



ISCF Healthy Ageing Challenge ESRC-AHRC Joint Call - Research Director

Summary

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is inviting applications for the post of Research Director for the [Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund \(ISCF\) Healthy Ageing Challenge](#). This call is being led by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) in collaboration with the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

The Research Director will provide strong, authoritative leadership over a £10.53 million programme of social science and arts and humanities research for the Healthy Ageing Challenge. They will be responsible for the coherence of research across a portfolio of research activity as well as linking with other Healthy Ageing activities funded. A substantive part of their role will be to lead and co-ordinate the forthcoming Social, Behavioural and Design Research Programme (SBD RP), in which research projects will address key issues facing the older population and ways in which support and care can be delivered effectively.

The successful applicant will be expected to have an outstanding track record of research and impact leadership within areas relevant to healthy ageing, and a broad understanding of the potential for different disciplines within and across the social sciences and arts and humanities to contribute to this research area. Further details of the role and additional eligibility criteria are provided in this document.

Of the £10.53 million research programme, £1.22 million of funding is available for this call. This includes £730,000 available for the Research Director post across 48 months, and £490,000 for a flexible funding pot to be distributed by the Research Director. These figures are presented at 100% fEC and ESRC will contribute 80% of fEC.

The funding for the Research Director post is expected to cover the Research Director's salary costs, support staff and leadership activities. The flexible fund will be available to the Research Director to administer to award holders to meet the needs of investments in the wider Challenge portfolio and facilitate opportunities to enhance the evidence base.

Applicants are encouraged to complete an [Intention to Submit \(ItS\) form](#) by **16.00h on 23 September 2019**, and full proposals must be submitted via the Research Council's [Joint Electronic Submissions \(Je-S\) system](#) by **16.00h on 15 October 2019**.

It is expected that the successful applicant will take up the post in January 2020.

Background to the Healthy Ageing Challenge

In 2017, the Prime Minister announced the government's [Industrial Strategy](#) which set out [four Grand Challenges](#) and an [Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund \(ISCF\)](#) to enable the delivery of activity addressing the identified Challenges. One of the Grand Challenges in the Industrial Strategy is Ageing Society, which seeks to harness the power of innovation to help meet the needs of an ageing society. The UK government's mission for the Ageing Society Grand Challenge is to "ensure that people can enjoy at least five extra healthy, independent years of life by 2035, while narrowing the gap between the experience of the richest and poorest".

Through the ISCF, UKRI has secured an investment of up to £98 million for the [Healthy Ageing Challenge](#), which will enable businesses, including social enterprises, to develop and deliver products, services and business models that will be adopted at scale which support people as they age. The aim is to allow people to remain active, productive, independent and socially connected across generations for longer. A portfolio of activities will be delivered under the Healthy Ageing Challenge, with academic research playing a crucial role in understanding the key issues facing the older population and ways in which support and care can be delivered effectively.

Research in the Healthy Ageing Challenge

The Social, Behavioural and Design Research Programme (SBDRP) will fund interdisciplinary academic-led teams, working in partnership with a range of stakeholders, to develop the research base and understanding of the needs of the ageing population, informing innovators and influencing market behaviours. The research projects that ESRC will commission under this programme will cover four research areas, these are: lifecourse approach, understanding behaviour, inclusive design, and organisational context. These will feed into the Healthy Ageing Challenge themes outlined in the [Challenge Framework](#), specifically focussing on the creation of healthy and active environments.

In addition to the SBDRP, a number of other activities will be delivered as part of the Healthy Ageing Challenge. This activity includes, for example, a trailblazer programme which will establish a number of larger 'service integration' collaborations to support the ageing population. These collaborations will address gaps in the market for aspirational and affordable services and products. It also includes a collaboration between UKRI and the National Academy of Medicine (NAM) in the United States as part of the [NAM Healthy Longevity Grant Challenge](#), which will catalyse transformative innovation and inform policies and priorities to advance healthy ageing and longevity globally. Further information about the Healthy Ageing Challenge activity can be found on the [UKRI website](#).

The Research Director will work with the Challenge Director, UKRI and the ISCF delivery team to shape the commissioning of research under the challenge and facilitate connections with other research and industry led activity in the Healthy Ageing Challenge portfolio.

