used to generate new findings, which focus on:
 - Understanding the translation of behavioural and social science advice to government during a UK public health emergency (COVID-19)
 - Examining the influence of statistical and anecdotal evidence on belief in policy effectiveness and support: a mixed method experiment in evidence evaluation
 - Development and evaluation of methods for creating and using ontologies in behavioural and social sciences
 - Assessing the transferability of evidence for environmental policy support across different socio-demographic clusters and countries
 - Behavioural interventions to reduce speed behaviour in car drivers
- A **rapid response mechanism** to address urgent policy needs, focusing on unexpected events or behavioural developments. To date, BR-UK has undertaken one rapid review in response to an outbreak of Avian Influenza in cattle in the USA and rapid primary research in relation to the 2024 Summer riots in England
- The development of **Ask BR-UK**, a responsive and accessible service providing timely behavioural science expertise to help research users. The service has been trialled via two pilot projects: one with Public Health Wales on how modifications to invitation letters affect cancer screening attendance; and another with Scottish Forestry to improve monitoring and evaluation for their green space initiatives and access to woodlands
- **Communication activities** on social media and networking platforms (e.g. LinkedIn) and BR-UK's own website to publicise **webinars** and other online engagement events:
 - Eleven webinars have been delivered between March 2024 and February 2025, with at least two more planned between March 2025 and May 2025. These cover topics ranging from public engagement in research and policy to using AI to improve BR. Webinar recordings are publicly available and can be accessed through BR-UK's website¹³
- A series of **blogs** and opinion pieces from BR-UK members on subjects broadly aligned to the topics covered in these activities¹⁴
- At least **5 publications** covering topics ranging from public support for tobacco and alcohol control policies in Great Britain to smoking cessation interventions, nicotine use during pregnancy, and trends in e-liquid strength among adult vapers published *Heliyon*, *Addiction*, *BMC Public Health* and *BMJ*¹⁵
- **Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Intersectionality (EDI)** work, including a specific policy and position statement, a working group and the development of principles and guidance to be followed throughout BR-UK activities, but that may also be of interest and relevance to other organisations seeking to embed EDI practices
- Cooperation with Centre-UB, with regular meetings between the leadership teams, cross-sharing of communication material and the organisation of a biennial conference to be held in June 2026 on data and technology, environment and sustainability, and health

¹³ Webinar Recordings (BR-UK). [Available online](#).

¹⁴ Read the latest thoughts of the BR-UK team (BR-UK). [Available online](#).

¹⁵ As noted on Gateway to Research, Project Reference: [ES/Y001044/1](#)

Together with the preparation for the Stage Gate Review in May and June 2025, BR-UK is working to launch a research **commissioning fund**, for which a specific process has been developed and is being reviewed by ESRC to ensure compliance with research funding rules. It will combine small accelerator grants for early career researchers and a small number of larger project grants.

Moreover, the network-building aspect of BR-UK activities is progressing as well, with a mailing list of around 2,000 people. BR-UK is investing in networking and knowledge sharing activities for early career researchers and research fellows which have been recruited under the different work packages, with funding and a physical space to enable them to come together and share experiences, learning from each other's work in different areas and different disciplines.

2.4 Centre-UB

Centre-UB is a national CDT+ focused on BR which is hosted at the University of Birmingham. It aims to develop a new generation of highly skilled PhD graduates, early career researchers (ECRs) and provide relevant training and other developmental activities to non-academics. It was launched in October 2023 and will run beyond 2029, the end date for the programme. Its stated objectives are:

- To produce the next generation of well-rounded researchers with expertise in BR who are ready to take up leadership-track positions in academia, industry, policy and wider professional communities.
- To promote a positive research culture and a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) through specific training and good practice. Engagement with stakeholders, experts-by-experience and the public is embedded throughout.
- To deliver training and knowledge exchange that brings cutting edge, actionable insights to policymakers, industry and charitable sectors, leading to impact in communities beyond Higher Education.

In terms of activities, Centre-UB will support three cohorts of at least 17 PhD studentships per academic year, of which eight per year will be ESRC-funded students with the remainder funded by the University of Birmingham and Centre-UB partners. The first cohort of 17 students was recruited in September 2024, with a high number of applications (674). Recruitment for the second cohort is ongoing. The CDT+ will also support three cohorts of eight early career research fellows. The first cohort was recruited in November 2024 (made of only seven fellows, as one withdrew their application), and the second cohort is expected to start in October 2025.

Moreover, Centre-UB developed a comprehensive National Training Strategy by consulting with over two hundred doctoral students, post-doctoral researchers, and partner organisation, across a range of sectors. As part of this, priority areas of BR training have been identified, with training activities that have been designed to be accessible to a wide audience, including partner organisations, doctoral students, and post-doctoral fellows.

2.5 Governance of the programme

Finally, in terms of **governance**, the programme is overseen by a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) and a Behavioural Research Programme Board (BRPB) within ESRC. The former is accountable for successful programme delivery and effective governance, reports to ESRC's Executive Chair and keeps ESRC Council informed. The BRPB provides a formal assurance

mechanism for the investment as a whole, together with strategic oversight of delivery, risks, and evaluation, and strategic advice to the SRO and the investments where appropriate.

The ESRC Investment Management Group (IMG) is composed of investment managers who liaise with the investments' leadership teams and monitor delivery. The IMG ensures operational join up across the investments and related activity across ESRC. The group is also responsible for relaying the investments' progress and escalating issues to the BRPB, for which it also acts as the secretariat. The investment managers, two for BR-UK and two for Centre-UB, engage with their respective investments, to ensure that there are clear milestones, risk management, and monitoring and evaluation arrangements in place. They are the first point of contact point for the investments and may attend their respective advisory group or leadership team meetings as observers.

Each investment also maintains its own governance arrangements to ensure alignment with programme objectives while addressing its specific needs. Both BR-UK and Centre-UB have a leadership team, to manage the delivery of the investment. BR-UK has worked on the establishment of strong governance structures, developing a clear reporting framework and developing Terms of Reference for governance working groups, including an International Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB). Centre-UB has established an Advisory Board which includes a member of the BR-UK leadership team, with members currently in the process of agreeing to the Terms of Reference and organising the first meeting. There may be adjustments to the existing governance structures to reflect evolving programme needs and address any identified complexities following the stage gate review.

3 Baseline and early evidence of progress

3.1 Introduction

This aim of this section is to establish a baseline on the current state of BR in the UK and to show early signs of progress made by NCBR along the ToC pathways. The analysis draws primarily on the responses to the survey conducted by the evaluation team. These are complemented using insights from interviews with NCBR stakeholders and outputs from BR-UK's capability scoping studies. The presentation of this baseline and findings is guided by the impact evaluation questions (EQs), with the view of laying the foundation to continue providing evidence against them during the next stages of the evaluation.¹⁶

The EQs are defined as follows:

- **EQ1:** To what extent has NCBR developed a national capability that effectively connects and convenes stakeholders across academia, the public sector, the private sector and third sector to address key societal challenges?
- **EQ2:** To what extent has NCBR increased capacity to embed and deliver effective behavioural research across the public sector, private sector and society?
- **EQ3:** To what extent has NCBR contributed to increasing the effectiveness of public policy interventions?
- **EQ4:** To what extent has NCBR increased capability among UK and international researchers to conduct leading-edge multi- and interdisciplinary research incorporating behavioural research?

3.2 Baseline information and early evidence on building BR national capability

As described in Section 2, ESRC invested £10 million to set up the hub, BR-UK, and £7 million in the first of a series of spokes, Centre-UB. These investments, together with the embedded posts in GO-Science and Government Skills, are already working towards improving BR national capability. This includes better connections between actors from the public, private and third sectors and the co-design and development of training and research agendas. These are expected to result in new tools and methods for BR development and use, upskilled BR researchers and users, and wider use of BR to solve the UK's societal challenges.

3.2.1 Supporting an active community

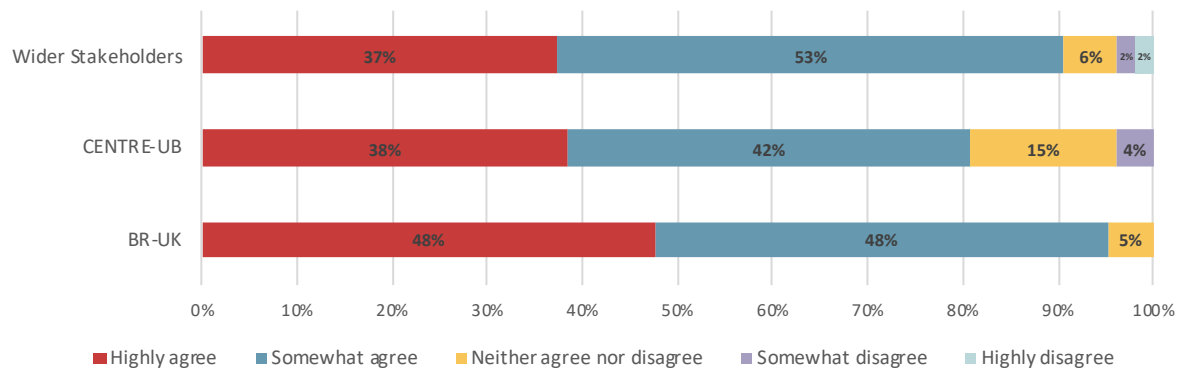
Interviews with NCBR stakeholders suggested that an active community of behavioural researchers is crucial for the programme's success. For this reason, and as a starting point, the survey asked respondents to note the extent to which they agreed with the following statement: *"There is an active community of behavioural researchers producing knowledge that is directly relevant to my professional needs in the UK and internationally."*

The survey responses summarised in Figure 3 suggest a generally positive perception of the BR community in the UK. Among BR-UK respondents, 95% either highly or somewhat agreed with the statement, whereas a higher proportion of responses from the Centre-UB group expressed neutrality in their answers. This may be due to respondents in the Centre-UB group being at an earlier career stage (e.g. PhD students) than members of BR-UK who are predominantly established researchers in their fields and therefore more familiar with the BR community.

¹⁶ Further information on the evaluation approach to each question is provided in the Appendix.

Among wider stakeholders, agreement with this statement is also largely positive, although this group was the only one to report instances of disagreement with the statement.

Figure 3 To what extent do you agree with this statement: "There is an active community of behavioural researchers producing knowledge that is directly relevant to my professional needs in the UK"

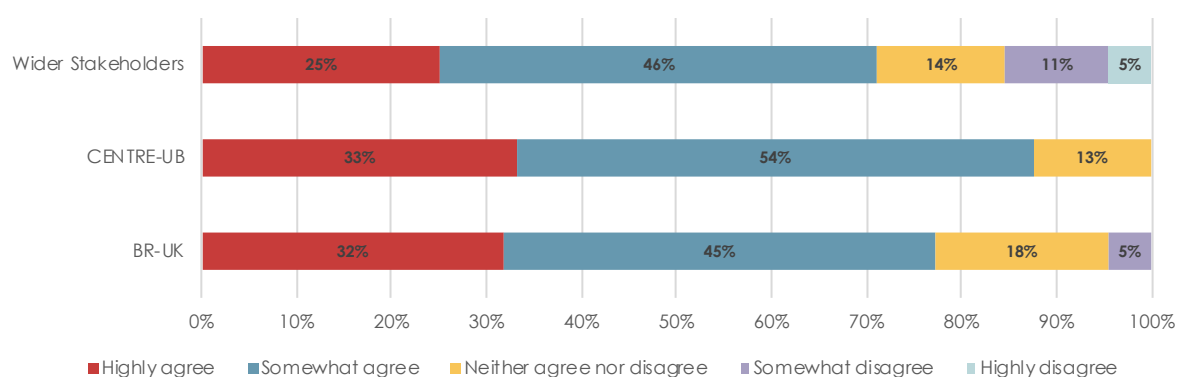


Source: NCBR Baseline Evaluation Survey (Technopolis); n(BR-UK)=21, n(CENTRE-UB)=26, n(WIDER.SH)=107

The responses summarised in Figure 4 provide a similar interpretation regarding the BR community *internationally*. In this instance, 77% of respondents from the BR-UK group either highly or somewhat agree with the statement, while 18% remained neutral. This distribution is similar with Centre-UB respondents. In contrast, wider stakeholders are less in agreement with the statement, 16% of which report some degree of disagreement.

Altogether, a stricter comparison between the two figures suggests that respondents believe that the BR community in the UK is more active than the international BR community.

Figure 4 To what extent do you agree with this statement: "There is an active community of behavioural researchers producing knowledge that is directly relevant to my professional needs internationally"



Source: NCBR Baseline Evaluation Survey (Technopolis); n(BR-UK)=22, n(CENTRE-UB)=24, n(WIDER.SH)=111

3.2.2 Addressing gaps in BR capabilities

One of the first steps in building national capability relies on understanding where gaps and opportunities exist. BR-UK's documentary review and cross-sector survey that were part of the capability scoping study revealed that there are well-established theories, frameworks and

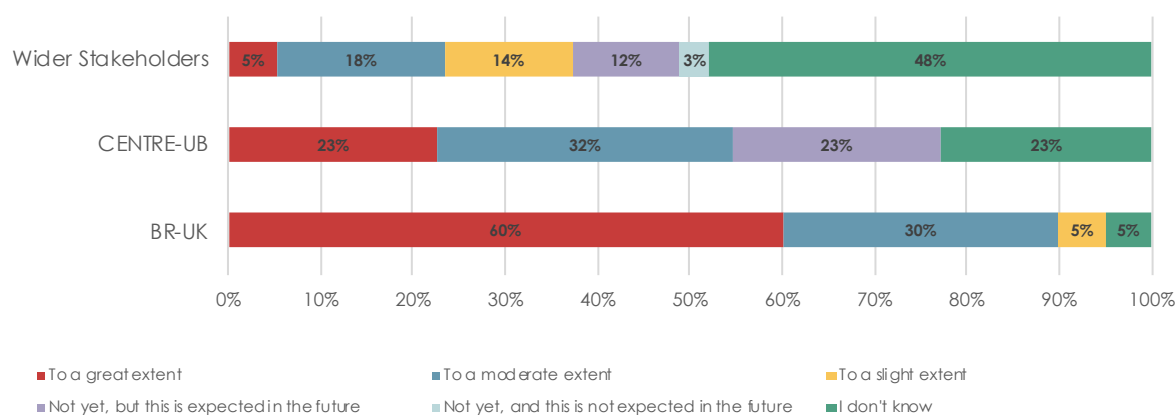
tools for predicting and understanding behaviour, but that these are not always translated to practical solutions. The review further identified areas that need to be advanced to maintain and increase BR capability in the UK. These include enhancing ethical standards and transparency, leveraging emerging technologies such as AI, encouraging interdisciplinary collaborations, adopting systems-level approaches, and expanding training and resources to build capability and capacity, among others.¹⁷ These areas conform to NCBR's high-level objectives and NCBR stakeholders' own views on the gaps that the programme is expected to cover as expressed during the interviews.

The survey explored perceptions of respondents across the three survey groups on the extent to which NCBR has, to date, generated new knowledge about the UK's BR capabilities and has helped identify the needs in the UK BR landscape.

At this early stage, perceptions of NCBR's role in generating new knowledge about the UK's BR capabilities varied significantly across respondent groups. Figure 5 shows that BR-UK members were the most positive, with 60% believing it has done so to a great extent and 30% to a moderate extent. In contrast, Centre-UB respondents were more divided, with 23% stating it has contributed to a great extent, 32% to a moderate extent, and 23% believing it has not yet done so but is expected to in the future.

Among wider stakeholders, awareness and certainty were much lower. Only 5% felt it had generated knowledge to a great extent, 18% to a moderate extent, and 14% to a slight extent, while 12% expected contributions in the future, and 48% were unsure. These answers are reflective of the current level of awareness and engagement from wider stakeholders of the contributions made by BR-UK and Centre-UB so far. Those directly involved with NCBR would expectedly have greater familiarity with the outputs from BR-UK's capability scoping studies.

