



UK Research and Innovation Equality Impact Assessment Form



*See guidance document for detailed support.

* Delete the guidance text in the response column when completing your EIA.

Overview of activity

	Response
Name of activity being assessed	Future Data Services: Joining up the data service workforce
Council/department/project team	ESRC Data Strategy and Infrastructure Programme
Aims and objectives of the activity	The aim of this funding is to establish or support existing communities of practitioners to exchange knowledge, improve working practices and deliver better data services for social science researchers. Funding will support the creation of collaborative community groups bringing together data service practitioners around common delivery themes, challenges and issues with the aim of identifying how data services can be delivered more effectively. These groups will provide an opportunity for knowledge exchange and to deliver outputs which will affect real world change. Through our investment in community groups the following outcomes are expected: • connected communities of data service professionals who work together to address shared challenges in areas of data service delivery to support the transition to a more federated landscape. This could include, but is not limited to: ○ curation and metadata ○ data access ○ data linking ○ duplication reduction ○ harmonised approaches ○ transparency ○ statistical disclosure control • improved experiences for researchers, including consistent, easy to understand and efficient journeys for discovering and accessing data

	data owners can more easily deposit their data with data services for onward use by researchers. This funding opportunity arises out of the <u>Future Data Services (FDS) Review</u> which investigated the challenges for accessing and using data and the opportunities for future data infrastructure provision. This opportunity will therefore support the delivery of the FDS recommendations and its vision for the future of data services: “A seamless, connected, user-centred and federated data service landscape, driven by curiosity, collaboration and coordination, and making use of the new technologies that present boundless possibilities for researchers to use data for public good.”
Who is affected by your policy/funding activity/event?	ESRC staff, applicants, panel members, awardees, collaborators, and the public for whom their data is made discoverable and accessible.
What data and consultation have you used?	- EDI UKRI and ESRC guidance and best practice on recruiting diverse advisory groups and holding panel meetings, guidance for recruiting advisor reviewers, guidance for peer review panels, MRC guidelines on peer review panels, UKRI Inclusion materials, ESRC Code of Practice for Reviewers. - ESRC <u>EDI guidance</u> - Previous DS&I EIAs - Funding opportunity leads - DS&I EDI team lead

GENERAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

The EIA should be considered by **ALL** colleagues who are working on the delivery of the commissioning of this funding opportunity, including those who join the delivery at a later stage. It is the responsibility of ALL to ensure the considerations are implemented wherever possible.

Eligibility and criteria

- You must be based at a UK research organisation eligible for ESRC funding
- For full details, visit [Eligibility as an individual](#) and [Check if your organisation is eligible](#).

Standard Grant Terms and Conditions:

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

Peer review and panel recruitment:

- We will aim to ensure that the composition of the peer review and commissioning panel is diverse, with at least a 60:40 gender balance, in line with UKRI guidelines.
- We will ensure (if possible) that the chair and vice chair of the commissioning panel are not the same gender.
- We will aim to appoint a diverse peer review and panel membership. Final decisions will take into account trying to balance the reviewers and panel by gender, geography, career stage and institutions, consulting best practice guidance as referenced under the *data and consultation used* section of the Overview of Activity.
- We will only make recruitment decisions which compromise diversity when it is objectively justified by the necessity to ensure the required breadth of subject expertise with high quality candidates.
- Relevant guidance will be considered when appointing a panel.

Process:

- Meetings will follow ESRC guidance on hybrid and in-person meetings.
- UKRI accessibility guidelines will be used to ensure materials are suitable for all audiences.
- It is the role of panel members to moderate and assess the quality of peer review and to agree final scores for each proposal. Panel members will be briefed on unconscious bias and encouraged to feel empowered to constructively challenge potential bias where they identify it. The Panel Chairs and Panel Secretaries play a particularly important role in this respect. An implementation intention statement will be read out at the beginning of the commissioning panel meeting which sets the tone for discussions and requires that panel members pay close attention to the scoring criteria and definitions. Members will receive guidance which covers issues including fairness, objectivity and unconscious bias.



- The Chair will be briefed on 'Charing Inclusive Meetings' in order that all panel members feel their voices are heard.

Call dates:

- The call dates and commissioning panel will as much as possible be organised around school holidays and significant religious holidays

Design

- EDI considerations will be embedded throughout the design of the funding opportunity.
- R4RI (the Resume for Research and Innovation) will be used in place of traditional CVs for applicants which provides more flexibility and inclusivity, enabling a broader range of people to evidence a wider variety of skills and experience, along with the added benefit to include context around career breaks, periods of long-term sickness or absence etc.

Analysing your impact

In addition to data gathering and consultation, the guidance materials should be used to assist in identifying impacts on different groups.

