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**Introduction**

Social science provides robust evidence and insights for individuals, local networks, institutions and societies, and helps us understand how societies work. ESRC-funded research plays a key role in addressing major societal issues and identifies ways of tackling these challenges. The researchers we fund are providing insights to government, business and civil society, which has an impact on us all. This report includes some of the key impacts our research and infrastructure investments have had over the last year. We illustrate throughout the scale of our investments and partnerships, some of the opportunities we have created and supported, and some of the achievements of our researchers and investments.

From 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 we:

- directly leveraged an additional £20 million – 10 per cent of our £204 million budget – from industry, government departments, public sector organisations, independent research organisations and charities. We invested nearly £92 million of our budget on responsive mode grants and strategic collaborative research (which included new research centres and capacity in vital interdisciplinary research in the areas of economic policy, human rights and sustainability), nearly £49 million on methods and infrastructure, a further £47 million in skills training, with the remainder on other areas such as international and knowledge exchange.
- have evidence that of grants funded since 2014, our researchers have collaborated with 279 organisations, which include businesses, local and regional government and international – currently 46 per cent of our total research portfolio comprises of research collaborations with users.
- enabled 54 ESRC-supported Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) with small businesses and social enterprises (case study 6).
- supported 24 Impact Acceleration Accounts (IAAs) in universities, enabling social science researchers to engage with new audiences to increase the impact of their work.
- offered 94 ESRC-funded PhD students a range of opportunities such as overseas institutional visits to enhance their networks and three month placements at the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology.
- funded almost 230 events through the ESRC Festival of Social Science, enabling social science researchers to engage with audiences across a breadth of sectors.
- produced 25 evidence briefings that reached an estimated 4,650 policymakers.
- discovered that ESRC-funded research has featured strongly in REF2014 – more than two thirds of all the UK universities in REF2014 submitted ESRC-supported impact case studies.
- invested in the Innovation Caucus, an ESRC - Innovate UK collaboration that connects social science to support the UK innovation system.

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**Highlights of the 50th year**

2015 marked ESRC’s 50th anniversary, and throughout the year we and our community celebrated the social sciences and how they have contributed to society since 1965:

- We highlighted 50 key achievements and landmark research contributions that had a major impact on our lives.
- Our interactive Timeline 1965-2015 demonstrates some of the key milestones in our history.
- Our 2015 photographic competition Changing World asked young people to capture how they felt the world has changed over the last 50 years, or could change in the future; we engaged with 1,633 pupils from 270 schools, and the competition had a potential reach of 547,000 people through publicity in the press.
- We hosted the 50 years of Population Change event in partnership with the British Academy, the British Society for Population Studies, and the ESRC Centre for Population Change to highlight the role and contributions of research in demography.
- We took a creative look at the impact social science research might have by the year 2065 through our writing competition, which had over 70 entries, and was held in partnership with SAGE Publications. The overall audience reach was 3,366,000.
- Our 50th year culminated in an Anniversary Debate with the UK’s leading social scientists and an audience of 150. It showcased impacts of social science over the past 50 years and the role social scientists have in understanding the issues facing UK society today. The debate tweets had a potential reach of 124,800.

**Impact through world-class research**

In 2014/15 we continued to invest in the best research and facilitated impact of our funded research on society and the economy. During this year we spent approximately £177 million (79 per cent) of our gross budget on supporting research, funding approximately 20 per cent of research grant applications we received.” Our evaluations demonstrate the consistently high quality and impact of our research, with 98 per cent of all projects graded as ‘good’, ‘very good’ or ‘outstanding’ by independent peer review.

The impacts arising from our research are diverse and significant – some provide new business models, some support innovation in delivery of public services (case studies 2, 7), while others seek to reduce the harm from excessive inequality (case study 11). Our research informs policy and practice, and several of the impacts in this report illustrate how social science has enabled effective and cost-efficient ways of providing care and improving the health of the population (case studies 13, 14 and 19). Several of our investments and the researchers we support are key...
contributors to a range of interdisciplinary programmes. For example, crucial research by social scientists, on how to achieve sustainable economic growth and improve health and wellbeing for all sectors of society, tackles grand challenges through interdisciplinary approaches. Our interdisciplinary research addresses major issues and makes a real difference to people's lives, both in the UK and globally (case studies 14 and 20).