Figure 5 To what extent do you believe that NCBR has generated new knowledge about the UK's behavioural research capabilities?



Source: NCBR Baseline Evaluation Survey (Technopolis); n(BR-UK)=20, n(CENTRE-UB)=22, n(WIDER.SH)=94

¹⁷ Current and Future Priorities for UK Behavioural Research (BR-UK). [Available online.](#)

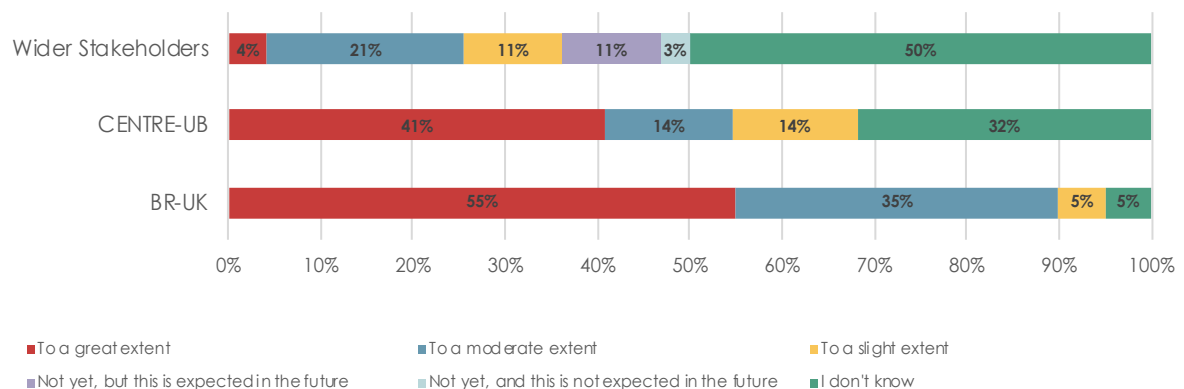
3.2.3 Identifying BR needs

Perceptions of NCBR's role in identifying needs within the UK BR landscape also varied across respondent groups, following a similar pattern to the previous question on knowledge generation.

- Among BR-UK members, more than half believed NCBR had identified research needs to a great extent, 35% said to a moderate extent, one respondent said to a slight extent, and another was unsure
- Centre-UB members were slightly more cautious, with 41% agreeing to a great extent, 14% to a moderate extent, and 14% to a slight extent
- Wider stakeholders were the least certain of NCBR's role in this area, with only 4% agreeing to a great extent, 21% to a moderate extent, and 11% to a slight extent. Another 11% expected future contributions, but overall half of the respondents said they did not know

These findings, illustrated in Figure 6, reinforce that this is early days for the programme, but also highlights some progress made towards identifying needs within the UK BR landscape, largely related to some of the early key outputs generated by BR-UK's capability scoping studies so far.

Figure 6 To what extent do you believe that NCBR has helped identify needs in the UK behavioural research landscape?



Source: NCBR Baseline Evaluation Survey (Technopolis); n(BR-UK)=20, n(CENTRE-UB)=22, n(WIDER.SH)=94

3.2.4 Spreading awareness of NCBR activities

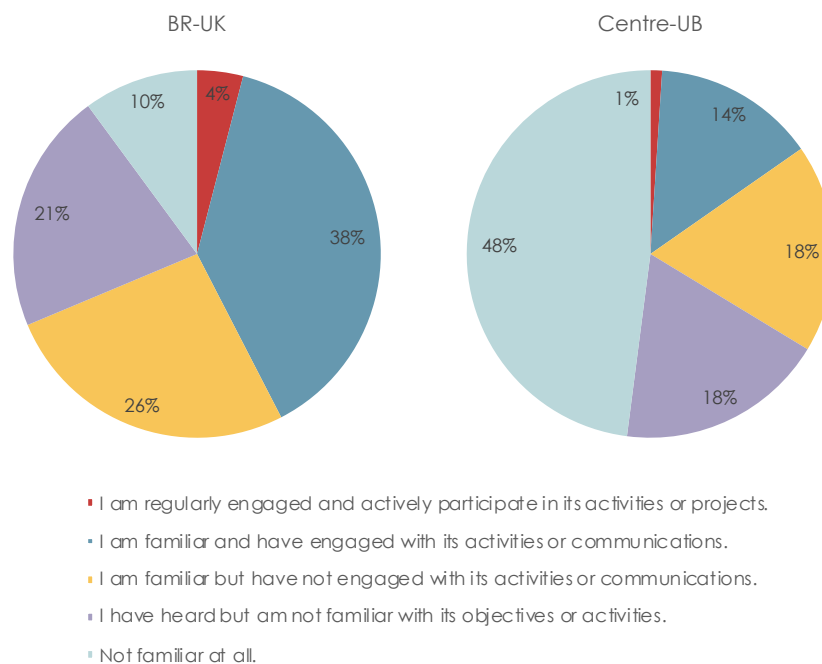
To some extent, the success of NCBR lies in its ability to spread awareness and reach of its activities and outputs to the wider stakeholders. To establish a baseline regarding current levels of awareness, the survey asked the group of wider stakeholders how familiar they are with the activities of BR-UK and Centre-UB.

Figure 7 shows that **68% of the wider stakeholders said that they are familiar with BR-UK**. That includes 42% of respondents that indicated that they have engaged with the activities or communications of BR-UK and 26% who are familiar but have not engaged with activities or communications. Only 4% said that they are regularly engaged and actively participate in its activities. There is also a relatively high proportion of respondents that have heard of but were not familiar with the objectives or activities of BR-UK (21%) and 10% of respondents reporting that they were not familiar at all with BR-UK.

Visibility of Centre-UB is more limited at this stage based on survey responses: 48% of the wider stakeholders said that they were not familiar at all with Centre-UB. On the other hand, 34% said that they were familiar with Centre-UB, but only 15% said that they had engaged with its activities or communications; 18% stated that they had heard of Centre-UB but were not familiar with its objectives or activities.

These findings can explain, at least in part, the results shown in Figure 5 and Figure 6. We would expect this degree of awareness and engagement for both BR-UK and Centre-UB to improve over time.

Figure 7 How familiar are you with ...



Source: NCBR Baseline Evaluation Survey (Technopolis); n(WIDER.SH)=99

3.2.5 Improving knowledge of BR applications and career paths

Another element of increasing national capability in BR will be seen in NCBR's ability to improve knowledge of the practical applications of BR and career paths in BR. To inform the baseline and assess early contributions in these areas, respondents were asked to rate how their knowledge has evolved since their involvement with NCBR. This was done on scale from 1-10, where 1 was deemed 'not knowledgeable at all' and 10 'highly knowledgeable.'

The averages scores and differences presented in



Table 1 show a stronger baseline position for BR-UK members and improved knowledge in both areas for all groups. The average differences are most pronounced for individuals in Centre-UB.

Table 1 We want to understand the extent to which your involvement with NCBR has led to an improvement on your knowledge on the following areas:

	Survey Group	pre-NCBR Position	Current Position*	Average Differences
Practical applications of behavioural research in your field	BR-UK	6.29	8.09	1.81
	CENTRE-UB	4.91	6.73	1.82
	Wider stakeholders	5.73	6.35	0.69
Behavioural research career paths (beyond your current sector of activity)	BR-UK	5.43	7.19	1.76
	CENTRE-UB	4.18	6.82	2.64
	Wider stakeholders	4.76	5.15	0.39

Source: NCBR Baseline Evaluation Survey (Technopolis); n(BR-UK)=21, n(CENTRE-UB)=22, n(WIDER.SH)=74

3.3 Baseline information and early evidence on increasing capacity to embed and deliver effective BR across the public, private, and third sectors.

This aim of this section is to establish the baseline for NCBR with regards to the existing capacity to embed and deliver effective BR across the public, private, and third sectors. In this context, we consider 'capacity' in terms of the following:

- The **availability of BR evidence** to meet professional needs
- The access, scope and relevance of **data and data infrastructure** to conduct BR
- The level and frequency of **collaboration** among institutions within the BR ecosystem and across different sectors to conduct BR
- The strength of existing **networks** to facilitate BR

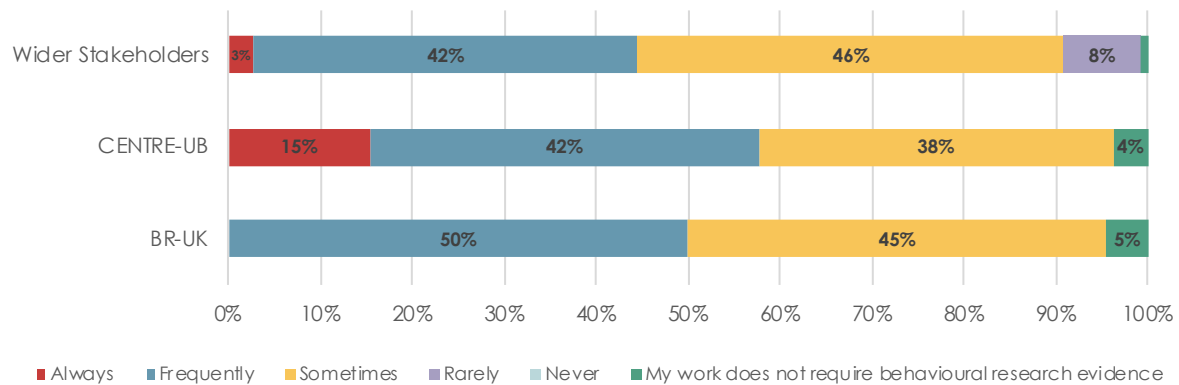
By understanding the current state of these foundational elements, we can identify and assess where gaps exist and where opportunities for NCBR lie in strengthening the BR landscape in the UK and beyond. Moreover, we can track how capacities and perceptions change throughout the life of the programme. The remainder of this section takes each one in turn analysing the responses from the survey and, where relevant, providing commentary on early progress of NCBR (either through BR-UK or Centre-UB) in enhancing capacity in each area.

3.3.1 Availability of BR evidence

Responses from NCBR members and wider stakeholders indicate that there is room for improvement in terms of access to BR evidence that meets their professional needs. This further substantiates the need for NCBR and its potential added value in the future.

Figure 8 shows that half of the respondents from BR-UK said that the evidence available frequently met their needs, while 45% that this was only the case sometimes. In contrast, 15% of respondents among Centre-UB members indicated that the evidence available always met their needs. The remaining indicated that this was the case frequently or sometimes. The wider stakeholder group responded broadly similarly to this question, though 8% of respondents indicated that BR evidence rarely meets their professional needs.

Figure 8 In instances where your work requires behavioural research evidence (e.g. research, literature reviews, policy briefs), how often does the evidence available meet your professional needs?



Source: NCBR Baseline Evaluation Survey (Technopolis); n(BR-UK)=22, n(CENTRE-UB)=26, n(WIDER.SH)=110

When asked about the extent to which BR-UK has, to date, led to an increase in the availability of synthesised BR evidence, 60% of BR-UK respondents said that it has happened either to a slight extent or more, with a further 25% saying that it had not yet led to an increase but that it is expected in the future. Similarly, from the point of view of Centre-UB respondents, 41% indicated that BR-UK's activities have already led to an increase in BR evidence to a great or moderate extent. The remaining said that it was either to a slight extent (12%) or that they did not know (41%).

When the same question was asked in the context of Centre-UB leading to an increase in the availability of synthesised BR evidence, both individuals from Centre-UB and BR-UK appeared to be less certain that this would be the case. Relatively large proportions (45% and 81% respectively) said that they did not know. This is not necessarily a negative finding, but rather a reflection of the types of activities and expected outputs from Centre-UB.

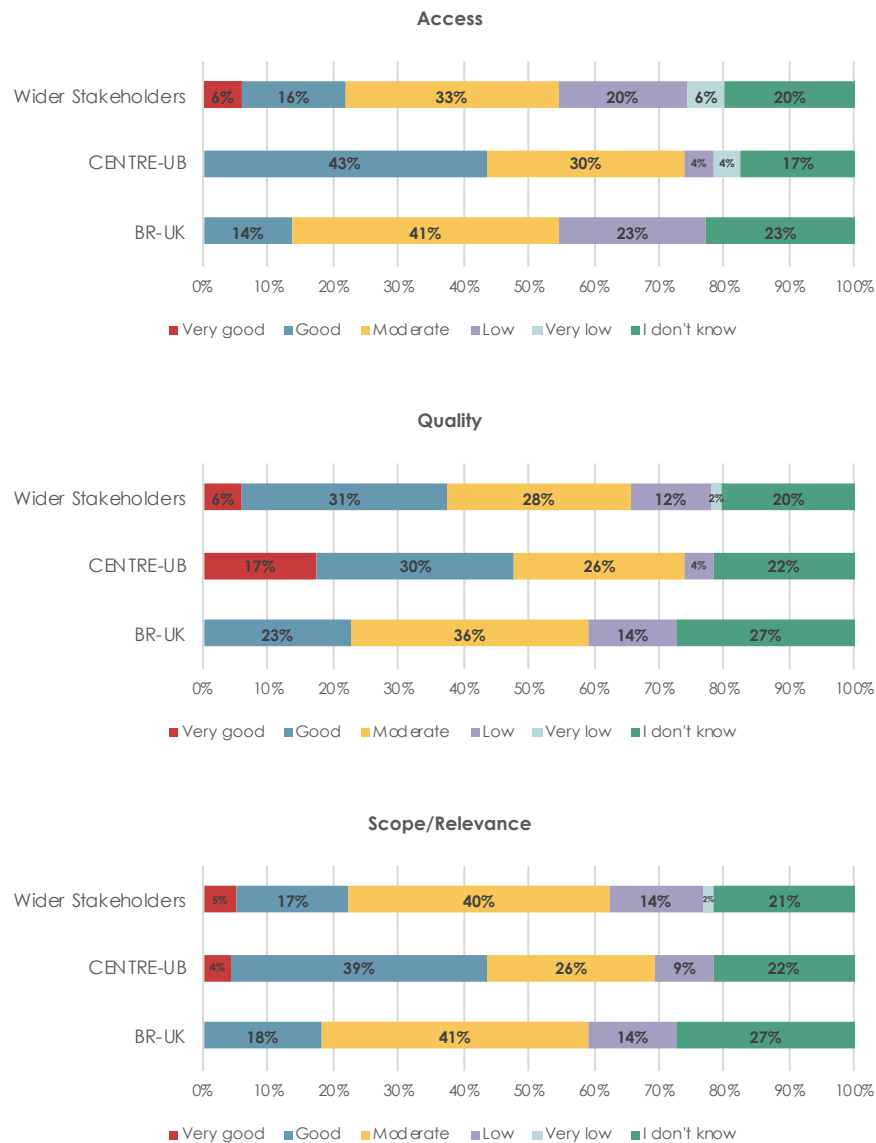
When asked about NCBR generally, close to 60% of the surveyed individuals from the wider stakeholder group said that they did not know. Again, this could be explained by their lack of familiarity with the activities of NCBR or to the early days of the programme.

3.3.2 Data and data infrastructure

In line with the above, the survey asked respondents to rate the access, quality and relevance of the available data and data infrastructure to conduct BR. The distribution of responses appears broadly similar across the three dimensions with at least half of the respondents in each of the three groups referring to the access, quality and relevance of data and data infrastructures available as good or moderate (Figure 9).

This is a relatively strong baseline position, and it is expected that NCBR will contribute further towards access, quality and relevance of the available data and data infrastructure to conduct BR. The interviews with ESRC stakeholders highlighted the importance of improving access to and the availability of data to support BR. They emphasised that making data more easily accessible, as well as the methodological approaches, was essential for maximising the potential of BR and the success of the programme. Moreover, interviews with members of the BR-UK leadership team emphasised the hub's mission to ensure that their data and protocols are publicly available through the Open Science Framework, thus allowing others to access and build upon their work. There is a clear commitment to transparency in BR-UK's research activities and outputs, as well as knowledge sharing.

