



EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
<p>1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed</p>	<p>Healthcare Technologies New Challenges NetworkPlus</p>
<p>2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event</p>	<p>Up to £5 million is available to fund a balanced portfolio of awards across the HT grand challenges and the EPSRC delivery plan. The HT Theme would like to support between six to eight 'NetworkPlus' grants to allow development of HT research and communities in new healthcare areas of national and global importance.</p> <p>The aims of these NetworkPlus awards will be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring together experts from across all relevant research disciplines and stakeholders, building new communities or creating new links between different existing communities, with a particular focus on those in engineering and physical sciences; • Bring focus to the relevant challenge area and identify new research strategies and opportunities for addressing the challenge; • Identify and address the barriers to achieving the challenge; • Initiate preliminary or feasibility research to tackle the challenge; • Networks must be highly collaborative and with strong engagement with healthcare professionals; • Engage with interested users of research, including business, clinicians, patient groups and

	<p>policy makers, to shape future research directions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking for solutions as well as applications of research.
<p>3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? <i>(e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)</i></p>	<p>The work is based on previous consultation with the Healthcare Technologies Strategy Advisory Team</p>
<p>4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<p>UK Research Organisations (RO) Non-academic stakeholders Academics (physical scientists, engineers, computer scientists, healthcare professionals, innovators, social scientists) RO Admin Staff UKRI staff Expert panel members</p>
<p>5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<p>The call and all associated documents will be available on UKRI websites and available to all interested parties to support their applications. Contact details will be provided to support queries related to the call. The assessment process has been designed to ensure unconscious bias is minimised and managed</p>

As a funder of research, EPSRC remains committed to attracting the best potential researchers from a diverse population into research careers. The Research Councils have together developed the ambitious [RCUK Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan](#) to outline our collective aspirations for working with the research community, and partners throughout the sector. For policy changes, funding activities and events EPSRC will aim to:

- Select venues that are accessible and where possible accommodate any specific requirement in our planning and organisation of an initiative to support wider participation. This includes for applicants, reviewers, panel members and staff. Included in the interview invitation letter is a request for any access issues to be notified.
- All participants in the process are asked to inform staff if they have any additional needs to enable attendance or participation.
- Offer support for people with caring responsibilities, further details are available [here](#).
- Clearly communicate the timeline and key milestones for funding activities, advertise these widely to reach the largest possible audience.
- Support and encourage panel members to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions. Staff will work closely with the Panel Chair(s) to agree approaches that are designed to minimize opportunities for bias and improve transparency of the decision making process. This includes managing environmental conditions, such as providing appropriate breaks.
- Support flexible working of stakeholders.
- Ensure diversity of peer review assessment and interview panels. Staff will adhere to a mixed panel policy and endeavor to achieve the minimum 30% for the underrepresented gender on the panel.
- Abide by the principles of peer review

- Provide EPSRC staff with tailored unconscious bias training for Peer Review processes and clear guidance for assessors.
- Handle personal sensitive information in compliance with General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

Protected Characteristic Group	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
Disability	Potential negative	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Je-S does not currently comply with disability accessibility schemes. This will be picked up by the Research and Innovation Funding Service (RIFS) project.</p> <p>Applicants should seek support from their own institution's research support office.</p> <p>Panel meeting attendees with physical disabilities may have difficulties if meeting venues cannot cater for their needs.</p> <p>Panel meeting attendees with neuro-disabilities may experience difficulties with concentration and focus during panel assessments.</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Opting to have a virtual panel meeting may address physical difficulties.</p> <p>In the event of an actual meeting, to solicit information from panel meeting participants (in confidence) about any additional requirements they may have in order to fully participate. Ensure that venues offer an accessible and inclusive environment for participants.</p> <p>Depending on the needs identified, considerations might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accessibility for wheelchair users and people with impaired mobility; •Induction loops for the hearing impaired; •Adequate lighting, alternative document formatting and potential use of screen readers for the visually impaired; • Dietary restrictions for those with coeliac, diabetes etc. • Provision of documents in sans-serif, dyslexia-