Protected characteristics

Protected characteristic	Positive impact or opportunity to benefit	Negative impact	Please explain the impact or why there is no impact including details of any evidence/data used	Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible). Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity.
	Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown			
Age	☐	☒	Age bias can come into play in all aspects of the commissioning: The ESRC may have unconscious bias when considering who is an 'expert' based on age.	Track record is not an explicit criterion, given likely relationship to career stage and hence (indirectly) age. Guidance to panel members will make clear applications should be assessed on the merit of the individual

			The applicants team composition may include predominately senior staff due to research culture and hierarchy of an 'expert'. Early career researchers* may be disadvantaged as they do not have the same track record to draw on as an experienced researcher. (*It is assumed that early career researchers are generally younger than their more experienced peers, although this by no means always the case. This is why this point has been included under 'age').	application. They should assess an individual's capability to deliver their proposed research, not their previous track record. Also see General Equality and Diversity Considerations.
Disability	☐	☒	Panel meeting attendees with neuro-disabilities may experience difficulties with concentration and focus during panel assessments. Unconscious bias can come into play between panel members.	Solicit information (in confidence) from online panel meeting participants and applicants to be asked about any additional requirements they may have in order to fully participate. Use UKRI accessibility guidelines to ensure materials are suitable for all audiences. Depending on the needs identified, considerations might include: Offer online meeting platforms if required to provide an accessible and inclusive environment for participants. • Enabling the chat function and closed captioning, and adjusting the volume, to support those with hearing requirements. • Adequate lighting, alternative document formatting and potential

				use of screen readers (ensure any images are well described so that text-to-speech applications can recognise them). • Provision of documents in sans-serif dyslexia-friendly fonts; and dyslexia-friendly formats. • Avoiding colours, lighting etc. that may trigger migraines, epilepsy etc. • Consideration of the length of any online meetings, shortening if necessary and ensuring that plenty of breaks are built into the agenda. The Funding Service is compliant with relevant accessibility standards. Applicants should seek support from their own institution's research support office Also see General Equality and Diversity Considerations.
Gender reassignment (Trans identity)	☐	☒	Trans people may be absent from work because of transition. UKRI records may show the wrong gender. There may be micro-aggression's or unconscious bias towards trans peer review or panel members, or included at any point during the commissioning.	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations, including on unconscious bias guidance. We will work to ensure the use of gender-neutral language where possible in our documents and funding opportunity. UKRI terms and conditions are flexible in nature and permit absence as a result of medical treatment. We would expect that absence related to transition would be

				covered by the Research Organisation's relevant policies and strongly encourage ROs to treat absence relating to transition like any other health-related absence. As the timeline has been set for the panel date, alternative ways of feeding in could be considered for those who cannot attend due to transition. Consideration needs to be given at UKRI level as to how records (including Gateway to Research and other communications materials) might be adjusted.
Marriage or civil partnership	☐	☐	None identified	
Pregnancy and maternity	☐	☒	The number of people on parental leave during which may miss an opportunity or may need to be informed of an opportunity. Childcare and costs may be a barrier to people attending commissioning panel meetings.	Provision for parental leave (including maternity leave, paternity leave and leave related to surrogacy and adoption) are covered in the UKRI terms and conditions. Dates will be agreed and publicised in advance to allow meeting attendees to make arrangements to attend. A large pre-announcement phase will also be used to ensure prospective stakeholders are aware of essential information long in advance. The costs of additional childcare for grant-holders, beyond that required to meet the normal contracted requirements of the job, and that are directly related to the project, may be requested as a directly incurred cost if the institutional policy is to reimburse them. However, childcare costs associated

				with normal working patterns may not be sought. Regular breaks in the panel meetings for parental duties including breastfeeding/expressing if required Reimbursement of additional childcare costs if the meeting participant is otherwise unable to attend (this could include childcare at the venue, additional hours of childcare in the child's usual setting or paying for a relative to travel to care for school age children) Sensitivity may be needed around pregnancy or maternity, for example people who have experienced pregnancy loss, or people who are not ready to share that they are pregnant. Some pregnant people may require changes to the way they work or access activities for example, need to attend panel meeting virtually. Pregnancy may make individuals more vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19 and therefore this will affect their ability or confidence to participate. Also see General Equality and Diversity Considerations.
Race	☐	☒	There may be micro-aggressions or unconscious bias towards people from certain ethnic groups or panel members or included at any point during the commissioning.	The Chair will be briefed on ' <u>Charing Inclusive Meetings</u> ' in order that all panel members feel included.