Figure 9 How would you rate the following, with respect to the available data and data infrastructure (e.g. survey datasets including cohort and longitudinal studies, administrative datasets) to conduct behavioural research in the UK?



Source: NCBR Baseline Evaluation Survey (Technopolis); n(BR-UK)=22, n(CENTRE-UB)=23, n(WIDER.SH)=101

3.3.3 Collaboration

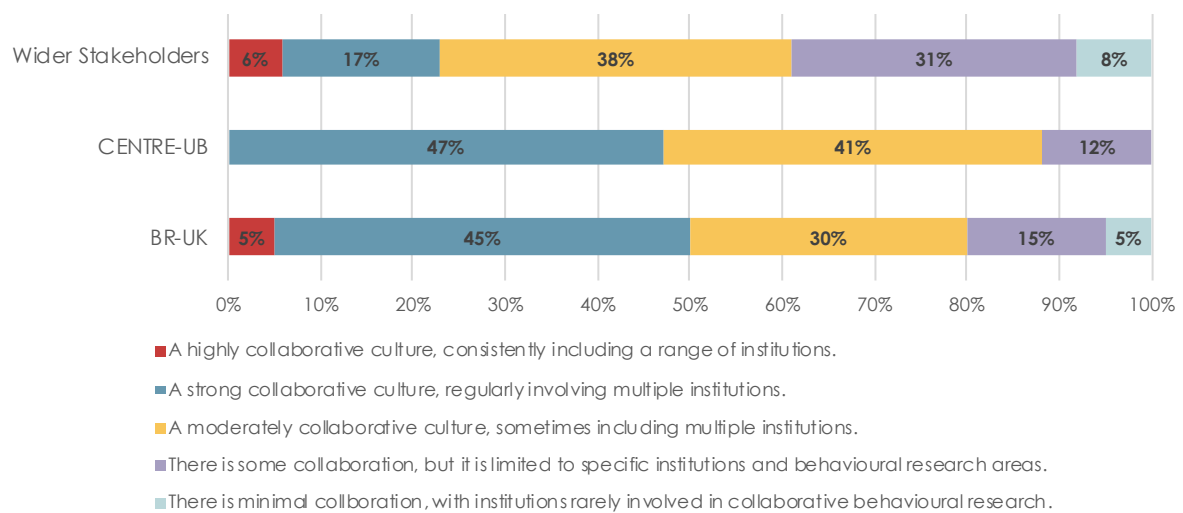
The subject of collaboration to increase national capacity (and capability) was a recurring theme during interviews with the group of NCBR stakeholders. The stakeholders interviewed were in agreement that there is currently limited collaboration within the BR community and some described the ecosystem as 'fragmented' referring to the way in which various sectors and organisations appear to be working in isolation. This lack of collaboration underpins the need for stronger connections and coordination across the BR community to deliver more impactful outcomes.

The *Behavioural Research Map* resulting from BR-UK's mapping activities, found 695 organisations across the academic, private, public and third sectors that make up the BR

landscape in the UK. This analysis, however, does not immediately capture the level of collaboration that exist between these organisations, but does provide the foundation needed to build a more collaborative BR community.

Our survey asked individuals to rate the level of collaboration among institutions within the UK BR community. Half of the surveyed individuals from BR-UK rated the collaborative culture as strong or highly collaborative. From Centre-UB, approximately half said that the collaborative culture is strong and regularly involves multiple institutions, while the other half indicated that collaboration is moderate or limited. In comparison, a smaller proportion of respondents from the wider stakeholder group said that the BR research ecosystem was highly, strongly or moderately collaborative (61%). A larger proportion (39%) of respondents from this group relative to others said that there is some or minimal collaboration (Figure 10), indicating that perhaps there are less opportunities for collaboration outside NCBR.

Figure 10 Reflecting on your personal experience, how would you rate the level of collaboration among institutions within the UK behavioural research community?



Source: NCBR Baseline Evaluation Survey (Technopolis); n(BR-UK)=20, n(CENTRE-UB)=17, n(WIDER.SH)=87

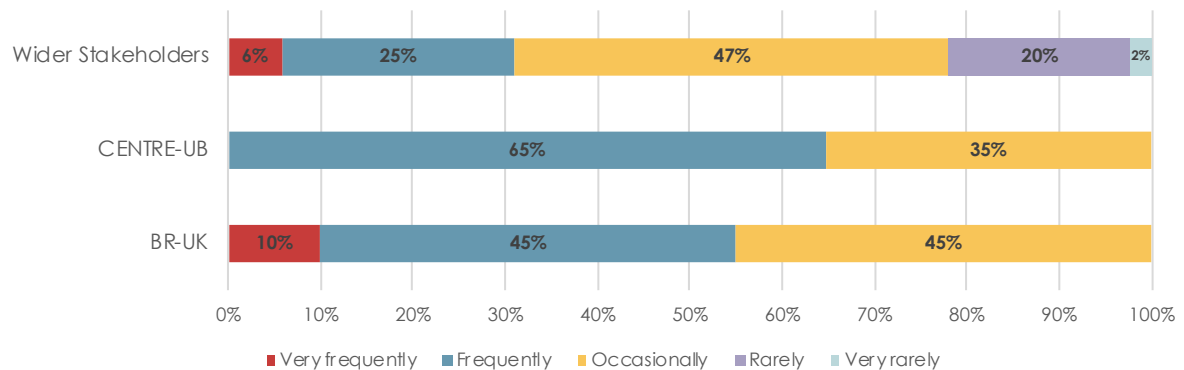
When asked to elaborate on their responses, many of the surveyed individuals from BR-UK and Centre-UB appear to agree that collaborations predominantly exist within research consortia or joint projects where funding mechanisms or common interests align. Some referred to the BR research ecosystem as 'fragmented' – a term also used by the interviewed ESRC stakeholders as mentioned above – and referred to disciplinary and institutional 'silos' that hinder broader collaboration. Individuals explained that collaboration often takes place within specific disciplines without much effort to connect broader disciplines. Moreover, competition within academia was mentioned as a barrier to creating cross-institutional partnerships.

For the wider stakeholders, some report being aware of and having been involved in cross-institutional work through existing networks, such as the cross-Government Behavioural Insight (BI) network. However, they also said that collaboration often occurs through personal relationships rather than formalised structures, which has led to a fragmented ecosystem in which universities with large research capacity (e.g. Bath, Cardiff, Manchester) dominate the collaborative landscape and leave smaller or newer institutions struggling to integrate their perspectives. In addition, competition for a limited amount of funding is also said to have

hindered more widespread and diverse collaboration. On collaboration between public and private sector, this was said to be rare and only to occur when commissioned.

Despite these barriers to collaboration, most individuals across the three survey groups said that collaborations take place frequently or, at least, occasionally. The wider stakeholder group was the only one to say that cross-sector collaborations happen rarely (Figure 11).

Figure 11 Reflecting on your personal experience, how frequently does collaboration between different sectors occur in the UK behavioural research community (i.e. academia, public sector, private sector, third sector)?



Source: NCBR Baseline Evaluation Survey (Technopolis); n(BR-UK)=20, n(CENTRE-UB)=17, n(WIDER.SH)=87

Elaborating on this, respondents explained that academic-public sector collaborations are the most common and that these often occur when specific user needs drive the research focus. Similarly, respondents explained that cross-sector collaboration is often dependent on funding mechanisms by government-driven initiatives or specific projects/interventions that are conditional on bringing together such partners.

The survey also asked individuals to reflect on the extent to which they believe that BR-UK and Centre-UB has helped identify potential areas for contribution in the UK BR landscape and the extent to which it has led to a broader range of disciplines and sectors contributing to BR. Most of the respondents from the BR-UK group said that they believed that BR-UK has already helped to identify potential areas for contribution to a great or moderate extent and that it has helped to connect people.

The wider stakeholder group were asked the same question but in the context of NCBR more generally. For both areas, just under half in this sample indicated that they did not know, and the remaining said that it had in varying extents or that it was expected in the future.

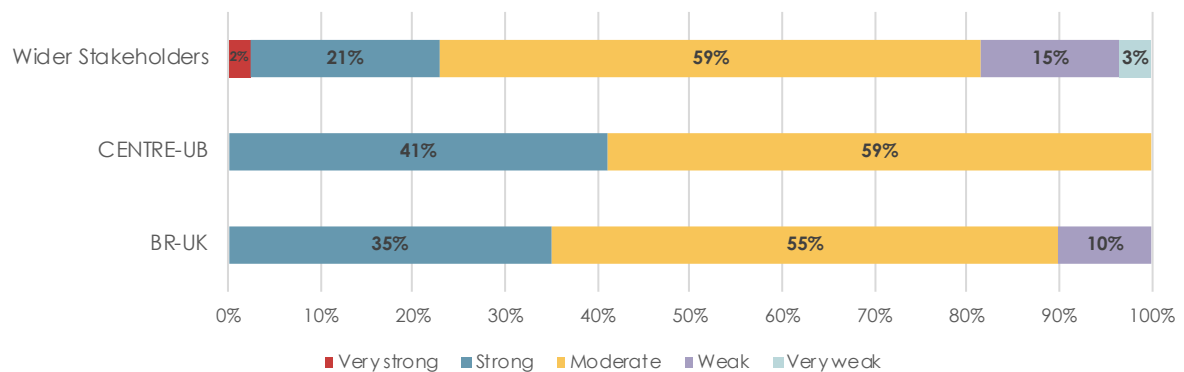
These findings primarily reflect the views of academic and non-academic researchers as they made up the largest proportion of the survey sample. There was some representation from the third and private sector in the sample, but the limited reach may be an early indication of a lack of collaboration between the academic and non-academic researchers and these sectors. The next stages of the evaluation will seek to engage this group more closely to better understand the role that NCBR can play to enhance cross-sector collaborations.

3.3.4 Existing networks

Following the above, the interviewed stakeholders and BR-UK's capability scoping studies point to the need of networks as means to increase collaboration for BR. To establish a baseline, the survey asked the sample to rate the strength of the existing networks within the

UK BR community. Across the three survey groups most respondents rated them as strong or moderately strong with good or adequate connectivity, resource sharing and collaboration respectively. Only a small proportion in the BR-UK and a slightly higher one in the wider stakeholder groups said that they were weak or very weak with some or little connectivity for resource sharing and collaboration (Figure 12).

Figure 12 How would you rate the strength of the networks within the UK behavioural research community?



Source: NCBR Baseline Evaluation Survey (Technopolis); n(BR-UK)=20, n(CENTRE-UB)=17, n(WIDER.SH)=87

In their explanations, many respondents acknowledged that existing networks are useful and supporting, but there is room for improvement to widen their reach and offer more opportunities for new members to engage. An ECR who responded to the survey explained that a stronger network would allow them to seek resources and expertise more effectively. Online engagement events, such as webinars, are said to have strengthened networks.

For the wider stakeholder group not directly involved with the programme, some respondents acknowledged the existence of well-established networks like UK Society for Behavioural Medicine (UKSBM) and the Behavioural Science and Public Health Network (BSPHN) but said that specific networks for niche subject areas are limited. This was mentioned in the context of research involving children or older people. There was some recognition of strong networks within government, but a lack of awareness of these networks outside these circles has resulted in a sense of alienation for individuals who are not part of the key institutions or organisations that dominate the field. A few respondents noted that discussions around improving capacity have increased in recent years, but there is still a focus on specific topic areas like health and economics.

Despite this, some noted that BR-UK is contributing positively to strengthening networks by providing more opportunities for collaboration. This can be plausibly traced back to BR-UK's mapping studies that identified the organisations engaged in BR and gathered information on around 200 existing networks that seek to connect behavioural researchers and/or BR users. These are said to span domains including behavioural economics, consumer behaviour, and health and medicine, among others.¹⁸ This is further reflected in the way that respondents viewed NCBR as having generated new knowledge about the stakeholders and

¹⁸ Others include environmental and energy behaviour, user experience (UX) and human factors, policy and government, technology and AI, interdisciplinary approaches, and ethics and social impact. Source: What behavioural research networks are active in the UK? (BR-UK). [Available online](#).

institutions active in the UK BR landscape. Respondents generally agreed that NCBR has helped connect people and foster interdisciplinary collaboration.

Survey respondents also referred to the delivery of clear strategies from funding bodies like ESRC and EPSRC, that were designed to support and expand networks. In this context, one respondent referred to the Network Plus funding opportunities, but without elaborating further.

Overall, this is a relatively strong baseline position, and it is expected that NCBR contributes further towards enabling stronger connectivity.

3.3.5 NCBR's contribution to strengthening the BR ecosystem

To round up the analysis on existing capacities and early contributions of NCBR to enhancing these, the survey asked individuals across the three groups to comment on the extent to which they think NCBR will contribute to improving the BR ecosystem.

Individuals were asked to rate their perceptions on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is 'no contribution at all' and 10 is 'significant contribution.' Perceptions appear somewhat mixed, with a majority of the surveyed individuals from the BR-UK and Centre-UB groups showing slightly higher confidence in NCBR contributing to improving the BR ecosystem. Some of the wider stakeholders expressed less confidence as shown in Table 2 and Figure 13.¹⁹

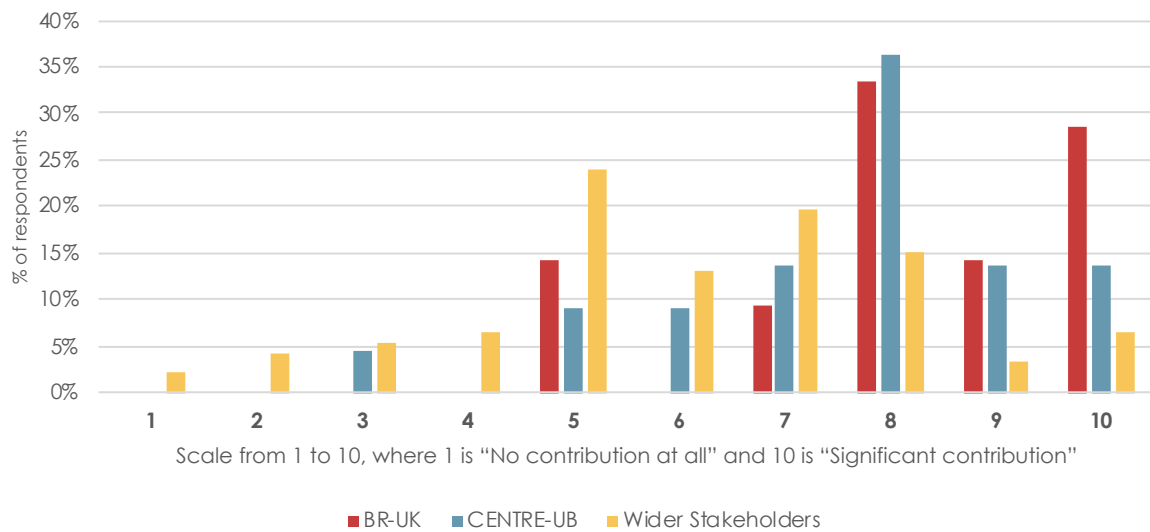
Table 2 To what extent do you think NCBR will contribute to improving the BR ecosystem (including collaboration, strength of networks, availability of data and data infrastructures)

	Level of contribution		
	Low (1-3)	Medium (4-7)	High (8-10)
BR-UK	0%	24%	76%
CENTRE-UB	5%	32%	64%
Wider Stakeholders	12%	63%	25%

Source: NCBR Baseline Evaluation Survey (Technopolis); n(BR-UK)=21, n(CENTRE-UB)=22, n(WIDER.SH)=92

¹⁹ Average rating across the three groups: BR-UK, 8.2; Centre-UB, 7.6; and wider stakeholders, 6.0

Figure 13 To what extent do you think NCBR will contribute to improving the BR ecosystem (including collaboration, strength of networks, availability of data and data infrastructures)



Source: NCBR Baseline Evaluation Survey (Technopolis); n(BR-UK)=21, n(CENTRE-UB)=22, n(WIDER.SH)=92

When asked to explain their answers, responses from the BR-UK group suggest a positive outlook on the potential contributions of NCBR. The group highlighted some of the early successes of BR-UK in fostering connections across government, academia and the private sector, and in establishing a strong network. Those who responded with lower ratings referred to the broader challenges facing the BR ecosystem, namely gaps in the relevance and accessibility of academic knowledge to industry and the private sector that need to be addressed to achieve more impactful outcomes. As another condition for success, some said that it was important that NCBR contribute to the expansion of BR beyond health-focused initiatives and that it continues to promote and deliver capability-building initiatives. Some concerns were raised regarding the broader political climate, funding challenges in HEIs, and a lack of sustainable career paths for postdoctoral researchers as potential obstacles to NCBR's long-term success.