Research Director

Role description

The Research Director will:

- Work with and be accountable to the Challenge Director for the delivery of the Social, Behavioural and Design Research Programme providing leadership and coordination across the range of projects commissioned.
- Work closely with UKRI staff, in particular with ESRC (as the lead Council for the research), AHRC and Innovate UK during commissioning and management of the research programme.
- Act as a key contact point with the authority to speak on the Challenge's research activity to UKRI Senior Leadership, key stakeholders, user communities and the media.
- Make connections between programme activity, policy and practice, and the private sector, and add value to research activity in the Challenge portfolio through their connections with key stakeholders and user communities.
- Act as a "thought leader" across disciplines, places, beyond academia, and beyond the portfolio of investments commissioned through the Challenge activity
- Be a visible face of activity and a champion for research in the Healthy Ageing Challenge, to both internal and external audiences.
- Take responsibility and be accountable for the coherence of research across the Challenge, and for maintaining awareness of the domain and emerging evidence.
- Add value across the research activity, for example by identifying opportunities for shared learning across Research Projects and co-ordinating the activity of research groups.
- Contribute to building an evidence base of value and impact across the programme of activities and identify opportunities to enhance the impact of investments across the Challenge portfolio (e.g. through connecting to relevant responsive research or synthesis of existing knowledge); and have oversight of associated flexible funding to disburse for this purpose. ESRC, as the lead Council, and the Research Director will work together to ensure that clear governance is put in place around the distribution of this flexible funding.
- Be a conduit for communications around research in the Challenge, bringing coherence to communications and to build a narrative about the collective achievements across the portfolio.

These aspects of the role are not exhaustive and applicants to the Research Director call are encouraged to present their vision of how they think they can add value within the Challenge.

Person specification

The successful applicant must demonstrate:

- An outstanding track record of world-leading research and impact within areas relevant to healthy ageing.
- The ability to provide intellectual research and impact leadership.
- A strong commitment to cross-disciplinary and cross-sectoral approaches to research, with evidence of having previously drawn together a broad range of perspectives and approaches from across the social sciences, arts and humanities, and beyond
- Outstanding communication skills, suitable for engagement with a range of different audiences - specialist and non-specialist - within the academic community, business

- community, user community and beyond.
- Experience of collaborative research and proven ability to engage and develop partnerships with people and organisations beyond the academic community, in particular with stakeholders at a senior level in government, industry and the private sector, particularly in a UK context.
 - Familiarity with UKRI's mission, and with the broader funding and policy landscape in the UK.
 - Familiarity with the UK Government's Industrial Strategy, and an understanding of how research will contribute to fulfilling ambitions.
 - A clear vision for how they will utilise their role as Research Director to help to deliver the Challenge.

Eligibility

Applicants must be based at a UK Research Organisation eligible for ESRC funding for the duration of the award. For further details please see the eligibility requirements in the [Research Funding Guide](#):

To avoid conflicts of interest, the Research Director will not be permitted to apply, or be involved in other applications for funding under other calls within the Healthy Ageing Challenge. This restriction only applies to the Research Director and does not apply to other individuals at their institution or named research staff. The Research Director and named staff will continue to be eligible to apply under other UKRI funding calls which are not linked to the Healthy Ageing Challenge, including to responsive mode schemes and calls under other initiatives. Where further funding is sought from UKRI the Research Director's total time commitment on UKRI grants cannot exceed 100 per cent of their contracted hours.

Working arrangements

The leadership element of the role is likely to involve a significant degree of travel to meetings, events etc. ESRC will oversee the work of the Research Director on behalf of UKRI. Therefore the Research Director will be expected to maintain close contact with the ESRC staff involved in the Healthy Ageing Challenge and to meet (usually in London or Swindon) or teleconference on at least a monthly basis to discuss progress and future plans. The Challenge Director is responsible for leading work on the Healthy Ageing Challenge activity and the Research Director will be responsible for leading and co-ordinating the successful projects commissioned through the SDRP, and will be responsible for the coherence of research activity under the Healthy Ageing portfolio. Although contact with the ESRC will primarily be via the nominated lead for the Healthy Ageing Challenge, the Research Director will work closely with, and be accountable to, the Challenge Director and will also develop links with relevant colleagues in other parts of UKRI (such as the ISCF delivery team, and wider UKRI colleagues), as well as specialist staff within ESRC. Wherever possible meeting dates will be co-ordinated to minimise travel or make use of telephone conferencing.

Governance and reporting

The Research Director will hold a grant from the ESRC and will be accountable directly to the Challenge Director. They will be required to participate in Challenge-level governance, such as the Programme Board and will be expected to keep the UKRI ISCF Healthy Ageing delivery team informed of key information and updates arising from interactions with the Challenge Director and Challenge-level governance.

Flexible funding

A flexible fund of £490,000 (100% FEC) is available to administer to research award holders to support them to meet the needs of investments in the wider Challenge portfolio and provide a mechanism for facilitating and utilising opportunities. This might include distribution of funds for small pieces of responsive research or synthesis to respond to emerging research questions that arise across the Challenge activities. Justification for this fund is not required in the Justification for Resources section of the application however the Case for Support should outline proposals for how the Research Director will work with ESRC to put in place a clear process for the governance and distribution of funds.