				Also see General Equality and Diversity Considerations, particularly in relation to diversity and commissioning.
Religion or belief	☐	☒	There could be potential discrimination because it is known that somebody (either a panel member, a research applicant or research participants) has a particular faith or belief. Commissioning dates may clash with religious holidays disadvantaging sectors of the research community.	See to foster an environment of respect so that people who do or do not hold a belief can feel included and welcomed, through: • Dietary requirements may need to be considered for example, Halal, Kosher or vegan food. • Ensure that religious observances are taken into account when planning panel meetings and use a <u>religious holiday dates calendar</u>. • Scheduling meetings to avoid major religious festivals; (if impossible to avoid then consider mitigations – ie. during Ramadan ensuring that meetings finish early so that participants are able to get home to break their fast); • Not scheduling meetings when they would conflict with religious attendance or observance on specific days or times (e.g. Jewish Sabbath on Friday evenings or Islamic Friday prayer) • Allowing prayer breaks if requested. The timeline of this commissioning activity will be designed to ensure that key deadlines are not set around known religious holidays where possible and suitable mitigations will be put in place in cases where this is unavoidable.

				Also see General Equality and Diversity Considerations, including in relation to panel composition, and on un-conscious bias.
Sexual orientation	☐	☒	There may be micro-aggressions or unconscious bias towards because of their sexual orientation at any point during the commissioning.	Use inclusive language to ensure inclusion of same-sex couples. Clarity/confirmation that 'partners' includes same sex or civil partners. Also see General Equality and Diversity Considerations, including in relation to panel composition, and on un-conscious bias.
Sex	☐	☒	Use of language can present a barrier to participation, and it may be perceived that those with caring responsibilities are disadvantaged. There may be micro-aggressions or unconscious bias towards people based on their sex during the commissioning. Caring responsibilities may have direct and indirect impact on sex. People with caring responsibilities (which falls disproportionately on women) may have less time to attend a panel meeting. Panel members/reviewers may criticise track record, publication history which could be as a result of extended maternity or paternity leave.	Ensure use of gender-neutral language in call specification, guidance, etc. Where possible ensure that the panel has balanced gender representation (aim for 60:40 split) in line with UKRI guidance. Also see General Equality and Diversity Considerations, including in relation to panel composition, and on un-conscious bias.

Additional characteristics

Additional characteristics	Positive impact or opportunity to benefit	Negative impact	Please explain the impact including details of any evidence/data used	Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible).
	Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown			
Geographical location and place (consider UK and international offices)	☐	☒	People based in different time zones may impact their ability to participate. The four nations may not all be well represented among panel members.	The following ESRC guidance documents must be considered when compiling a panel: DS&I guidance on 'recruiting diverse advisory groups and panels' 'Appointing a panel' guidance, and 'Advisor Members on Decision Panel's' guidance. Timelines will be agreed and publicised in advance to allow meeting attendees to make arrangements to attend. This will also ensure applicants have advanced notice of deadlines and key dates related to the funding opportunity. Where possible adjustments will be made to deadlines and panel meeting times if panellists are based in a different time zone.

Socio-economic status	☐	☒	There may be unconscious bias towards certain institutions outside of the Russell Group, therefore excluding people from certain socio-economic backgrounds. Socio-economic status may intersect with other characteristics such as geographical locations, for example the north-south wealth divide. ESRC are unable to provide payment for panellists work on reviewing applications, impacting inclusion.	The following ESRC guidance documents must be considered when compiling a panel: • DS&I guidance on 'recruiting diverse advisory groups and panels', 'Appointing a panel' guidance, and 'Advisor Members on Decision Panel's' guidance. Unfortunately, ESRC are unable to provide payment for panellists work on reviewing applications. Panel meeting is to be held virtually.
Education background	☐	☒	There may be unconscious bias towards certain institutions outside of the Russell Group, in turn creating a bias towards educational background. Use of unnecessary jargon and academic language could impact inclusion.	Include criteria that values skills, knowledge and experience. Explore recruiting of panel members from a wider range of institutions. ESRC must consider diversity when compiling commissioning panels, that includes institution, that education background will fall under. The following ESRC guidance documents must be considered when compiling a panel: • DS&I guidance on 'recruiting diverse advisory groups and panels' • 'Appointing a panel' guidance, and 'Advisor Members on Decision Panel's' guidance.