The UK remains world-leading in the use of social science data resources. Through our continued support of the UK data infrastructure we enable better understanding and exploitation of existing and new forms of data, developing new methodologies and new approaches to analyse complex systems. The impacts arising from the reuse of our data resources have enabled local to global insights, including helping local authorities to better target interventions whilst making substantial savings (case study 11). ESRC collaborations with Innovate UK (case study 6) and users of our data resources (case studies 10-12) are helping us to realise the opportunities of new technologies.

**National capability**

Along with funding research, developing and maintaining the supply of skilled social scientists continues to be a key priority. Highly skilled researchers are needed to contribute to a competitive knowledge-based UK economy, as well as developing the next generation of world-leading academic social scientists to sustain the national research base. We are enabling the highest quality postgraduate training across the UK social science community, ensuring that individuals develop the skillsets that are appropriate to our changing society.

Our Doctoral Training Centres leveraged an additional 218 studentships (above the 600 we directly fund) supported by external agencies, representing an increase of 36 per cent of studentships funded. Future Research Leaders is an annual scheme for early career researchers. It aims to enable outstanding early-career social scientists, in partnership with their host organisation, to acquire the skillsets to become the future world leaders in their field, and to fund excellent social science research projects. This year we funded 40 Future Research Leader awards.

In September 2015 we released a call for approximately 15 Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs) to provide training across the full disciplinary range of the social sciences as well as interdisciplinary research. We are also commissioning two Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs) to support the development of training pathways in the emerging areas of biosocial research and new forms of data.

- The Biosocial Research CDT, co-funded with BBSRC, will exploit the breadth of biosocial data, develop technological and methodological innovations, and explore the legal and ethical challenges raised by the biosocial agenda both within the UK and internationally.
- The New Forms of Data CDT will focus on the potential for near real-time analysis and linking of data from different sources, offering the possibility of studying social processes as they unfold and enabling us to develop vital training and skills for the next generation of researchers.
Social science aids growth

Labour productivity in the UK has remained low over the last eight years, with whole economy output per hour around 16 per cent below the previously anticipated level. Although this issue has spurred a range of work from ESRC research centres and elsewhere, there continues to be uncertainty about answers to the so-called ‘productivity puzzle’. Emerging evidence suggests that there is a range of factors at play rather than a single explanation for weak productivity, with a need for further analysis. The examples of impact in this report involve innovative uses of data to analyse business risks, develop carbon benchmarks and enhance delivery of services by local authorities. The UK’s service- and knowledge-based economy is vital to support the strong insurance, finance, communications and business services sectors. Growth depends on these sectors innovating and improving productivity, and insights from research on behaviour, the local environment, economy and society are vital to facilitate innovation.

Digital technologies have had a profound impact on the workplace over the past 20 years; research is critical if we are to understand how businesses can capitalise on the power of data to promote innovation and growth. For example, the UK has the most developed online retail market anywhere in the world, and it is estimated that greater internet connectivity and wider use of digital platforms across the business sector could add a further £63 billion to the UK economy. The service sector constitutes about two thirds of the UK economy, and includes retail and hotels. Along with key partners we have continued to support research in the retail sector, and our study into the state of British high streets revealed how town centres are adapting to meet the changing demands of consumers. Our report British High Streets: from Crisis to Recovery by Professor Neil Wrigley, commissioned by The Future High Streets Forum, was one of the most exhaustive evidence reviews into high streets, town centres and consumer habits ever conducted in Britain. The study revealed shifts in what consumers consider convenience shopping, the importance of convenience stores in grocery shopping, expected trends in the future growth of convenience retail in town centres/high streets, and expected fall in market share of superstores.

Business, innovation and the economy

We work collectively across RCUK to engage strategically with businesses where there is wider benefit to the companies and the Research Councils. We also collaborate directly with a range of non-academic organisations to support research. The Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) programme delivered by Innovate UK offers opportunities for companies, organisations, higher education institutions and recently qualified graduates to work collaboratively to develop a business opportunity, idea or innovation. KTP funding can help businesses to introduce and integrate technology and skills, gain knowledge and expertise, and address challenges. In 2014/15 the ESRC co-funded 10 new KTP projects and continued supporting 44 ongoing projects, all with social scientists.