			<p>friendly fonts; and dyslexia-friendly formats;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding colours, lighting etc that may trigger migraines, epilepsy; • Ensuring that plenty of breaks are built into the agenda • Ensuring sufficiently bright and spacious rooms • Ensure that venues are easily accessible to main transport links. • Consider paying T&S for carers or support workers to attend alongside the participant, where this is required and not covered by the Individual's own employment contract. • Where there are particular constraints consider opportunities for participants to engage in a different way (via video-link, tele-conference for instance).
<p>Gender reassignment</p>	<p>Potential negative</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations. Trans people may be absent from work as a consequence of transition and UKRI records may show the wrong gender.</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations. We would expect that absence related to transition would be covered by the Research Organisation's sick policy and strongly encourage ROs to treat absence relating to transition like any other sick absence.</p> <p>Consideration needs to be given at UKRI level as to how records (including Gateway to Research and other communications</p>

			materials) might be adjusted.
Marriage or civil partnership	No known negative impact		
Pregnancy and maternity	Potential negative	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Panel members may not be able to participate in panels due to accessibility issues or maternity leave. Relatively short timescales for the call may affect ability to participate e.g. if on parental leave.</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Provision for parental leave (including maternity leave, paternity leave and leave related to surrogacy and adoption) are covered in the UKRI terms and conditions.</p> <p>We should ensure the use of gender neutral language – parental leave, irrespective of sexual orientation.</p> <p>The costs of additional childcare for grant-holders, beyond that required to meet the normal contracted requirements of the job, and that are directly related to the project, may be requested as a directly incurred cost if the institutional policy is to reimburse them. However, childcare costs associated with normal working patterns may not be sought.</p> <p>Consider whether the venue for the panel meetings are able to provide facilities for breastfeeding/expressing mothers if necessary.</p> <p>Reimbursement of additional childcare costs</p>

			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)
Race	No known negative impact	See above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.	See above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations (particularly in relation to panel composition and mitigations against unconscious bias)
Religion or belief	Potential negative	See above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations. Participation could be affected by coincidence with religious holidays.	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>A full timeline is provided in the call document. EPSRC endeavours to select dates that are cognisant of major holidays (e.g. deadlines have been extended to avoid full proposal closure over Easter, Passover, Ramadan.)</p> <p>Ensure that religious observances are taken into account when planning panel meetings. Considerations might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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, awareness of the;

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not scheduling meetings such that they would require travel late on Friday evenings (Jewish Sabbath) or on Fridays (Friday prayer, Islam) • Allowing prayer breaks if requested
Sexual orientation	Potential negative	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.
Sex (gender)	Potential negative	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations. Use of language can present a barrier to participation and it may be perceived that those with caring responsibilities are disadvantaged.</p> <p>Panel members may be disadvantaged and unable to attend meetings if they have caring responsibilities.</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations. Ensure use of gender neutral language in call specification, guidance, etc. Ensure that the panel has balanced gender representation (aim for at worst 60:40 split)</p> <p>Ensure that the meeting location is suitable to allow easy return home and is not scheduled during school holidays.</p> <p>Reimbursement of additional childcare costs if the meeting participant is otherwise unable to attend (this could include childcare at the venue, additional hours of childcare in the child's usual setting or paying for a relative to travel to care for school age children)</p>
Age	Potential negative or positive depending on scheme eligibility requirements	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations. Early career researchers may be disadvantaged as they don't have the</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Track record is not an explicit criterion, given likely relationship to career stage and hence</p>

		<p>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').</p>	<p>(indirectly) age. Panel members are briefed to make clear that they should be assessing the application in front of them and not reading between the lines. They should assess an individual's capability to deliver their proposed network. Use of a variety of different communication strategies including social media to ensure that our messages reach the widest possible target audience.</p>
<p>Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)</p>	<p>Potential negative. EPSRC is committed to go above and beyond bare compliance with Equalities legislation to ensure that our processes are as fair and equitable as they can be. For instance, we wish to ensure that potential applicants and stakeholders are not disadvantaged by geography, institutional status etc.</p>		<p>ROs need to be clear of their responsibilities. The Research funding guide states: 'The Research Organisation is responsible for compliance with the terms of the Equality Act 2010 including any subsequent amendments introduced while work is in progress.</p>

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?		
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will proceed .		See the potential negative impacts outlined above.

2. You can decide to stop the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. You can adapt or change the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias	✓	See the mitigations outlined above.
4. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore you are going to proceed with caution with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.		

Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events:	Yes
Date completed:	11 June 2020
Review date (if applicable):	22 June 2020

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Jeanine Woolley	When published	1	