Those who provided comments from the Centre-UB group see success of NCBR depending on the ability of researchers to collaborate closely with policy leads, determining research topics with policy needs. Respondents recognised that the impacts from NCBR will take time to fully materialise and referred to potential challenges in the areas of data sharing, data infrastructures, and sustainability of funding.

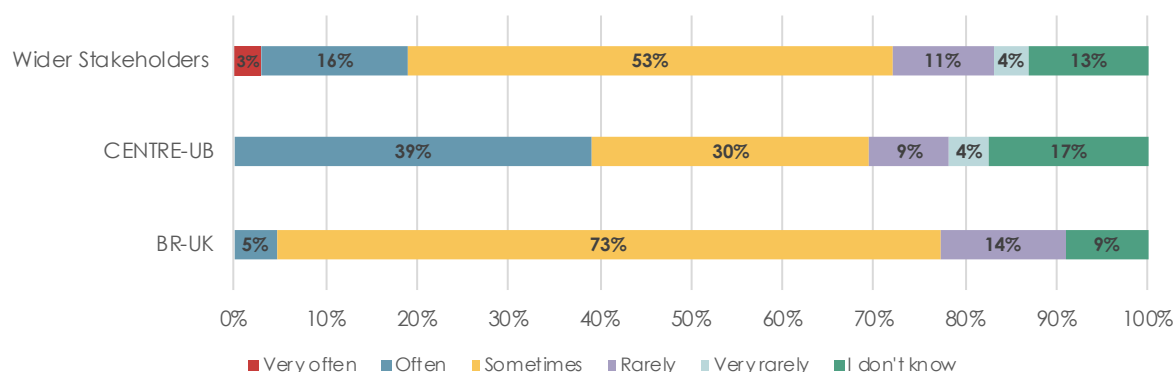
Lastly, the wider stakeholders were generally more reserved in their explanations owing to their limited knowledge of NCBR at this stage. Some noted that communications about NCBR's activities had been lacking, while others expressed optimism about NCBR's potential by acknowledging the importance of their goals and the investment committed. There were some concerns about the inclusivity of the process as some respondents cautioned that NCBRs' initiatives risk benefiting only those within academic or certain sectors, but equally expressed enthusiasm behind the efforts to increase collaboration.

3.4 Baseline information and early evidence on increased effectiveness of public policy interventions due to use of BR

This section focuses on establishing a baseline to understand the extent that NCBR will have influenced the uptake of BR in the design and implementation of public policy in the UK.

NCBR members and wider stakeholders were asked to reflect, via survey, on how frequently BR is currently used in public policy, as well as the key barriers and enablers influencing its adoption. The survey responses summarised in Figure 14 suggest that respondents have similar perceptions on the frequency with which BR is used in policymaking in the UK. Among BR-UK members, 73% reported that, in their experience, BR is only sometimes used, while 69% of Centre-UB members said that BR is often or sometimes used. Responses from the wider stakeholder group are broadly aligned to this.

Figure 14 In your experience, how frequently is behavioural research used in the design and implementation of public policy in the UK?



Source: NCBR Baseline Evaluation Survey (Technopolis); n(BR-UK)=22, n(CENTRE-UB)=23, n(WIDER.SH)=100

When asked to elaborate on their responses, members of BR-UK and Centre-UB stated that the lack of uptake of BR in the design and implementation of public policy in the UK is due to a combination of structural barriers, limited understanding, and competing priorities. The respondents referred to the way in which policymakers lack awareness of BR and its potential contributions, as well as misconceptions about its relevance. Limited access to the research itself by policymakers was also referred to as another barrier given that much of the research was said to only be found behind academic paywalls (e.g. academic journals with subscription requirements). Moreover, respondents referred to BR outputs not always including actionable insights for policymakers as another barrier.

The respondents from BR-UK and Centre-UB also reflected on the short timelines that are typically associated with policy development. Researchers, often constrained in resources, feel pressured and not always capable of generating behavioural evidence sufficiently quickly to provide policymakers with the evidence-based insights needed to justify policy design and implementation. This makes it difficult for BR conducted by academics and other public research establishments to influence policymaking. In addition, respondents explained that policymakers may be hesitant to incorporate behavioural perspectives as traditional social and economic models still dominate policy frameworks. Related to this, knowledge exchange between (academic) researchers and government varies by sector, often relying on historical or established relationships rather than systematic partnerships.

That being said, respondents also referred to several enablers and opportunities for change. Respondents welcomed the growing interest in evidence-based policymaking in areas like public health, taxation and energy consumption that are encouraging the integration of behavioural insights. This has led to behavioural insights teams and government units developing more structured engagement models such as framework contracts or explicit approaches to transdisciplinary research and collaboration (e.g. through funding, i.e. NCBR).

Responses from the wider stakeholder group largely reflect the views of academic and non-academic researchers as only a small number of individuals from this group who responded to the survey were not researchers. Therefore, the barriers and enablers identified by this group broadly match those acknowledged by BR-UK and Centre-UB members. For instance, the wider stakeholders also referred to policymakers' narrow perception towards BR, explaining that it is often associated with individual behaviour change and 'nudge interventions' without recognising broader applications in systems-level policy design. In a similar manner, the wider stakeholder group also referred to the way in which the timeliness of BR for policymaking is often misaligned with the pace of academic research and rapid shifts in funding priorities as barriers to enabling the uptake of BR in policymaking.

On the other hand, enablers referred to by the wider stakeholder group include knowledge exchange events, secondments and formal collaborations. Additionally, disseminating information and demonstrating successful case studies and pilot programmes that have led to measurable improvements were suggested as ways to help overcome scepticism and resistance. However, the respondents cautioned that these need to be disseminated through short, accessible formats like policy briefs or webinars.

In line with the responses received via survey, stakeholder interviews indicated that a BR community already exists within government but the amount of investment in BR varies across departments. The interviewees explained that some departments have well-established BR teams supported by dedicated advisory structures or committees, while others rely on smaller teams that are not fully able to support all potential policy areas. Another challenge, the stakeholders added, remains in improving understanding among non-BR professionals about how behavioural insights can be applied to enhance policy outcomes.

Within NCBR, there are several key initiatives and activities currently in progress that are expected to drive meaningful impact in this area. As already described in Section 2.3, BR-UK is expected to play a crucial role in this area through its rapid response and 'Ask BR-UK' functions. These will provide to government actors and other stakeholders the opportunity to request a review of a topic of interest related to BR and thus gain insights that could be influential in increasing the effectiveness of interventions. The formal implementation of these functions, however, is not due until after the stage gate review.

3.5 Baseline information and early evidence on increased capability among UK researchers to conduct leading-edge multi- and interdisciplinary research incorporating BR

This section considers the extent to which NCBR has contributed to increasing the capability of both UK and international researchers to conduct leading-edge, multi- and interdisciplinary research that incorporates BR. To establish a baseline, we asked respondents to rate the capabilities of their organisation across three different areas at the time pre-NCBR (i.e. October 2023) and their current position (February/March 2025). The areas are the following:

- Capacity of your organisation to embed and deliver effective BR
- Engagement of your organisation in partnerships and/or collaborations for using BR
- Capacity of your organisation to identify funding opportunities and secure funding for BR

Individuals were asked to rate their capabilities on a scale from 1-10 where 10 is 'excellent' and 1 is 'poor.'²⁰ Overall, the analysis shows that respondents have reported positive changes in capability between the pre-NCBR position and the current position across the three areas and across all different respondent groups (Table 3 and Figure 15).

Table 3 also shows that capabilities across the three areas pre-NCBR were generally highest among members of BR-UK and lowest among Centre-UB members. This is likely due to the fact that Centre-UB includes doctoral students (via their studentships and CPD initiatives) which are at an early stage of their careers. However, the average differences in the table suggest that this group have experienced the largest changes (differences higher than 1.2 average points marked in green in Table 3). In contrast, wider stakeholders report the lowest levels and almost no change in their capabilities between the two periods.

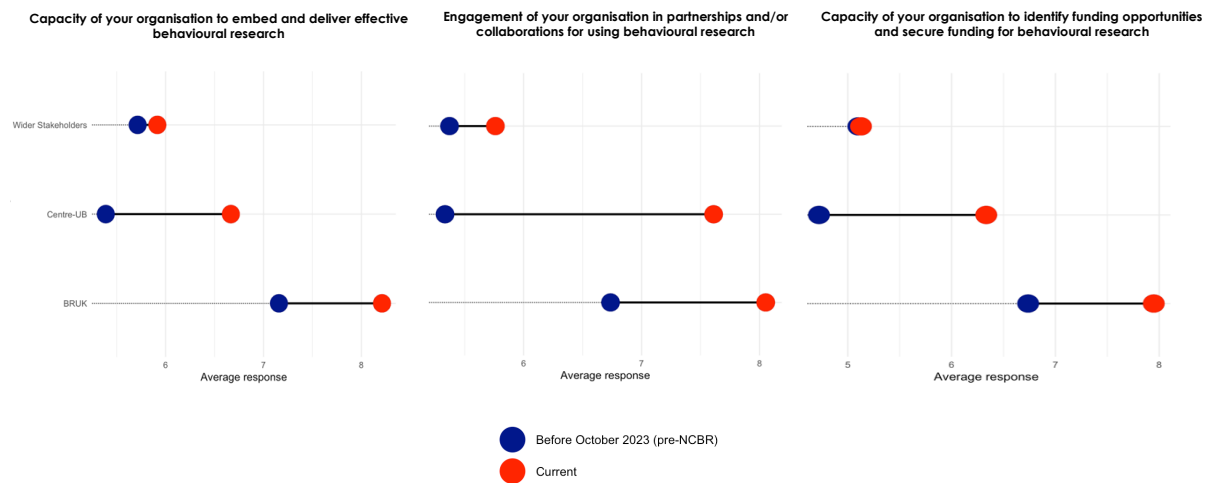
Table 3 How would you rate the capabilities of your organisation in the following areas? Averages

		pre-NCBR Position	Current Position	Average Differences	Average weighted differences
Capacity of your organisation to embed and deliver effective behavioural research	BR-UK	7.16	8.21	1.05	0.74
	CENTRE-UB	5.39	6.67	1.21	0.97
	Wider Stakeholders	5.71	5.92	0.21	0.18
Engagement of your organisation in partnerships and/or collaborations for using behavioural research	BR-UK	6.74	8.05	1.32	0.92
	CENTRE-UB	5.33	7.61	2.16	1.29
	Wider Stakeholders	5.37	5.76	0.37	0.25
Capacity of your organisation to identify funding opportunities and secure funding for behavioural research	BR-UK	6.74	7.95	1.21	0.92
	CENTRE-UB	4.72	6.33	1.53	1.11
	Wider Stakeholders	5.10	5.13	0.10	0.15

Source: NCBR Baseline Evaluation Survey (Technopolis); n(BR-UK)=19, n(CENTRE-UB)=18, n(WIDER.SH)=70

²⁰ Note that the question was framed around the capability of their organisation, but responses may also reflect individuals' own capabilities.

Figure 15 How would you rate the capabilities of your organisation in the following areas? Averages



Source: NCBR Baseline Evaluation Survey (Technopolis); n(BR-UK)=19, n(CENTRE-UB)=18, n(WIDER.SH)=70

In addition, individuals were asked to note the extent to which their organisations' involvement in NCBR had led to those changes. The responses to this question were used to weight the changes to estimate NCBR's contribution to any observed differences.²¹

The way respondents answered this question across the three surveyed groups is shown in Table 4 and the weighted differences in the last column in Table 3. The small weighted average differences suggest that the observed changes in capability may not be strongly attributed to the programme, likely due to the early stages and wider stakeholders' limited exposure to the programme presently.

Table 4 To what extent has your organisation's involvement in the NCBR programme led to those changes?

	To a large extent	To some extent	Not at all / no change	Total
BR-UK	6 (29%)	10 (48%)	5 (24%)	21
CENTRE-UB	4 (20%)	9 (45%)	7(35%)	20
Wider Stakeholders	3 (4%)	13 (18%)	59 (82%)	75

Source: NCBR Baseline Evaluation Survey (Technopolis)

Nevertheless, explaining how their capabilities had changed, the surveyed individuals from the BR-UK group noted that engagement with NCBR had enhanced their ability to conduct and translate BR, organise partnerships and collaborations, and increase their organisation's visibility. On the latter, one respondent noted that NCBR has helped put their institution 'on the map' and has attracted attention from both academic and non-academic stakeholders. Others referred to valuable new connections with government bodies, namely GO-Science, but admitted that these were developing anyway through and post-Covid. Lastly, one

²¹ The question asked, "To what extent has your organisation's involvement in the NCBR programme led to those changes?" Answers translated to the following weights: (i) To a large extent = 1, (ii) To some extent = 0.5, (iii) Not at all / no changes = 0.

respondent praised the opportunities created by BR-UK for ECRs to develop their BR ideas and develop grant applications to pursue them.

There were limited explanations provided by surveyed members from Centre-UB regarding changes in capabilities and the role of NCBR in achieving these. Nevertheless, one member from Centre-UB explained that since joining there had been a noticeable increase in interdisciplinary engagement, access to funding opportunities, and the ability to integrate behavioural insights into research and policy work more effectively.

For wider stakeholders, the impact of NCBR appears to be minimal or unclear. Several stakeholders explained that they have not been involved or have engaged with NCBR. In fact, when asked if and what type of support they had received from BR-UK and Centre-UB, 77% (75 of 98) and 90% (86 of 96) said that they had not received any support from BR-UK or Centre-UB, respectively. Among those who have received support, 15% (15 of 98) said that they had used resources developed by BR-UK, 7% (7 of 98) said that they had received training from BR-UK and 3% (3 of 96) that they had received training from Centre-UB.

When elaborating, many of the wider stakeholders said that they had only limited exposure to the programme through newsletters and announcements. Some noted that their organisation's capacity for BR had decreased due to internal restructuring, financial constraints, or other external factors unrelated to NCBR. A few respondents acknowledged the value of BR and its growing prominence but felt that the programme had not yet influenced their work. Some also questioned whether NCBR activities, such as webinars, were sufficient to drive meaningful change in research capability.

Lastly, several of the interviewed stakeholders suggested that the long-term success of the programme lies in ensuring a legacy of sustained impact beyond the funding period. They emphasised the need for lasting capability-building efforts that continue to develop expertise and support ECRs to establish a sustainable and scalable model for BR in the future.

4 Concluding remarks and next steps

4.1 Concluding remarks

This first iteration of the NCBR evaluation (baseline) has found that the different elements of the programme are progressing well.

There is early evidence that NCBR is making progress towards achieving its objectives, as it has begun to take important steps towards establishing an active and collaborative BR community in the UK through the creation of BR-UK and Centre-UB. There is early evidence to suggest that these initiatives will generate new knowledge, enhance capability and capacity to conduct BR, and encourage collaboration across academia, the public, private and third sectors to address key societal challenges.