In 2015, we launched the Innovation Caucus (IC) with Innovate UK. The primary objective is to promote knowledge exchange between social science researchers and Innovate UK with the aim to support innovation and enterprise in the UK innovation ecosystem. This novel collaborative approach has brought together small groups of policymakers, strategists, analysts, technologists and businesses with social science researchers to address specific questions which, if better understood, would enhance the innovation ecosystem in the UK. The IC has already produced 12 briefings and think pieces on a variety of topics such as innovation, startups, innovation-led growth,

Our report British High Streets: from Crisis to Recovery was one of the most exhaustive evidence reviews into high streets, town centres and consumer habits ever conducted in Britain.
1. Boosting Manchester’s economic opportunities
Professor Henry Overman and colleagues at the ESRC-supported Spatial Economics Research Centre (SERC) have been at the forefront of influencing policies for economic and business growth. Policies on economic development around the Manchester City Region have been influenced by SERC research input, which played a key role in shaping and delivering the Manchester Independent Economic Review (MIER). The researchers were able to transfer research evidence to the policymaking community, define the economic challenges and opportunities identified by MIER, and set out the options for action that have subsequently led to changes in policy and practice.

ESRC Spatial Economics Research Centre

2. Improving cost-efficiency in the public sector
Since 2010, implementing the ‘CLEAR IDEAS’ innovation development model has improved cost-efficiency in service delivery for public sector organisations. In Sheffield alone savings of £1.7 million for social care services have been achieved as a result of CLEAR IDEAS. The ESRC Centre for Organisation and Innovation developed the CLEAR IDEAS model from research on the barriers and facilitators for organisational innovation. The model has delivered benefits across a range of services — e.g., improvements in fitting fire alarms in South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue, the adoption of an alternative drug for gastric medication in Sheffield Children’s NHS Foundation Trust, and as a training resource for public sector managers and employees.

ESRC Centre for Organisation and Innovation

3. Birmingham’s enterprise belt contributing £14 billion to the economy
ESRC-funded studentships contributed to the discovery that economic activity in the West Midlands was shifting away from Birmingham and the Black Country, and instead moving to the outlying areas. This analysis of a distinctive ‘enterprise belt’ surrounding Birmingham was directly used by policymakers and business leaders in 2010 to extend the reach of the new Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Through combined public and private funding, it is estimated that by 2026 the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP will create over one million square metres of space for businesses, and up to 96,000 jobs. Funding initiatives following the expansion of the enterprise region include the 2012 City Deal, which aims to deliver 10,000 additional jobs in central Birmingham alone and leverage over £15 billion of private sector investment over 25 years.

ESRC-funded PhD studentship; ESRC CASE studentship

4. Stimulating business angel investment
Today, angel investment contributes an estimated £750 million annually to support the entrepreneurial economy. ESRC-funded research by Professors Colin Mason and Richard Harrison has been instrumental in the development of this market, which has been vital for investment in new and growing business ventures in the UK. Business angels are wealthy individuals who invest their personal capital in small businesses in return for an equity stake. Their research showed that business angels’ personal wealth and desire to invest could be a key source of finance. These findings influenced the introduction of UK tax incentives for business angels and led to the establishment of business angel networks. A later review of angel investment activity led to the 2012 Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme, providing tax incentives for small enterprises and start-up businesses.

ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize
Reinvigorating Enfield Borough Council

Research from the ESRC Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change (CRESC) prompted London’s Enfield Borough Council to change their strategy for economic renewal. Enfield councillors approached CRESC for help with supporting regeneration, and the researchers recommended changes to 18 identified strategies and policies. As a result the council updated its regeneration programme to shift the focus from training and infrastructure to rebuilding local supply chains by involving major employers. British Gas is now including a number of specialised Enfield-based construction sector small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in its supply chain, and has expressed interest in partnering with the council, colleges and other stakeholders to build a University Technical College.