				Avoid unnecessary jargon in call specification and panel information. Use the Résumé for Research and Innovation (R4RI) format for team capability to deliver.
Parent/guardian responsibilities	☐	☒	Parental/guardian responsibilities may be disadvantaged and unable attend the panel and/or other meetings, or feeling that they cannot participate due to caring for children/attending appointments.	Reimbursement of additional childcare costs if the meeting participant is otherwise unable to attend (this could include additional hours of childcare in the child's usual setting or paying for a relative to travel to care for school age children) The panel meeting will be held virtually and scheduled to avoid where possible school run hours and school holidays. Regular breaks will be built into the panel meetings. Timelines will be agreed and publicised in advance to allow meeting attendees to make arrangements to attend. This will also ensure applicants have advanced notice of deadlines and key dates related to the funding opportunity. The funding opportunity is open for an extended period as the activity will cut across school holidays.
Carer/parent carer responsibilities	☐	☒	Carer/parent carer responsibilities may prevent people from participating in the panel or	Timelines will be agreed and publicised in advance to allow meeting attendees

			preparing a proposal. Additionally, they may feel that they cannot participate due to caring responsibilities/attending appointments.	to make arrangements to attend. This will also ensure applicants have advanced notice of deadlines and key dates related to the funding opportunity. Organise any meetings and events outside of school run hours and school holidays to enable full participation of people with caring responsibilities where possible. Regular breaks will be built into the panel meetings to allow for any caring duties.
Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)	☐	☒	There may be bias towards people based on their political background.	Include provisions to mitigate for unconscious bias towards people of different opinions and beliefs. Communicate a commitment to respect and inclusion in materials.
Other characteristics	☒	☐	None identified	

Additional characteristics

Are there general or overarching impacts on multiple groups? What actions will you take to increase positive impact, or reduce/mitigate negative impact?	ESRC's research commissioning processes are designed with fairness in mind. ESRC staff receive Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training so they can respond effectively to the requirements of all participants. ESRC uses a variety of different communication strategies to ensure that our messages are inclusive and accessible. The Panel meeting will be virtual and adjustments will be incorporated to ensure that the meeting is inclusive, including briefing the Chair to ensure that the session is facilitated to take equality and diversity considerations into account. ESRC must consider diversity throughout the commissioning process using this EIA. The following ESRC guidance documents will be considered: <u>DS&I guidance on 'recruiting diverse advisory groups and panels'</u> <u>'Appointing a panel'</u> guidance, and <u>'Advisor Members on Decision Panel's'</u> guidance. Panel members will receive <u>guidance</u> which covers issues including fairness, objectivity and <u>unconscious bias</u>. The Chair will be briefed on <u>'Charing Inclusive Meetings'</u> in order that all panel members feel included. The R4RI is used to provide mitigation against potential negative impacts for people with protected characteristics.
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Continued below...

Evaluation

Final Decision:	Select the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No negative or positive impact identified; therefore, activity will proceed .	☐	
2. Adapt or change the activity in a way which you think will eliminate negative impact or promote equality.	☒	The mitigations outlined enable the opportunity to be adapted to eliminate potential bias
3. Stop the activity because the evidence shows bias or negative impact towards one or more groups.	☐	
4. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the activity (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore, you are going to proceed with caution with this activity knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.	☐	

Continued below...

Review and sign off

What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the impact of your activity?	An EIA is a live document and should regularly be reviewed throughout the life cycle of an activity • The EIA will be reviewed regularly at important points– see action plan. • Review the EIA as part of any closure or lessons learned activity.
Next review date:	01/12/2026
Will this EIA be published? * Yes/Not required	Yes alongside the funding opportunity
Point of contact	Future Data Services – FDS@esrc.ukri.org
Signed off by (name and date):	Mollie Rawlins 01/09/26
Before publishing or archiving your EIA, please remove any sensitive or confidential information such as personal identifiable data. Once your EIA is completed or updated: 1. Upload it to the UKRI central repository via the EIA submission form EIAs for ODA and non-ODA ISPF programmes should be emailed to: ISPF@ukri.org	



Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Freya Boulton		1	Initial drafting of EIA document
Ben Martin	12/08/26	2	EIA updated to reflect edits to aims, objectives and commissioning approach

Continued below...

Action plan

Use the table below to define the actions you intend to take (or have taken) to address the indications of negative impact you have identified or to promote equality. Actions should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound).

Action	Deadline	Owner	How will it be monitored?	What is/will be the impact/outcome?
Review diversity information in the funding opportunity	08/09/26	Opportunity owner and managers	Ensure requirements from the EIA are embedded in the funding opportunity.	Inform inclusive design of the activity.
Review when recruiting for commissioning panel	13/04/27	Opportunity owner and managers	Through the use of this document, and review date updated.	A diverse panel is recruited that reflects the diversity of our research community.
Planning for peer review and commissioning panel	09/07/27	Opportunity owner and managers	Through the use of this EIA and the incorporation of commissioning documents, and the review date updated.	EDI is embedded in the planning materials for the commissioning panel.
Commissioning panel	09/07/27	Opportunity owner and managers	Through the use of this EIA and the incorporation of EDI into the commissioning panel guidelines and documents.	The chair runs an inclusive panel meeting in which everyone has a chance to fully participate. The design is assessed by the commissioning panel in line with the diversity requirements set out in the funding opportunity.