The level of engagement and perceived impact of NCBR's activities vary across stakeholder groups. Members of BR-UK and Centre-UB (i.e. those directly involved with NCBR) generally agree that the programme has already contributed to generating new knowledge about the UK's BR capabilities, generated new knowledge about the stakeholders and institutions active in the UK BR landscape, and helped to identify research needs in the BR landscape. Wider stakeholders, on the other hand, appear to be less certain that this will be the case.

Arguably, this is reflective of the current levels of awareness of NCBR's activities and engagement levels among wider stakeholders. The survey revealed that a significant proportion of the wider stakeholders are not familiar or have not interacted with BR-UK or Centre-UB, thus appearing to be less certain when questioned about the extent to which NCBR is delivering on its objectives. Nevertheless, some of the wider stakeholders have reported increased opportunities for collaboration and engagement in their open-ended explanations, while others feel that the programme has not yet had a direct influence on their work.

The survey also revealed that the uptake of BR in public policy design and implementation faces several barriers, owing to policymakers' narrow perception of the subject. However, respondents appeared optimistic about the growing appetite for increasing its use in policymaking and perceive the embedded posts as a meaningful way to increase uptake.

There is early evidence to suggest that NCBR has made progress towards a stronger, more collaborative, and interdisciplinary BR ecosystem, but its impact remains uneven across different groups. This is, again, likely due to the early days of the programme. All in all, the findings serve as a baseline for the evaluation of NCBR, as we continue to monitor and track progress over time.

4.2 Next steps

The evaluation will progress to the next stage, which involves an interim process and impact evaluation. The former will assess how effectively NCBR is being delivered in line with its original aims and objectives. It will examine the role of programme design, commissioning, and governance in shaping its success, as well as how individual investments work together to achieve the programme's goals. The process evaluation will also consider how monitoring, reporting and evaluation have supported programme management. On the other hand, the interim impact evaluation will continue to gather evidence to assess the emerging outcomes

and early impacts of the programme through quasi-experimental approaches²² and a contribution analysis.

On quasi-experimental approaches, at least two approaches rely on the use of longitudinal surveys with stakeholders. The number of responses from the wider stakeholders have been relatively low at this baseline stage and we expect that, as the programme progresses and engagement increases, these number of responses will also increase over time.

This may pose an issue in terms of comparability of responses. We suggest capturing retrospective information in the interim stage to provide the 'longitudinal' (i.e. asking respondents to rate their understanding of BR 'before engagement with NCBR' and their current position in the interim survey). We can then compare the retrospective results with the baseline results to interpret results on changes over time.

The evaluation team will continue to employ a suite of data collection tools to gather the evidence needed to address the evaluation questions, which include reviews of programme and administrative data, surveys and stakeholder interviews. The analysis will be synthesised in the form of case studies and an interim report.

Lastly, the independent evaluation of NCBR also requires a value for money (VfM) assessment. This comprises two complementary components, namely the 4Es approach and the monetisation of selected economic impacts. The 4Es approach, guided by the National Audit Office's framework, will assess economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and equity, providing a broad evaluation of the programme's resource use and impact. The monetisation component will focus on estimating the economic value of specific, key impacts attributable to NCBR activities, particularly those that generate measurable benefits for UK public policy. Each of these components are described in greater detail in the Evaluation Framework.

In terms of timetables, we had originally planned to submit the draft interim report in October 2025 (followed by a final submission in December 2025). However, that would mean launching a survey in August 2025 at the latest, meaning not enough time would have passed between the baseline data collection (which took place in February/March 2025) and the interim data collection. Additionally, it would mean collecting data around the time of the stage gate review. With that in mind, we suggest delaying the end of Stage 2 to March 2026.

²² The feasibility of quasi-experimental approaches to evaluate the programme's outcomes were first laid out in the Evaluation Framework and are also presented in Appendix D of this report.

Table 5 Suggested timetable

Dates	Stages and core deliverables
December 2024 – April 2025	Stage 1 – Baseline measurement
February 2025	Baseline report for review
April 2025	Baseline report for acceptance
October 2025 – March 2026	Stage 2 – Interim evaluation
February 2026	Interim report for review
March 2026	Interim report for acceptance
January 2026 – June 2029	Stage 3 – Final evaluation
June 2026	Annual evaluation report - 2026
June 2027	Annual evaluation report - 2027
June 2028	Final evaluation report for review
August 2028	Final evaluation report for acceptance
June 2029	Follow-up impact report for review
July 2029	Follow-up impact report for acceptance

Appendix A Impact evaluation questions

Impact evaluation questions

As set out in the Theory of Change, the NCBR programme seeks to achieve impact in four areas. Based on this, the key impact evaluation questions to be covered by the evaluation are:

- **Impact EQ1:** To what extent has NCBR developed a national capability that effectively connects and convenes stakeholders across academia, the public sector, private sector and third sector to address key societal challenges?
- **Impact EQ2:** To what extent has NCBR increased capacity to embed and deliver effective BR across the public sector, private sector and third sector?
- **Impact EQ3:** To what extent has NCBR contributed to increasing the effectiveness of public policy interventions?
- **Impact EQ4:** To what extent has NCBR increased capability among UK and international researchers to conduct leading-edge multi- and interdisciplinary research incorporating BR?

Approach

The following table presents each evaluation question, along with commentary on the approach that will be employed to provide an answer in each case. The table also summarises (in the final column) the outcomes and indicators that will be used to provide supporting evidence for each question. Information on all indicators will be collected first at the baseline stage, to enable comparisons at the interim and final stages of the evaluation.

Importantly, the intended impacts of NCBR are expected to materialise toward the end of the programme's lifecycle and beyond its completion. For example, the duration of a doctoral programme (four years full-time) means that the evaluation is likely to conclude before the final cohort of doctoral researchers funded through Centre-UB completes their programme. Consequently, the interim evaluation and annual reports will primarily focus on tracking outcomes as precursors to impact. These outcomes will serve as key indicators of progress towards the longer-term impacts identified in the ToC. At the final evaluation stage, progress on these outcomes will be aggregated and synthesised to assess overall impacts, with a follow-up impact report produced one year after the completion of the programme to further capture impacts that unfold post-programme. This phased approach ensures that the evaluation accurately reflects both short-to-medium term achievements and the enduring value of the NCBR programme.

Table 6 *Impact Evaluation Questions (EQs) and description of approach*

Question	Description of approach
Impact EQ1: To what extent has NCBR developed a national capability that effectively connects and convenes stakeholders across academia, the public sector, the private sector and third sector to address key societal challenges?	<p>This will be assessed by examining various indicators, following the impact pathways identified in the Theory of Change. Our approach will include both quantitative and qualitative methods:</p> <p>We will draw on evidence from the evaluation survey, stakeholder interviews and case studies to assess changes in stakeholder awareness and recognition of BR-UK as an important and credible source for BR evidence needs [OC1], as well as improvements in the alignment of research priorities between BR researchers and users [OC2].</p> <p>To assess the relevance of BR output to UK stakeholder needs [OC9], we will draw on evidence from the evaluation survey, case studies and bibliometric analysis.</p>

Question	Description of approach
<p>Impact EQ2: To what extent has NCBR increased capacity to embed and deliver effective BR across the public sector, private sector and third sector?</p>	<p>This will be assessed by examining various indicators, following the impact pathways identified in the Theory of Change. Our approach will include both quantitative and qualitative methods:</p> <p>To assess increases in public sector capacity to use BR evidence in local and national decision making [OC3], we will use programme monitoring data, the evaluation survey, stakeholder interviews and case studies. For this impact, we will focus on the capacity dimension of OC3.</p> <p>We will draw on evidence from programme monitoring data, the evaluation survey and case studies to assess the development of a new generation of research leaders outside and within academia [OC5], as well as the upskilling of BR researchers and users [OC6].</p> <p>To assess increased collaboration between researchers and the public sector, private sector and third sector in the development and delivery of training [OC7], we will draw on evidence from the evaluation survey, stakeholder interviews and case studies.</p>
<p>Impact EQ3: To what extent has NCBR contributed to increasing the effectiveness of public policy interventions?</p>	<p>This will be assessed by examining various indicators, following the impact pathways identified in the Theory of Change. Our approach will include both quantitative and qualitative methods:</p> <p>To assess increases in public sector capability and capacity to use BR evidence in local and national decision making [OC3] and improvements in the alignment of research priorities between BR researchers and users [OC2], we will use programme monitoring data, the evaluation survey, stakeholder interview and case studies. For this impact, we will focus on how these changes have contributed to concrete policy change.</p> <p>To assess increased use of BR in public policy design and implementation [OC4], we will use programme monitoring data, the evaluation survey, stakeholder interviews, case studies and bibliometric analysis.</p> <p>To assess the change in existing BR evidence synthesised [OC10], we will use programme monitoring data, the evaluation survey and stakeholder interviews.</p>
<p>Impact EQ4: To what extent has NCBR increased capability among UK and international researchers to conduct leading-edge multi- and interdisciplinary research incorporating BR?</p>	<p>This will be assessed by examining various indicators, following the impact pathways identified in the Theory of Change. Our approach will include both quantitative and qualitative methods:</p> <p>We will draw on evidence from programme monitoring data, the evaluation survey and case studies to assess the development of a new generation of research leaders outside and within academia [OC5], as well as the upskilling of BR researchers and users [OC6]. For this impact, we will focus on the BR researchers' dimension of OC6, rather than that of BR users.</p> <p>To assess increases in collaboration across disciplines and sectors in contributing to BR [OC8], we will draw on evidence from bibliometric data, the evaluation survey, stakeholder interviews and case studies.</p> <p>To assess improvements in access to and use of data among BR researchers and users [OC11], we will draw on evidence from administrative data (dataset downloads), the evaluation survey, stakeholder interviews and case studies.</p>



Appendix B Impact evaluation indicators

The table below provides the list of indicators that the evaluation will employ to provide evidence of achievement. It lists all the individual outputs and outcomes identified within the Theory of Change. For each, a series of indicators are listed, along with the relevant sources of data and baseline measurements, where applicable. For many of these outputs, the baseline measurement is, by nature, zero as it captures positions pre-NCBR. For some indicators, we use the survey responses.

Table 7 List of impact evaluation indicators and baseline measurement

		Indicators/Metrics	Data sources	Baseline measurement
Outputs				
O1. New knowledge related to UK's BR capabilities (e.g. stakeholders, institutions)	1	Stakeholders' assessment of the extent to which the programme has led to new knowledge of UK's BR capabilities.	Survey Interviews (including case study interviews)	% that agreed to a great, moderate, or slight extent: BR-UK=95% (19/20); Centre-UB=65% (11/17); Wider SH=37% (35/94)
	2	Stakeholders' assessment of the extent to which the programme has led to new knowledge of the stakeholders and institutions active in UK BR.	Survey Interviews (including case study interviews)	% that agreed to a great, moderate, or slight extent: BR-UK=90% (18/20); Centre-UB=65% (11/17); Wider SH=46% (43/94)
O2. Identification of UK's BR needs (or potential areas for contribution) across BR researchers and users	3	BR researchers' and users' assessment of the extent to which the programme has helped identify the UK's BR needs or key potential areas for contribution.	Survey Interviews (including case study interviews)	% that agreed to a great, moderate, or slight extent: BR-UK=95% (19/20); Centre-UB=59% (10/17); Wider SH=36% (34/94)
O3. New BR training courses and training materials	4	Number of BR training materials developed and published by Centre-UB and BR-UK.	NCBR monitoring and administrative data	0
	5	Number of BR training courses organised by the Centre-UB and BR-UK.	NCBR monitoring and administrative data	0
O4. Doctoral researchers and fellows funded and trained	6	Number of doctoral researchers enrolled in Centre-UB.	NCBR monitoring and administrative data	0
	7	Number of Centre-UB doctoral researchers awarded PhD.	NCBR monitoring and administrative data	0
	8	Number of Centre-UB fellows.	NCBR monitoring and administrative data	0
O5. New tools, methods and theories for producing, innovating and applying BR	9	Stakeholders' assessment of the extent to which the programme has led to the development of tools, methods and theories for producing, innovating and applying BR.	Survey (interim and final) Interviews (including case study interviews)	To be determined.
	10	Number of BR tools developed (e.g. frameworks, research software packages, etc).	Survey	0
O6. New BR research knowledge (e.g. publications, policy briefs)	11	Number of original research publications produced (e.g. peer-reviewed research articles, policy briefs).	NCBR monitoring and administrative data Survey (interim and final) Bibliometric data	0
O7. Syntheses of existing BR knowledge for wider audiences	12	Number of research syntheses produced (e.g. rapid evidence reviews, meta-analyses).	NCBR monitoring and administrative data Survey (interim and final)	0

		Indicators/Metrics	Data sources	Baseline measurement
O8. Increased stakeholder awareness of BR use-cases and careers (incl. outside academia)	13	Number of knowledge dissemination events carried out by Centre-UB, BR-UK and the embedded posts.	NCBR monitoring and administrative data	0
	14	Reach of knowledge dissemination events carried out by Centre-UB, BR-UK and the embedded posts.	NCBR monitoring and administrative data	0
	15	Stakeholders' awareness of BR use-cases and careers (incl. outside academia).	Survey Interviews (including case study interviews)	Self-reported average scores: BR-UK=5.4/10, Centre-UB=4.1/10; Wider SH=4.8/10
O9. New or strengthened partnerships between academia, public, private and third sector to conduct and use BR	16	Number of NCBR-supported partnerships for conducting and using BR, disaggregated by UK-based and international.	Survey (interim and final) BR-UK and CENTRE-UB websites and documents	0
	17	Number of institutions involved in NCBR-supported partnerships for conducting and using BR.	Survey (interim and final) BR-UK and Centre-UB websites and documents	0
	18	Stakeholders' assessment of the level of collaboration between different institutions involved in UK BR.	Survey Interviews (including case study interviews)	% that said highly or strong collaborative culture: BR-UK=50% (10/20), Centre-UB=47% (8/17), Wider SH=23% (20/87)
	19	Stakeholders' assessment of the level of collaboration between different sectors involved in UK BR.	Survey Interviews (including case study interviews)	% that said very frequently or frequently: BR-UK=55% (11/20), Centre-UB=65% (11/17), Wider SH=31% (27/87)
O10. New or strengthened networks within UK BR	20	Stakeholders' assessment of the extent to which BR-UK has played an effective role in managing the UK BR network.	Survey (interim and final) Interviews	To be determined.
	21	Stakeholders' assessment of the strength of UK BR networks.	Survey Interviews (including case study interviews)	% that said very strong or strong: BR-UK=35% (7/20), Centre-UB=41% (7/17), Wider SH=23% (20/87)
O11. Increased use of BR data infrastructure	22	Trends in key BR dataset downloads.	ESRC administrative data NCBR monitoring and administrative data	To be determined.
	23	BR researchers' and users' self-reported usage of BR data infrastructure.	Survey Interviews (including case study interviews)	% that said very good or good: Access=24% (35/146), Quality=37% (53/144), Scope=25% (36/143)
O12. New funding and investments into BR from public, private and third sector	24	Total amount of NCBR-related BR funding from public, private and third sector actors.	NCBR monitoring and administrative data Survey (interim and final)	To be determined.
O13. New BR interventions in UK public, private and third sector	25	Number of new NCBR-related BR interventions in UK public, private and third sector.	NCBR monitoring and administrative data Survey (interim and final) Interviews (including case study interviews)	0
Outcomes				
OC1. Stakeholder awareness and recognition of BR-UK as	26	External stakeholders' awareness of BR-UK.	Survey Interviews (including case study interviews)	% of wider stakeholders saying they are not familiar with BR-UK=10% (10/99) and Centre-UB=48% (47/98)

		Indicators/Metrics	Data sources	Baseline measurement
important and credible source for BR evidence needs	27	Number of mentions of BR-UK in publications related to BR.	Document review Overton	0
	28	Social media engagement with BR-UK on Bluesky, LinkedIn, X and YouTube.	NCBR monitoring and administrative data	0
OC2. Improved alignment of research priorities between BR researchers and users	29	BR users' assessment on the extent to which the research priorities of BR researchers align with their needs.	Survey Interviews (including case study interviews)	To be determined.
OC3. Increased capability and capacity within public sector and other users to use BR evidence in local and national decision making	30	BR users' assessment on the extent to which the programme has led to the development of new skills relevant to the use of BR evidence in decision making.	Survey Interviews (including case study interviews)	% that agreed to a great, moderate, or slight extent: BR-UK=80% (16/20); Centre-UB=47% (8/17); Wider SH=26% (24/94)
	31	Examples of concrete actions taken by involved organisations to deal with BR (e.g. specific roles) and programme contribution.	Document review Interviews (including case study interviews)	To be determined.
OC4. Increased use of BR in public policy design and implementation	32	(Public sector) stakeholders' assessment of the frequency of use of BR in public policy design and implementation.	Survey	% that said very often or often: BR-UK=5% (1/22), Centre-UB=39% (9/23), Wider SH=19% (19/100)
	33	Examples of the use of BR in UK public policy design and implementation.	Interviews (including case study interviews)	To be determined.
OC5. New generation of applied BR leaders outside and within academia	34	Career destinations of Centre-UB alumni (doctoral researchers and fellows).	Survey Document review	To be determined.
OC6. Upskilled BR researchers and users	35	BR researchers' and users' assessments of the extent to which the programme has led to the development of new skills on how to develop and use BR.	Survey Interviews (including case study interviews)	To be determined.
OC7. Increased collaboration between researchers and public, private and third sector in development and delivery of training	36	Centre-UB stakeholders' assessments on the extent to which the programme has led to increased collaboration in the development and delivery of BR training.	Survey Interviews (including case study interviews)	To be determined.
	37	Examples of co-created and/or co-delivered BR training.	Document review Interviews (including case study interviews)	To be determined.
	38	Examples of additional public, private and third sector funding for BR training.	Document review Interviews (including case study interviews)	To be determined.
OC8. Broader range of disciplines and sectors collaborating and contributing to BR	39	Stakeholders' assessments of the extent to which the programme has led to a broader range of disciplines and sectors contributing to BR.	Survey Interviews (including case study interviews)	% that agreed to a great, moderate, or slight extent: BR-UK=65% (13/20); Centre-UB=47% (8/17); Wider SH=28% (26/94)
	40	Disciplinary diversity of authors in NCBR-supported research publications.	Bibliometric data	To be determined.