Outputs and impact

The Director will be expected to provide those involved in the wider Healthy Ageing Challenge with input and advice in a timely manner when requested, and to produce regular outputs relevant to their activities throughout the grant.

Contributions to academic and particularly broader user impact are expected throughout the Director post as part of the programme of leadership activity. For example, this could involve activities such as: organising seminars or briefings or other engagement activities to address key research issues; knowledge exchange at different stages of the research to relevant stakeholders; developing networks based around significant research issues involving academics and other stakeholders; to participate in any communities or networks created by the ISCF HA delivery team. Given the high profile nature of the debates around ageing we would also expect the Director to engage in public discussions as part of the role and to remain non-partisan.

The Director will be expected to produce outputs that incorporate key research insights into the areas of business and/or policy debate and greatest stakeholder need. These should take the most appropriate form for the audience, given the diverse range of stakeholders in the field. We encourage the use of innovative media in these activities, including the development of a website and utilisation of social media. Close co-ordination with UKRI on communications or media related activities will be required. UKRI will provide a mandatory media training session for the Research Director and all communications must be co-ordinated with UKRI.

The Director is expected to inform ESRC of all events and publications planned as part of the role in advance and ensure that any programme of work is flexible enough to respond to changing needs.

Funding and resources

Overall funding for the Research Director role and related activity is £1.22 million (100% fEC). Of this funding, up to £730,000 (100% fEC) is available across 48 months for the Research Director role and is expected to cover the following costs:

- Research Director at ~0.4 FTE plus associated Estates and Indirects
- Support Staff up to a total of ~1.0 FTE across posts plus Estates and Indirects
- Directly Incurred costs e.g., leadership activities, travel and subsistence, arranging workshops and meetings

Please note that ESRC will contribute 80% of costs.

Applicants are permitted a degree of flexibility in the funds that they request but should contact the ESRC Office using the contact details at the end of this document to discuss any significant deviations from the above.

The remaining £490,000 (100% fEC) will be available as a flexible fund for the Research Director to distribute for related activity.

Assessment of applications

All applications will be reviewed and shortlisted by a Panel consisting of UKRI and external representatives. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an interview on 20 November in London. Further information on the format of the interview will be provided to shortlisted candidates.

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Relevant expertise and experience
- Understanding of the requirements of the work
- Leadership and vision
- Respect in the research and stakeholder communities
- Ability to work across disciplines and stakeholder groups
- Resources and planning
- Value for money
- Communication and ability to work closely with the ESRC Office, Challenge Director and wider UKRI colleagues

All applicants will receive written feedback.

Reasonable travel and subsistence costs involved in attending the interview will be reimbursed for all shortlisted applicants (see the [ESRC Travel and Subsistence Guidance](#) for details).

How to apply

Intention to submit

Applicants to this call are encouraged to complete an Intention to Submit (ItS) via an [online form on the ESRC website](#) call page by 16.00h on 23 September 2019. Please note that the ItS is NOT for any assessment purpose and applicants can submit full applications without having done so. The ItS is to help ESRC plan shortlisting and interview Panel arrangements. Applicants should not await a response from the funders following the ItS submission, but simply continue with the development of their full application.

Full proposal

Applications should be submitted via the Research Council's [Joint Electronic Submissions \(Je-S\) system](#) by 16.00h on 15 October 2019.

Applications should address the aims of the call as listed in the call details and person specification sections and should include:

- Case for Support (6 pages), please see the Je-S guidance for what must be included
- Pathways to Impact (2 sides)
- Outline CV, including indicators of esteem (2 pages)
- Justification of Resources (2 pages)
- Head of Department statement for the PI
- Letters of Support from any project partners.

The ESRC strongly recommends that the advice of the Research Organisation's research offices be sought in the calculation of costs.

Applications received after the closing date will not be considered. All applications received before the closing date will receive confirmation of receipt.

Commissioning timetable

- Call for proposals open – 19 August 2019
- Intention to submit deadline – 23 September 2019
- Deadline for submissions – 15 October 2019
- Shortlisting panel meeting – 8 November 2019
- Shortlisted candidates notified – 11 November 2019
- Interviews – 20 November 2019
- Applicants notified of outcomes – December 2019
- Appointment publicly announced – January 2020
- Start of post – January 2020

Contacts

Further information is available from:

- Josie McGregor and Evie Bate
Email: ISCFHealthyAgeing@esrc.ukri.org
Phone: 01793 413094 or 01793 413175