ESRC Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change

Business success for children’s apps

An ESRC student placement at app development company Hippotrix led to a 300 per cent increase in turnover and major expansion of the business. The placement focused on early-years apps, developing a framework comparing the different mediums of theatre and apps. The student’s research on the production of performing arts for very young audiences (birth to age 3) encompassed knowledge from the performing arts, developmental psychology and pedagogy, and underpinned the app. ESRC support was instrumental in getting additional funding from Creative Scotland to support the company expansion of Hippotrix. As a result Hippotrix increased turnover by 300 per cent for 2013/14, expanded their development team, collaborated with major new UK partners, and are developing five new apps. ESRC Internship

Knowledge Transfer Partnership helped Welsh charity to expand nationally

Llamau, a charity providing social services to vulnerable young people and women in Wales, expanded their business to a national level following an ESRC-funded Knowledge Transfer Partnership. At the start of the KTP, Llamau worked in ten local authority areas in South Wales, but has expanded to work across the whole of Wales. The KTP was an important part of this, partly through the ability to deliver evidence-based support for vulnerable people. The partnership enabled Llamau to improve and redesign existing in-house training to staff as well as develop new training around specific mental health conditions. Overall an additional £4 million was brought into Llamau through successful tenders during the course of the KTP. ESRC-Innovate UK; Knowledge Transfer Partnership

Reinvigorating Enfield Borough Council

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annual reports and evaluations.

Since 2014, our funding of 24 IAAs provides dedicated funding to drive investment in KE activities, accelerating the impact of social science research. Providing funds in this way empowers universities to make agile, strategic decisions and devolves decision-making on KE projects and relationship-building. Our IAAs have developed new learning networks, shared best practice and built an understanding of international challenges, which are enabling universities to pursue KE activities and opportunities for impact at a local and global level.
Social science promotes innovation

In an increasingly data-driven world our researchers’ insights are being used to harness information and aid the efficient and effective delivery of public services. Such insights include both the individual and collective level; for instance, behavioural economics can help to determine the best way of motivating people to act in their own and others’ best interest, or provide systems analyses of how organisations and institutions co-operate or compete to provide high-quality services.

The nature of social relationships and working arrangements in contemporary society has changed greatly with the introduction of digital technology. The ubiquity of data is potentially transforming the way that we target and deliver services, and is driving innovation in the public and private sectors. Our investment in research and capability in data has provided a deeper understanding of the ways our society is changing and the implications of these changes for different groups within society.

Impact evaluation

Our long-standing programme of impact evaluation across the ESRC’s portfolio provides robust evidence of the impacts of our investments. The highlights of this year’s evaluation programme include an analysis of REF2014 impact case studies, which revealed how extensive and potent our impacts are, and an evaluation of three major ESRC-funded Economics Centres – Centre for the Microeconomic Analysis of Public Policy (CPP), Centre for Competitive Advantage in the Economy (CAGE) and the Spatial Economics Research Centre (SERC). This evaluation highlighted many opportunities that have been created to engage and exchange knowledge with non-academics, which led to numerous policy impacts. Researchers at these centres worked closely with policymakers as knowledge brokers and independent analysts, translating ESRC research into implications for current and emerging policy. Impacts were generated in at least eight central government departments and non-departmental public bodies, and in addition to these HM Treasury has reported added value from all three centres. The impact on policy extended to the UK’s devolved administrations and local government (case studies 1, 13, 23).

Our annual Celebrating Impact Prize event on 24 June 2015 recognised the outstanding social and economic impacts of ESRC-funded researchers over the previous year, with over 150 guests attending. This was our third event, and was held in partnership with SAGE Publications. Guest speakers included Kate Allen (Director of Amnesty International UK), Ziyad Marar (Global Publishing Director of SAGE) and Kelvin Hopkins (MP for Luton North). The prize winners are listed below, and several of the prize winners’ case studies feature in this report.

- Outstanding Impact in Business: Professor Colin Mason, University of Glasgow, and Professor Richard Harrison, University of Edinburgh, for their role in stimulating business angel investment worth £750 million a year in the UK.
- Outstanding Impact in Public Policy: Dr Aisha K Gill, University of Roehampton, improved support for victims, raised awareness and enabled better prevention strategies concerning violence against women, ‘honour’ crimes and forced marriage.
- Outstanding Impact in Society: Professor Jenny Kitzinger, Cardiff University, and Professor Celia Kitzinger, University of York, created a much-needed online resource supporting relatives of patients in long-term care.

8. Spotting business risks on social media

QuantEye, an intelligent-business app measuring consumer purchasing behaviours, trends and attitudes, was developed with support from an ESRC internship. The research enabled Cognizant Technology Solutions to develop new software and roll out a key feature of its software platform, giving the business a major competitive advantage. The software can analyse comments on social media mentioning a company’s operations and products, and spot potential business risks that could threaten company reputation and brands.
also being collected as part of the Integrated Multimedia City ongoing with over 40 other organisations. Primary data is community, and collaborative activities and negotiations are already making data available for use by the research regulatory and local government sectors. These organisations the information technology, retail and consumer, marketing, licence agreements have been secured with organisations in continue to develop relationships with data owners. Data (ie, ‘de-identified’ datasets).

and secure settings. The centres have also ensured that the information retrieval, and very high resolution satellite data.