		Indicators/Metrics	Data sources	Baseline measurement
	41	Disciplinary diversity of references in NCBR-supported research publications.	Bibliometric data	To be determined.
	42	Share of NCBR-supported publications authored by at least one author affiliated with a private institution and at least one author affiliated with a non-private institution.	Bibliometric data	0
OC9. Increased relevance of BR output to UK stakeholder needs	43	BR users' assessments of the relevance of BR output to their needs	Survey Interviews (including case study interviews)	To be determined.
	44	Examples of use of BR output used by stakeholders.	Document review Interviews (including case study interviews)	To be determined.
	45	Examples of BR outputs that address the needs of a diverse population.	Document review Interviews (including case study interviews)	To be determined.
	46	BR uptake in UK Government and devolved administration publications for selected policy areas ²³ (2019-2029).	Overton database	To be determined.
OC10. Increase in existing BR evidence synthesised	47	Stakeholders' assessments of the extent to which the programme led to an increased availability of synthesised BR evidence.	Survey Interviews (including case study interviews)	% that agreed to a great, moderate, or slight extent: BR-UK=60% (12/20); Centre-UB=53% (9/17); Wider SH=27% (25/94)
OC11. Improved access to and use of data among BR researchers and users	48	Stakeholders' assessments of the extent to which the programme led to improved access to data among BR researchers and users.	Survey Interviews (including case study interviews)	% that said very good or good: Access=24% (35/146)
Impacts				
IM1. A national BR capability that effectively connects and convenes stakeholders across academia, the public sector, private sector and third sector to address key societal challenges	49	Stakeholders' assessments of the extent to which the programme led to the establishment of a broad, actively engaged BR network that: 1) facilitates collaboration between stakeholders, 2) supports BR research uptake, and 3) enhances BR capacity and capability among stakeholders.	Survey Interviews (including case study interviews)	To be determined.
	50	Examples of NCBR-supported use of BR to address key societal challenges.	Document review Interviews (including case study interviews)	To be determined.

²³ The analysis will focus on the policy areas most relevant to NCBR. These policy areas will be identified in consultation with ESRC at the beginning of Stage 3 of the evaluation.

		Indicators/Metrics	Data sources	Baseline measurement
IM2. Increased capacity to embed and deliver effective BR across the public sector, private sector and third sector	51	Early signs of increased capacity to embed and deliver effective BR the public sector, private sector and third sector that are attributable to NCBR support and interventions.	Survey Interviews (including case study interviews)	To be determined.
IM3. Increased effectiveness of public policy interventions	52	Examples of improvements in public policy interventions through the integration of high-quality BR evidence and expertise that are attributable to NCBR support and interventions.	Document review Interviews (including case study interviews)	To be determined.
IM4. Increased capability among UK and international researchers to conduct leading-edge multi- and interdisciplinary research incorporating BR	53	Examples of new NCBR-supported theories, methods, and knowledge used by researchers to conduct leading-edge multi- and interdisciplinary research incorporating BR.	Document review Survey Interviews (including case study interviews)	To be determined.
	54	Early signs of the emergence of a new generation of highly skilled BR leaders that are attributable to NCBR support and interventions.	Document review Survey Interviews (including case study interviews)	To be determined.
	55	Examples of new opportunities for research collaboration that are attributable to NCBR support and interventions.	Document review Survey Interviews (including case study interviews)	To be determined.



Appendix C Survey questionnaires

BR-UK

Invitation e-mail

Dear [Recipient's Name],

We are pleased to invite you to participate in a survey evaluating the National Capability in Behavioural Research (NCBR). [Technopolis](#) has been commissioned to conduct this evaluation on behalf of the programme funder, [ESRC](#). This survey is a crucial part of our efforts to undertake an initial baseline assessment.

You have received this email because, according to our records, you are involved with Behavioural Research UK (BR-UK). The purpose of the survey is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, and overall impact of NCBR. Your responses will help us understand key areas such as:

- The alignment of behavioural research priorities with stakeholder needs.
- The role of NCBR in generating new knowledge, tools, and methods within the behavioural research field.
- How NCBR has contributed to career development, research opportunities, and the broader application of behavioural research in public policy and other sectors.

Your responses will provide valuable insights that will help assess the importance and effectiveness of NCBR and contribute to ESRC's knowledge about how best to support behavioural research.

The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete. If you have any further questions or need further clarification, please contact the Project Manager of this evaluation, Alessandro Sica, ncbr_evaluation@technopolis-group.com

Introduction

This survey is part of the current evaluation of the National Capability in Behavioural Research (NCBR). [Technopolis](#) has been commissioned to conduct this evaluation on behalf of the programme funder, [ESRC](#).

The purpose of the survey is to collect feedback from NCBR participants and stakeholders to better understand the impact and benefits of the programme. Your responses will provide valuable insights that will help highlight the importance of NCBR and their contributions to innovation. ESRC will use the results to refine and improve NCBR. The results of the study will be shared with you upon completion of the evaluation.

Survey privacy and confidentiality:

None of the subsequent questions in the survey are mandatory and you can leave the questionnaire at any time. You are free to request the withdrawal and deletion of your submission and data at any point during the study.

All data and information provided will be considered as confidential and will only be used for the purposes of conducting the study. Any publication of results from the survey will only be in a synthesised and anonymised form in the study's final report. The data will be presented as aggregate statistics or charts and will not be linked to individual organisations. In compliance with GDPR, Technopolis has established processes to ensure the security of the data and information that we collect and hold. For further information on your rights and how to contact us, please refer to our [Privacy Notice](#).



We will erase your data within six months of the conclusion of the study.

Should you wish to receive any additional information or clarifications about the study, please do not hesitate to contact the Project Manager of the evaluation, Alessandro Sica, ncbr_evaluation@technopolis-group.com

Before proceeding, please read the information above about 'survey privacy and confidentiality' and indicate whether you give consent to the following statement concerning the use of your data:

- By clicking **Next** I give consent for my response to this questionnaire to be processed and used according to the assurances on confidentiality and data provided in the introductory section about 'survey privacy and confidentiality'

Behavioural research

For the purposes of this survey, behavioural research is defined as research that aims to understand what influences, characterises, changes, or results from people's individual or collective behaviour. This conceptualisation of behavioural research goes beyond individual approaches to human behaviour, incorporating broader societal and economic contexts.

Your background

This section contains questions about your professional background and role to better understand the perspectives and experiences you bring to this survey.

1. Please select the option that best describes your current role.

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

[Routing depending on answer to the question]

- I am an academic researcher engaged in behavioural research.
- I am a non-academic researcher engaged in behavioural research.
- I am not a researcher, but I apply insights from behavioural research in my professional role.
- Other, please specify [comment box]

2. In which sector are you currently employed?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Academia
- Public research establishment
- Other public sector organisation
- Private organisation / business
- Third sector (NGOs, non-profit, et cetera)
- Other, please specify [comment box]

3. [Behavioural researchers; display IF Q1 == 1 OR 2] Please select the discipline most closely aligned with your research.

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Anthropology
- Business management
- Economics



- Education
- Neuroscience
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Public Health
- Sociology
- Other, please specify **[comment box]**

4. Gender

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Female
- Male
- Other, please specify **[comment box]**
- Prefer not to say

5. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

6. Which of the following best describes your ethnic group? Please select the most appropriate option.

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Asian or Asian British (including Bangladeshi, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani)
- Black or Black British (including African, Caribbean)
- Mixed
- White (including British, English, Gypsy, Irish, Irish Traveller, Northern Irish, Roma, Scottish, Welsh, other white groups)
- Other ethnic group
- Prefer not to say

Current state of behavioural research

This section contains questions regarding your perspective on the current state of behavioural research, both generally and specifically within the UK, as well as your understanding of practical applications and career opportunities.

Please note that the questions are meant to gather evidence from the behavioural research community perspective (rather than to rate individuals' knowledge or perspectives).

7. To what extent do you agree with this statement: "There is an active community of behavioural researchers producing knowledge that is directly relevant to my professional needs in the UK and internationally."

[Question type: Matrix of radio buttons, select one per row]

- Highly agree

- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Highly disagree

8. In instances where your work requires behavioural research evidence (such as research, literature reviews, policy briefs), how often does the evidence available meet your professional needs?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Always
- Frequently
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- My work does not require behavioural research evidence

9. [Behavioural researchers; display IF Q1 == 1 OR 2] Reflecting on your personal experience, how would you rate the level of collaboration among institutions within the UK behavioural research community?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- A highly collaborative culture, consistently including a range of institutions.
- A strong collaborative culture, regularly involving multiple institutions.
- A moderately collaborative culture, sometimes including multiple institutions.
- There is some collaboration, but it is limited to specific institutions and behavioural research areas.
- There is minimal collaboration, with institutions rarely involved in collaborative behavioural research.

Could you briefly explain your answer above? [comment box]

10. [Behavioural researchers; display IF Q1 == 1 OR 2] Reflecting on your personal experience, how frequently does collaboration between different sectors occur in the UK behavioural research community (i.e. academia, public sector, private sector, third sector)?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Very frequently, cross-sector collaboration is a common and integral part of behavioural research in the UK.
- Frequently, there are regular instances of cross-sector collaboration.
- Occasionally, cross-sector collaboration happens, but it is not the norm.
- Rarely, cross-sector collaboration is infrequent.
- Very rarely, cross-sector collaboration is an exception within the UK behavioural research community.

Could you briefly explain your answer above? [comment box]

11. [Behavioural researchers; display IF Q1 == 1 OR 2] How would you rate the strength of the networks within the UK behavioural research community?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Very strong, with excellent connectivity, resource sharing and collaboration.
- Strong, with good connectivity, resource sharing and collaboration.
- Moderate, with adequate connectivity, resource sharing and collaboration.
- Weak, with some connectivity, resource sharing and collaboration.
- Very weak, with little connectivity, resource sharing and collaboration.

Could you briefly explain your answer above? **[comment box]**

12. How would you rate the following, with respect to the available data and data infrastructure (e.g. survey datasets including cohort and longitudinal studies, administrative datasets) to conduct behavioural research in the UK?

[Question type: Matrix of radio buttons, select one per row]

- Access
- Quality
- Scope / relevance
- a) *Very good*
- b) *Good*
- c) *Moderate*
- d) *Low*
- e) *Very low*
- f) *I don't know*

13. How frequently do you use data and data infrastructure that is relevant to behavioural research in your work?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Several times a week
- About once a week
- 2-3 times a month
- About monthly
- A few times a year
- Annually or less often
- Behavioural data is not relevant to my work

14. In your experience, how frequently is behavioural research used in the design and implementation of public policy in the UK?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Very often, behavioural research is consistently integrated and used when it is relevant
- Often, behavioural research is commonly used when it is relevant.
- Sometimes, behavioural research is sometimes used when it is relevant
- Rarely, behavioural research is occasionally used when it is relevant.
- Very rarely, behavioural research is seldom used when it is relevant.

15. In your opinion, what are the main barriers or enablers for the uptake of behavioural research in the design and implementation of public policy in the UK?

[Question type: Open text]

16. To what extent do you think UK's National Capability in Behavioural Research (NCBR) will contribute to improving the behavioural research ecosystem (including collaboration, strength of networks, availability of data and data infrastructures and relevance to public policy design and implementation)?

Note that NCBR currently comprises of Behavioural Research UK (BR-UK) and the Centre for National Training and Research Excellence in Understanding Behaviour (Centre-UB)

Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is "No contribution at all", and 10 is "Significant contribution"

[Question type: Drop-down, 1-10, single choice]

Could you briefly explain your answer? [comment box]

National Capability in Behavioural Research

This section contains questions regarding your perspective on the work of the UK's National Capability in Behavioural Research (NCBR). As stated before, NCBR currently comprises Behavioural Research UK (BR-UK) and the Centre for National Training and Research Excellence in Understanding Behaviour (Centre-UB).

17. What is your role in BR-UK?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Member of the Directorate
- Co-Investigator and Work Package / Theme Lead
- Researcher (incl. Early Career Researcher)
- PhD student
- Other, please specify [comment box]

18. How are you involved with the activities of BR-UK?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select multiple]

- Research activities (including demonstration projects)
- Dissemination and engagement activities
- Reviews and advice for government and other BR users
- Capacity building activities
- Management and administration activities
- Other, please specify [comment box]

19. To date, and understading that it is early in the process, to what extent do you believe that BR-UK has:

[Question type: Matrix of radio buttons, select one per row]

- Generated new knowledge about the UK's behavioural research capabilities?
- Generated new knowledge about the stakeholders and institutions active in the UK behavioural research landscape?
- Helped identify needs in the UK behavioural research landscape?

- Helped identify potential areas for contribution in the UK behavioural research landscape?
- Improved the ability of UK stakeholders to use behavioural research evidence in decision making?
- Led to a broader range of disciplines and sectors contributing to BR?
- Helped connecting people and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration?
- Led to an increased availability of synthesised BR evidence?

- a) *To a great extent*
 b) *To a moderate extent*
 c) *To a slight extent*
 d) *Not yet, but this is expected in the future*
 e) *Not yet, and this is not expected in the future*
 f) *I don't know*

20. **We want to understand the extent to which your involvement with BR-UK has led to an improvement on your knowledge on (a) practical applications of behavioural research in your field, and (b) behavioural research career paths (including beyond your current sector of activity). Could you please rate your knowledge on practical applications before participation and now?**

Please use a scale from 1-10, where 1 is "Not knowledgeable at all" and 10 is "Highly knowledgeable." If there has been no change so far, please enter the same number in both columns.