Impacts from ESRC Data Resources

The UK Data Service (UKDS) provides access to a wide range of data including large-scale government surveys, international macrodata, business microdata, qualitative studies and census data. An independent evaluation shows that one year's investment into UKDS enables additional use of research data worth between £58 and 230 million over 30 years – effectively a 2.5- to 10-fold return on investment. Re-use of existing research data is cost effective and increases productivity by saving time and resources, as well as providing new research opportunities. UKDS has over 6,000 datasets, over 25,000 registered users, and 60,000 downloads worldwide each year.

Our three Business and Local Government Data Research Centres launched in October 2014. The Consumer Data Research Centre (CDRC), Urban Big Data Centre (UBDC), and the Business and Local Government Data Research Centre (BLG) are providing researchers with data routinely collected by business and local government organisations, to enable research of mutual benefit to researchers and data owners alike. The research centres have created cutting-edge physical and virtual infrastructures which facilitate access to, and linking of, business and local government data in safe and secure settings. The centres have also ensured that the process used will restrict a person being identified from the data (ie, ‘de-identified’ datasets).

The centres are currently working with 23 businesses and continue to develop relationships with data owners. Data licence agreements have been secured with organisations in the information technology, retail and consumer, marketing, regulatory and local government sectors. These organisations are already making data available for use by the research community, and collaborative activities and negotiations are ongoing with over 40 other organisations. Primary data is also being collected as part of the Integrated Multimedia City Data project within the UBDC, which is collecting innovative data in different forms through five different strands focused on the Glasgow area. This includes a household survey, sensor data collection, textual and multimedia internet information retrieval, and very high resolution satellite data.

The ESRC-funded Administrative Data Research Network (ADRN) is a UK-wide partnership between universities, government departments and agencies, national statistics authorities, funders and the wider research community. It is made up of four Administrative Data Research Centres – one

We have enabled the UK to host the most comprehensive social science data collections in the world.

in each country of the UK – and an Administrative Data Service. The ADRN has established a new, legal, secure and efficient pathway for the research community to access de-identified linked administrative datasets.

Set up in 2013, in just two years the ADRN has developed state-of-the-art physical and electronic infrastructures across the UK. ADRN security standards and best practices have been established based on five principles: safe environments, safe research projects, secure data, safe outputs and safe people. These principles, together with specialist training and accreditation of all researchers seeking to use the ADRN, ensure the privacy of the people whose information is contained in the data.

With these safeguards in place, researchers in academia and government are now able to access de-identified administrative data for high-quality research across many areas of social policy. Currently there are 20 ongoing, potential high-impact projects within the ADRN, with demand for the ADRN service likely to grow further over the next few years. Examples of research enabled by the ADRN reveal the diverse projects now possible through re-use of ADRN data, ranging from studies evaluating linkage between children’s health, education and social care data, and the impact of disability on employment in Wales, to the impact on Northern Ireland’s economy, security and society from removing the country’s ‘peace walls’.

Our long-term investments in longitudinal studies enable us to understand society by following individuals through time, looking at how their experiences and behaviour are influenced by their social and economic environments. Case studies such as number 11 illustrate the broad range of impacts emerging from ESRC’s portfolio of world-leading longitudinal investments. Department for Work and Pensions analysts are also using ESRC-funded Understanding Society study data as a source of longitudinal income data for individuals and households, thereby allowing estimates of persistent low income to be derived.