[Question type: Matrix, rating]

	Before October 2023 (pre-NCBR)	Current position
Practical applications of behavioural research in your field		
Behavioural research career paths beyond your current sector of activity		

21. **How familiar are you with Centre-UB and its activities?**

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- I am **regularly engaged** with Centre-UB and **actively participate** in its activities or projects.
- I am **familiar** with Centre-UB and **have engaged** with its activities or communications.
- I am **familiar** with Centre-UB but have **not engaged** with its activities or communications.
- I have **heard of Centre-UB** but am not familiar with its objectives or activities.
- Not familiar at all.

22. **[Display IF Q21 == 1, 2, 3 OR 4] To date, and understanding that it is early in the process, to what extent do you believe that Centre-UB has:**

[Question type: Matrix of radio buttons, select one per row]

- Generated new knowledge about the UK's behavioural research capabilities?

- Generated new knowledge about the stakeholders and institutions active in the UK behavioural research landscape?
- Helped identify needs in the UK behavioural research landscape?
- Helped identify potential areas for contribution in the UK behavioural research landscape?
- Improved the ability of UK stakeholders to use behavioural research evidence in decision making?
- Led to a broader range of disciplines and sectors contributing to BR?
- Helped connecting people and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration?
- Led to an increased availability of synthesised BR evidence?

- a) *To a great extent*
- b) *To a moderate extent*
- c) *To a slight extent*
- d) *Not yet, but this is expected in the future*
- e) *Not yet, and this is not expected in the future*
- f) *I don't know*

23. How would you rate the capabilities of your organisation in the following areas?

Use a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 is “excellent” and 1 is “poor”. If there has been no change so far, please enter the same number in both columns.

[Question type: Matrix of open texts, include one per cell]

	Before October 2023 (pre-NCBR)	Current position
Capacity of your organisation to embed and deliver effective behavioural research		
Engagement of your organisation in partnerships and/or collaborations for using behavioural research		
Capacity of your organisation to identify funding opportunities and secure funding for behavioural research		

24. If you note an increase in capabilities, to what extent has your organisation's involvement in the NCBR programme led to those changes?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- To a large extent
- To some extent
- Not at all

Could you briefly explain your answer above? [comment box]

Final remarks

25. Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

[Question type: Open text]



End of survey

Thank you for responding to this survey. The results will be used to inform ESRC's future work to support behavioural research.

Centre-UB

Invitation e-mail

Dear [Recipient's Name],

We are pleased to invite you to participate in a survey evaluating the National Capability in Behavioural Research (NCBR). [Technopolis](#) has been commissioned to conduct this evaluation on behalf of the programme funder, [ESRC](#). This survey is a crucial part of our efforts to undertake an initial baseline assessment.

You have received this email because, according to our records, you are involved with the Centre for National Training and Research Excellence in Understanding Behaviour (Centre-UB). The purpose of the survey is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, and overall impact of NCBR. Your responses will help us understand key areas such as:

- The alignment of behavioural research priorities with stakeholder needs.
- The role of NCBR in generating new knowledge, tools, and methods within the behavioural research field.
- How NCBR has contributed to career development, research opportunities, and the broader application of behavioural research in public policy and other sectors.

Your responses will provide valuable insights that will help assess the importance and effectiveness of NCBR and contribute to ESRC's knowledge about how best to support behavioural research.

The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete. If you have any further questions or need further clarification, please contact the Project Manager of this evaluation, Alessandro Sica, ncbr_evaluation@technopolis-group.com

Introduction

This survey is part of the current evaluation of the National Capability in Behavioural Research (NCBR). [Technopolis](#) has been commissioned to conduct this evaluation on behalf of the programme funder, [ESRC](#).

The purpose of the survey is to collect feedback from NCBR participants and stakeholders to better understand the impact and benefits of the programme. Your responses will provide valuable insights that will help highlight the importance of NCBR and their contributions to innovation. ESRC will use the results to refine and improve NCBR. The results of the study will be shared with you upon completion of the evaluation.

Survey privacy and confidentiality:

None of the subsequent questions in the survey are mandatory and you can leave the questionnaire at any time. You are free to request the withdrawal and deletion of your submission and data at any point during the study.

All data and information provided will be considered as confidential and will only be used for the purposes of conducting the study. Any publication of results from the survey will only be in a synthesised and anonymised form in the study's final report. The data will be presented as aggregate statistics or charts and will not be linked to individual organisations. In compliance with GDPR, Technopolis has established processes to ensure the security of the data and



information that we collect and hold. For further information on your rights and how to contact us, please refer to our [Privacy Notice](#).

We will erase your data within six months of the conclusion of the study.

Should you wish to receive any additional information or clarifications about the study, please do not hesitate to contact the Project Manager of the evaluation, Alessandro Sica, ncbr_evaluation@technopolis-group.com

Before proceeding, please read the information above about 'survey privacy and confidentiality' and indicate whether you give consent to the following statement concerning the use of your data.

- By clicking **Next** I give consent for my response to this questionnaire to be processed and used according to the assurances on confidentiality and data provided in the introductory section about 'survey privacy and confidentiality'

Behavioural research

For the purposes of this survey, behavioural research is defined as research that aims to understand what influences, characterises, changes or results from people's individual or collective behaviour. This conceptualisation of behavioural research goes beyond individual approaches to human behaviour, incorporating broader societal and economic contexts.

Your background

This section contains questions about your professional background and role to better understand the perspectives and experiences you bring to this survey.

1. Please select the option that best describes your current role.

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

[Routing depending on answer to the question]

- I am an academic researcher engaged in behavioural research.
- I am a non-academic researcher engaged in behavioural research.
- I am not a researcher, but I apply insights from behavioural research in my professional role.
- Other, please specify [comment box]

2. In which sector are you currently employed?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Academia
- Public research establishment
- Other public sector organisation
- Private organisation / business
- Third sector (NGOs, non-profit, et cetera)
- Other, please specify [comment box]

3. [Behavioural researchers; display IF Q1 == 1 OR 2] Please select the discipline most closely aligned with your research.

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Anthropology

- Business management
- Economics
- Education
- Neuroscience
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Public Health
- Sociology
- Other, please specify **[comment box]**

4. Gender

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Female
- Male
- Other, please specify **[comment box]**
- Prefer not to say

5. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

6. Which of the following best describes your ethnic group? Please select the most appropriate option.

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Asian or Asian British (including Bangladeshi, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani)
- Black or Black British (including African, Caribbean)
- Mixed
- White (including British, English, Gypsy, Irish, Irish Traveller, Northern Irish, Roma, Scottish, Welsh, other white groups)
- Other ethnic group
- Prefer not to say

Current state of behavioural research

This section contains questions regarding your perspective on the current state of behavioural research, both generally and specifically within the UK, as well as your understanding of practical applications and career opportunities.

Please note that the questions are meant to gather evidence from the behavioural research community perspective (rather than to rate individuals' knowledge or perspectives).

7. To what extent do you agree with this statement: "There is an active community of behavioural researchers producing knowledge that is directly relevant to my professional needs in the UK and internationally."

[Question type: Matrix of radio buttons, select one]

- Highly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Highly disagree

- a) UK
- b) Internationally

8. In instances where your work requires behavioural research evidence (such as research, literature reviews, policy briefs), how often does the evidence available meet your professional needs?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Always
- Frequently
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never
- My work does not require behavioural research evidence

9. [Behavioural researchers; display IF Q1 == 1 OR 2] Reflecting on your personal experience, how would you rate the level of collaboration among institutions within the UK behavioural research community?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- A highly collaborative culture, consistently including a range of institutions.
- A strong collaborative culture, regularly involving multiple institutions.
- A moderately collaborative culture, sometimes including multiple institutions.
- There is some collaboration, but it is limited to specific institutions and behavioural research areas.
- There is minimal collaboration, with institutions rarely involved in collaborative behavioural research.

Could you briefly explain your answer above? **[comment box]**

10. [Behavioural researchers; display IF Q1 == 1 OR 2] Reflecting on your personal experience, how frequently does collaboration between different sectors occur in the UK behavioural research community (i.e. academia, public sector, private sector, third sector)?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Very frequently, cross-sector collaboration is a common and integral part of behavioural research in the UK.
- Frequently, there are regular instances of cross-sector collaboration.
- Occasionally, cross-sector collaboration happens, but it is not the norm.
- Rarely, cross-sector collaboration is infrequent.

- Very rarely, cross-sector collaboration is an exception within the UK behavioural research community.

Could you briefly explain your answer above? **[comment box]**

11. [Behavioural researchers; display IF Q1 == 1 OR 2] How would you rate the strength of the networks within the UK behavioural research community?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Very strong, with excellent connectivity, resource sharing and collaboration.
- Strong, with good connectivity, resource sharing and collaboration.
- Moderate, with adequate connectivity, resource sharing and collaboration.
- Weak, with some connectivity, resource sharing and collaboration.
- Very weak, with little connectivity, resource sharing and collaboration.

Could you briefly explain your answer above? **[comment box]**

12. How would you rate the following, with respect to the available data and data infrastructure (e.g. survey datasets including cohort and longitudinal studies, administrative datasets) to conduct behavioural research in the UK?

[Question type: Matrix of radio buttons, select one per row]

- Access
 - Quality
 - Scope / relevance
- a) *Very good*
 b) *Good*
 c) *Moderate*
 d) *Low*
 e) *Very low*
 f) *I don't know*

13. How frequently do you use data and data infrastructure that is relevant to behavioural research in your work?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Several times a week
- About once a week
- 2-3 times a month
- About monthly
- A few times a year
- Annually or less often
- Behavioural data is not relevant to my work

14. In your experience, how frequently is behavioural research used in the design and implementation of public policy in the UK?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Very often, behavioural research is consistently integrated and used when it is relevant

- Often, behavioural research is commonly used when it is relevant.
- Sometimes, behavioural research is sometimes used when it is relevant
- Rarely, behavioural research is occasionally used when it is relevant.
- Very rarely, behavioural research is seldom used when it is relevant.

15. In your opinion, what are the main barriers or enablers for the uptake of behavioural research in the design and implementation of public policy in the UK?

[Question type: Open text]

16. To what extent do you think UK's National Capability in Behavioural Research (NCBR) will contribute to improving the behavioural research ecosystem (including collaboration, strength of networks, availability of data and data infrastructures and relevance to public policy design and implementation)?

Note that NCBR currently comprises of Behavioural Research UK (BR-UK) and the Centre for National Training and Research Excellence in Understanding Behaviour (Centre-UB)

Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is "No contribution at all", and 10 is "Significant contribution"

[Question type: Drop-down, 1-10, single choice]

Could you briefly explain your answer? [comment box]

National Capability in Behavioural Research

This section contains questions regarding your perspective on the work of the UK's National Capability in Behavioural Research (NCBR), which is currently comprised of Behavioural Research UK (BR-UK) and the Centre for National Training and Research Excellence in Understanding Behaviour (Centre-UB).

17. How are you involved in the activities of Centre-UB?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- As a Centre-UB staff member
- As a Centre-UB PhD student
- As a Centre-UB early career researcher
- As an external stakeholder
- As an external trainee
- Other, please specify [comment box]

18. Which forms of support have you received from Centre-UB? Select all that apply.

[Question type: Multiple choice, select multiple]

- I have received research funding from Centre-UB (e.g. fellowship)
- I have received training from Centre-UB
- I have used resources developed by Centre-UB (e.g. frameworks, research software, datasets)
- I have received other forms of support from Centre-UB
- I have not received any support from Centre-UB

19. To what extent do you believe Centre-UB has increased collaboration between different stakeholders in the development and delivery of behavioural research training?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- To a great extent
- To a moderate extent
- To a slight extent
- Not at all
- I don't know

20. To date, and understanding that it is early in the process, to what extent do you believe that Centre-UB has:

[Question type: Matrix of radio buttons, select one per row]

- Generated new knowledge about the UK's behavioural research capabilities?
 - Generated new knowledge about the stakeholders and institutions active in the UK behavioural research landscape?
 - Helped identify needs in the UK behavioural research landscape?
 - Helped identify potential areas for contribution in the UK behavioural research landscape?
 - Improved the ability of UK stakeholders to use behavioural research evidence in decision making?
 - Led to a broader range of disciplines and sectors contributing to BR?
 - Helped connecting people and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration?
 - Led to an increased availability of synthesised BR evidence?
- a) *To a great extent*
 b) *To a moderate extent*
 c) *To a slight extent*
 d) *Not yet, but this is expected in the future*
 e) *Not yet, and this is not expected in the future*
 f) *I don't know*

21. We want to understand the extent to which your involvement with Centre-UB has led to an improvement on your knowledge on (a) practical applications of behavioural research in your field, and (b) behavioural research career paths (including beyond your current sector of activity). Could you please rate your knowledge on practical applications before participation and now?

Please use a scale from 1-10, where 1 is "Not knowledgeable at all" and 10 is "Highly knowledgeable." If there has been no change so far, please enter the same number in both columns.

[Question type: Matrix, rating]

	Before October 2023 (pre-NCBR)	Current position
Practical applications of behavioural research in your field		
Behavioural research career paths beyond your current sector of activity		

22. How familiar are you with BR-UK and its activities?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- I am regularly engaged with BR-UK and actively participate in its activities or projects.
- I am familiar with BR-UK and have engaged with its activities or communications.
- I am familiar with BR-UK but have not engaged with its activities or communications.
- I have heard of BR-UK but am not familiar with its objectives or activities.
- Not familiar at all.

23. [Display IF Q22 == 1, 2, 3 OR 4] To date, and understanding that it is early in the process, to what extent do you believe that BR-UK has:

[Question type: Matrix of radio buttons, select one per row]

- Generated new knowledge about the UK's behavioural research capabilities?
 - Generated new knowledge about the stakeholders and institutions active in the UK behavioural research landscape?
 - Helped identify needs in the UK behavioural research landscape?
 - Helped identify potential areas for contribution in the UK behavioural research landscape?
 - Improved the ability of UK stakeholders to use behavioural research evidence in decision making?
 - Led to a broader range of disciplines and sectors contributing to BR?
 - Helped connecting people and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration?
 - Led to an increased availability of synthesised BR evidence?
- a) *To a great extent*
 b) *To a moderate extent*
 c) *To a slight extent*
 d) *Not yet, but this is expected in the future*
 e) *Not yet, and this is not expected in the future*
 f) *I don't know*

24. How would you rate the capabilities of your organisation in the following areas?

Use a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 is "excellent" and 1 is "poor". If there has been no change so far, please enter the same number in both columns.

[Question type: Matrix of open texts, include one per cell]

	Before October 2023 (pre-NCBR)	Current position
Capacity of your organisation to embed and deliver effective behavioural research		
Engagement of your organisation in partnerships and/or collaborations for using behavioural research		

	Before October 2023 (pre-NCBR)	Current position
Capacity of your organisation to identify funding opportunities and secure funding for behavioural research		

25. To what extent has your organisation's involvement in the NCBR programme led to those changes?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- To a large extent
- To some extent
- Not at all

Could you please briefly explain your answer? **[comment box]**

Final remarks

26. Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

[Question type: Open text]

End of survey

Thank you for responding to this survey. The results will be used to inform ESRC's future work to support behavioural research.

Wider stakeholders

Invitation

We are pleased to invite all those interested to participate in a survey evaluating the National Capability in Behavioural Research (NCBR). [Technopolis](#) has been commissioned to conduct this evaluation on behalf of the programme funder, [ESRC](#). This survey is a crucial part of our efforts to undertake an initial baseline assessment.

The survey is addressed to stakeholders interested in NCBR, including actors involved in Behavioural Research UK (BR-UK) and in the Centre for National Training and Research Excellence in Understanding Behaviour (Centre-UB), the members of cross-government behavioural insights network and wider actors working on behavioural research in the UK.

The purpose of the survey is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, and overall impact of NCBR. Your responses will help us understand key areas such as:

- The alignment of behavioural research priorities with stakeholder needs.
- The role of NCBR in generating new knowledge, tools, and methods within the behavioural research field.
- How NCBR has contributed to career development, research opportunities, and the broader application of behavioural research in public policy and other sectors.

Your responses will provide valuable insights that will help assess the importance and effectiveness of NCBR and contribute to ESRC's knowledge about how best to support behavioural research.

The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete.



If you are a member of the BR-UK or Centre-UB or have received a link to complete one of the respective versions of the survey, please do not complete this survey. If you have any further questions or need further clarification, please contact the Project Manager of this evaluation, Alessandro Sica, ncbr_evaluation@technopolis-group.com

Introduction

This survey is part of the current evaluation of the National Capability in Behavioural Research (NCBR). [Technopolis](#) has been commissioned to conduct this evaluation on behalf of the programme funder, [ESRC](#).

The purpose of the survey is to collect feedback from NCBR participants and wider behavioural research stakeholders to better understand the impact and benefits of the programme. Your responses will provide valuable insights that will help highlight the importance of NCBR and their contributions to innovation. ESRC will use the results to refine and improve NCBR. The results of the study will be shared with you upon completion of the evaluation.

Survey privacy and confidentiality:

None of the subsequent questions in the survey are mandatory and you can leave the questionnaire at any time. You are free to request the withdrawal and deletion of your submission and data at any point during the study.

All data and information provided will be considered as confidential and will only be used for the purposes of conducting the study. Any publication of results from the survey will only be in a synthesised and anonymised form in the study's final report. The data will be presented as aggregate statistics or charts and will not be linked to individual organisations. In compliance with GDPR, Technopolis has established processes to ensure the security of the data and information that we collect and hold. For further information on your rights and how to contact us, please refer to our [Privacy Notice](#).

We will erase your data within six months of the conclusion of the study.

Should you wish to receive any additional information or clarifications about the study, please do not hesitate to contact the Project Manager of the evaluation, Alessandro Sica, ncbr_evaluation@technopolis-group.com

Before proceeding, please read the information above about 'survey privacy and confidentiality' and indicate whether you give consent to the following statement concerning the use of your data.

- By clicking **Next** I give consent for my response to this questionnaire to be processed and used according to the assurances on confidentiality and data provided in the introductory section about 'survey privacy and confidentiality'.

Behavioural research

For the purposes of this survey, behavioural research is defined as research that aims to understand what influences, characterises, changes or results from people's individual or collective behaviour. This conceptualisation of behavioural research goes beyond individual approaches to human behaviour, incorporating broader societal and economic contexts.

Your background

This section contains questions about your professional background and role to better understand the perspectives and experiences you bring to this survey.

1. Please select the option that best describes your current role.

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

[Routing depending on answer to the question]

- I am an academic researcher engaged in behavioural research.
- I am a non-academic researcher engaged in behavioural research.
- I am not a researcher, but I apply insights from behavioural research in my professional role.
- I do not produce or use behavioural research in my professional role.
- Other, please specify **[comment box]**

2. In which sector are you currently employed?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Academia
 - Public research establishment
 - Other public sector organisation
 - Private organisation / business
 - Third sector (NGOs, non-profit, et cetera)
 - Other, please specify **[comment box]**
- 3. [Behavioural researchers; display IF Q1 == 1 OR 2] Please select the discipline most closely aligned with your research.**

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Anthropology
- Business management
- Economics
- Education
- Neuroscience
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Public Health
- Sociology
- Other, please specify **[comment box]**

4. Gender

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Female
- Male
- Other, please specify **[comment box]**
- Prefer not to say

5. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Yes

- No
 - Prefer not to say
- 6. Which of the following best describes your ethnic group? Please select the most appropriate option.**

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Asian or Asian British (including Bangladeshi, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani)
- Black or Black British (including African, Caribbean)
- Mixed
- White (including British, English, Gypsy, Irish, Irish Traveller, Northern Irish, Roma, Scottish, Welsh, other white groups)
- Other ethnic group
- Prefer not to say

Current state of behavioural research

This section contains questions regarding your perspective on the current state of behavioural research, both generally and specifically within the UK, as well as your understanding of practical applications and career opportunities.

Please note that the questions are meant to gather evidence from the behavioural research community perspective (rather than to rate individuals' knowledge or perspectives).

- 7. To what extent do you agree with this statement: "There is an active community of behavioural researchers producing knowledge that is directly relevant to my professional needs in the UK and internationally."**

[Question type: Matrix of radio buttons, select on]

- Highly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Highly disagree

a) UK

b) Internationally

- 8. In instances where your work requires behavioural research evidence (such as research, literature reviews, policy briefs), how often does the evidence available meet your professional needs?**

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Always
- Frequently
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

9. **[Behavioural researchers; display IF Q1 == 1 OR 2]** Reflecting on your personal experience, how would you rate the level of collaboration among institutions within the UK behavioural research community?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- A highly collaborative culture, consistently including a range of institutions.
- A strong collaborative culture, regularly involving multiple institutions.
- A moderately collaborative culture, sometimes including multiple institutions .
- There is some collaboration, but it is limited to specific institutions and behavioural research areas.
- There is minimal collaboration, with institutions rarely involved in collaborative behavioural research.

Could you briefly explain your answer above? **[comment box]**

10. **[Behavioural researchers; display IF Q1 == 1 OR 2]** Reflecting on your personal experience, how frequently does collaboration between different sectors occur in the UK behavioural research community (i.e. academia, public sector, private sector, third sector)?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Very frequently, cross-sector collaboration is a common and integral part of behavioural research in the UK.
- Frequently, there are regular instances of cross-sector collaboration.
- Occasionally, cross-sector collaboration happens, but it is not the norm.
- Rarely, cross-sector collaboration is infrequent.
- Very rarely, cross-sector collaboration is an exception within the UK behavioural research community.

Could you briefly explain your answer above? **[comment box]**

11. **[Behavioural researchers; display IF Q1 == 1 OR 2]** How would you rate the strength of the networks within the UK behavioural research community?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Very strong, with excellent connectivity, resource sharing and collaboration.
- Strong, with good connectivity, resource sharing and collaboration.
- Moderate, with adequate connectivity, resource sharing and collaboration.
- Weak, with some connectivity, resource sharing and collaboration.
- Very weak, with little connectivity, resource sharing and collaboration.

Could you briefly explain your answer above? **[comment box]**

12. **[Hide if Q1==4]** How would you rate the following, with respect to the available data and data infrastructure (e.g. survey datasets, administrative datasets) to conduct behavioural research in the UK?

[Question type: Matrix of radio buttons, select one per row]

- Access
- Quality

- Scope / relevance
- a) *Very good*
- b) *Good*
- c) *Moderate*
- d) *Low*
- e) *Very low*
- f) *I don't know*

13. [Hide if Q1==4] How frequently do you use data and data infrastructure that is relevant to behavioural research in your work?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Several times a week
- About once a week
- 2-3 times a month
- About monthly
- A few times a year
- Annually or less often
- Behavioural data is not relevant to my work

14. In your experience, how frequently is behavioural research used in the design and implementation of public policy in the UK?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- Very often, behavioural research is consistently integrated and used when it is relevant
- Often, behavioural research is commonly used when it is relevant.
- Sometimes, behavioural research is sometimes used when it is relevant
- Rarely, behavioural research is occasionally used when it is relevant.
- Very rarely, behavioural research is seldom used when it is relevant.

15. In your opinion, what are the main barriers or enablers for the uptake of behavioural research used in the design and implementation of public policy in the UK?

[Question type: Open text]

16. To what extent do you think UK's National Capability in Behavioural Research (NCBR) will contribute to improving the behavioural research ecosystem (including collaboration, strength of networks, availability of data and data infrastructures and relevance to public policy design and implementation)?

Note that NCBR currently comprises of Behavioural Research UK (BR-UK) and the Centre for National Training and Research Excellence in Understanding Behaviour (Centre-UB)

Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is "No contribution at all", and 10 is "Significant contribution"

[Question type: Drop-down, 1-10, single choice]

Could you briefly explain your answer? [comment box]

National Capability in Behavioural Research

This section contains questions regarding your perspective on the work of the UK's National Capability in Behavioural Research (NCBR), which is currently comprised of Behavioural Research UK (BR-UK) and the Centre for National Training and Research Excellence in Understanding Behaviour (Centre-UB).

17. How familiar are you with BR-UK and its activities?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- I am regularly engaged with BR-UK and actively participate in its activities or projects.
- I am familiar with BR-UK and have engaged with its activities or communications.
- I am familiar with BR-UK but have not engaged with its activities or communications.
- I have heard of BR-UK but am not familiar with its objectives or activities.
- Not familiar at all.

18. Which forms of support have you received from BR-UK? Select all that apply.

[Question type: Multiple choice, select multiple]

- I have received research funding from BR-UK
- I have received training from BR-UK
- I have used resources developed by BR-UK (e.g. frameworks, research software, datasets)
- I have received other forms of support from BR-UK
- I have not received any support from BR-UK

19. How familiar are you with Centre-UB and its activities?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- I am **regularly engaged** with Centre-UB and **actively participate** in its activities or projects.
- I am **familiar** with Centre-UB and **have engaged** with its activities or communications.
- I am **familiar** with Centre-UB but have **not engaged** with its activities or communications.
- I have **heard of Centre-UB** but am not familiar with its objectives or activities.
- Not familiar at all.

20. Which forms of support have you received from Centre-UB? Select all that apply.

[Question type: Multiple choice, select multiple]

- I have received research funding from Centre-UB (e.g. fellowship)
- I have received training from Centre-UB
- I have used resources developed by Centre-UB (e.g. frameworks, research software, datasets)
- I have received other forms of support from Centre-UB
- I have not received any support from Centre-UB

21. To date, and understanding that it is early in the process, to what extent do you believe that NCBR in general has:

[Question type: Matrix of radio buttons, select one per row]

- Generated new knowledge about the UK's behavioural research capabilities?
- Generated new knowledge about the stakeholders and institutions active in the UK behavioural research landscape?

- Helped identify needs in the UK behavioural research landscape?
 - Helped identify potential areas for contribution in the UK behavioural research landscape?
 - Improved the ability of UK stakeholders to use behavioural research evidence in decision making?
 - Led to a broader range of disciplines and sectors contributing to BR?
 - Helped connecting people and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration?
 - Led to an increased availability of synthesised BR evidence?
- a) To a great extent
- b) To a moderate extent
- c) To a slight extent
- d) Not yet, but this is expected in the future
- e) Not yet, and this is not expected in the future
- f) I don't know

22. We want to understand the extent to which your involvement with NCBR has led to an improvement on your knowledge on (a) practical applications of behavioural research in your field, and (b) behavioural research career paths (including beyond your current sector of activity). Could you please rate your knowledge on practical applications before participation and now?

Please use a scale from 1-10, where 1 is "Not knowledgeable at all" and 10 is "Highly knowledgeable." If there has been no change so far, please enter the same number in both columns.

[Question type: Matrix, rating]

	Before October 2023 (pre-NCBR)	Current position
Practical applications of behavioural research in your field		
Behavioural research career paths beyond your current sector of activity		

23. How would you rate the capabilities of your organisation in the following areas?

Use a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 is "excellent" and 1 is "poor". If there has been no change so far, please enter the same number in both columns.

[Question type: Matrix of open texts, include one per cell]

	Before October 2023 (pre-NCBR)	Current position
Capacity of your organisation to embed and deliver effective behavioural research		
Engagement of your organisation in partnerships and/or collaborations for using behavioural research		
Capacity of your organisation to identify funding opportunities and secure funding for behavioural research		

24. If you note an increase in capabilities, to what extent has your organisation's involvement in NCBR led to those changes?

[Question type: Multiple choice, select one]

- To a large extent
- To some extent
- Not at all

Could you please briefly explain your answer? **[comment box]**

Final remarks

25. Do you have any other comments you would like to make? [Question type: Open text]

End of survey

Thank you for responding to this survey. The results will be used to inform ESRC's future work to support behavioural research.

Appendix D QED Feasibility Assessment

The table below presents the feasibility of QED and comparison groups of ToC outcomes; the outcomes have been grouped by evaluation approach.

Outcomes	QED and comparison groups
<p>OC1. Stakeholder awareness and recognition of BR-UK as an important and credible source for BR evidence needs.</p> <p>OC2. Improved alignment of research priorities between BR researchers and users.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For these outcomes, there is no measurable, comparable unit at the country level to serve as a control group in a QED. It is possible to conduct a longitudinal comparison, measuring changes over time in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder awareness and recognition of BR-UK. Stakeholder perceptions around the UK's BR needs. Stakeholder perceptions around BR research priorities. <p>This will involve conducting a stakeholder survey at baseline, midline and endline.</p>
<p>OC3. Increased capability and capacity within the public sector to use BR evidence in local and national decision making.</p> <p>OC11. Improved access to and use of data among BR researchers and users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For this outcome, there is no measurable, comparable unit at the country level to serve as a control group in a QED. It is possible to adopt a longitudinal comparison, measuring changes over time in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of public sector officials receiving NCBR support (e.g. training, use of NCBR tools, evidence syntheses) and the associated increases in their capabilities. Access to and use of key publicly available BR datasets. This will involve the use of administrative data, programme monitoring data and the above-described stakeholder survey data.
<p>OC4. Increased use of BR in public policy design and implementation.</p> <p>OC5. New generation of applied BR leaders outside and within academia.</p> <p>OC6. Upskilled BR researchers and users.</p> <p>OC7. Increased collaboration between researchers and the public sector, private sector and third sector in the development and delivery of training.</p> <p>OC10. Increase in existing BR evidence synthesised.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For these outcomes, there is no measurable, comparable unit at the country level to serve as a control group in a QED. It is possible to adopt a longitudinal comparison, measuring changes over time in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of policy-relevant NCBR outputs (e.g. commissioned policy research, policy briefings, evidence syntheses) and associated changes in use of BR in public policy design and implementation. The number of BR researchers and users receiving NCBR support (e.g. PhD studentships, fellowships, research grants, training) and the associated changes in their skills and career paths. The level of inter-sectoral collaboration between stakeholders in the development and delivery of training. This will involve the use of programme monitoring data and the above-described stakeholder survey data.
<p>OC8. Broader range of disciplines and sectors collaborating and contributing to BR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For this outcome, the construction of a quantitative counterfactual is theoretically possible, given that it is possible to use bibliometric data to measure collaboration across disciplines and public-private partnership in BR publications across an extended time series and various country contexts. A theoretically possible quasi-experimental approach would involve the construction of a synthetic control group using data from BR publications produced in comparable countries and to compare this to changes in BR collaboration in the UK. However, it is our assessment that this approach is unsuitable for

Outcomes	QED and comparison groups
	<p>this evaluation. As discussed above, many of the programme's outputs are publicly accessible, raising the possibility of 'contamination' to BR researchers in comparable countries. Moreover, some NCBR initiatives involve international collaboration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An interrupted time series (ITS) analysis is likely to be a feasible QED approach to assessing change over time in BR collaboration. • Another feasible comparison group is ESRC-funded BR that is not funded by NCBR. Levels of collaboration across disciplines in the two groups can be compared. • Longitudinal comparison for relevant indicators using the above-described stakeholder survey data can also be used.
<p>OC9. Increased relevance of BR output to UK stakeholder needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For this outcome, the construction of a quantitative counterfactual is theoretically possible, given that it is possible to use quantitative text analysis to measure BR uptake in government documents across an extended time series and various country contexts. • A theoretically possible quasi-experimental approach could involve the construction of a synthetic control group using data from comparable English-speaking countries to assess changes in BR uptake in government documents. However, it is our assessment that this approach is unsuitable for this evaluation. The synthetic control method is best suited to the detection of large, immediate effects. Given the nature and scale of the NCBR investment, this approach is not considered appropriate. • An interrupted time series (ITS) analysis is likely to be feasible for assessing changes in BR uptake in government documents over time. • Longitudinal comparison for relevant indicators using the above-described stakeholder survey data can also be used.