A further example of secondary analysis of data is a project by researchers at NatCen Social Research, the UCL Institute of Education and the University of East Anglia. These researchers looked in detail at the lives of fathers in 21st century Britain, exploring their work patterns and family
10. Cost-effective parenting programmes reducing crime offending
Conduct disorders are the most common psychiatric conditions amongst children, affecting five per cent of children and young people aged between five and 16 years (ONS surveys 1999-2006). If not addressed, around 50 per cent of cases develop into anti-social personality disorders in adulthood, which are linked to an increased risk of criminal activity. Secondary data analysis of information from the Offending, Crime and Justice Survey held at the UK Data Service facility has helped researchers develop a model showing that parenting programmes were highly cost-effective: typical costs were only £1,016–£2,218, while savings per family from reduction in offending were estimated to be £17,500 (calculated over a period of 25 years). This research evidence has been incorporated into the public health strategies of 25 local authorities across England, as well as mental health strategies for the Scottish Government. An important output of this work – a costing template produced for the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) – has been endorsed by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health and circulated to its 16,000 members. The researchers are now working with local authorities to track savings from these types of early intervention. UK Data Service

11. Improving family lives and saving the taxpayer £1.2 billion
Secondary analysis of ESRC-funded survey data has helped local authorities in England to target interventions that support families with long-standing problems, turning around their lives and improving the life chances of children. The UK Government’s Troubled Families programme, praised by the Prime Minister after helping an estimated 116,000 families and saving the taxpayer £1.2 billion, was extended for five years from 2015. The Department for Communities and Local Government used data from the ESRC-funded Millennium Cohort Study to verify the estimated number of families that could be eligible for the programme due to domestic violence. In March 2015 the London Borough of Wandsworth recorded nearly 70 per cent reduction in domestic violence due to interventions across families, with financial benefits to the Borough of over £70,000*. Millennium Cohort Study

12. Changing transport habits
Encouraging people towards more sustainable transport habits by leaving their cars at home and use public transport is a daunting challenge facing many local authorities. Researchers from the University of the West of England used data from Understanding Society to show that people are most likely to change their transport behaviour after significant life events, such as getting a new job or moving home. This knowledge is being used to inform transport behavioural change programmes. The Department for Transport cited the findings in their 2015 Understanding the drivers of road travel report, and the West of England local authorities have used the research to shape their Local Sustainable Transport Fund programme for 2015/16. South Gloucestershire Council also used the research findings to design an intervention project aimed at changing home movers’ transport behaviour. Secondary Data Analysis Initiative

Public dialogues
In 2015 we commissioned dialogues with the public to inform the work of the ESRC Data Research Centres (Big Data – Phase 2) on acquiring, archiving, accessing and analysing private sector data for social research and engaging with the public to communicate this work. Our Data Research Centres - the Consumer Data Research Centre, the Business and Local Government Data Research Centre, and the Urban Big Data Centre - worked closely to discuss their research, and the safeguards put in place for various types of data across a range of private sector organisations. The public dialogue revealed that there is wide public support for the use and reuse of private sector data for social research, and that the more information people have on data centre processes and the benefits of using private sector data for social research, the more likely they are to support and be interested in research using business data.

* This summary contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0
In addition to growth and prosperity, quality of life is also essential to our overall wellbeing. People in the UK and around the globe are living longer. However, major inequalities in life expectancy still remain. Our research enables governments, businesses and societies to understand the factors that shape inequalities and how we can combat them, and has informed policy and practice to improve health care (case studies 13 and 14), wages (case study 15), the environment (case studies 25 and 26) and making a difference in global efforts to alleviate poverty (case studies 20 and 22).

One such example is research at the University of Warwick which shows that being bullied in childhood has long-term negative consequences for health and life prospects. This study used data from the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children, the ESRC-supported Understanding Society study and the Great Smoky Mountain Study (USA). The researchers also found that negative family environments make school bullying more likely, whilst nurturing family environments make bullying less likely. The researchers are working closely with policymakers, and it is expected that a new legal framework will be implemented recommending a community-centred approach to help children vulnerable to bullying. This will be of benefit to parents, teachers and health practitioners who can work together to prevent bullying before it happens.

Public engagement

Engaging the public is an important part of our portfolio of knowledge exchange activities - creating opportunities for the public, researchers and the ESRC to explore and improve on research and its impact. The ESRC’s twelfth annual Festival of Social Science was held from 1-8 November 2014 to engage the public with social science research and to raise awareness of its impact on society and the economy.³⁴ There were almost 230 events held across seven regions and in 47 UK towns and cities. Forty-eight targeted young people, 67 events focused on a professional/knowledge exchange audience and 114 activities were for a general audience. Feedback indicates that approximately 20,600 people attended the event in their work or studies.

Our third annual photographic exhibition took place 9-14 March 2015, at the Menier Gallery in London⁴. This was the culmination of our Changing World photographic competition (2014-15), encouraging young people aged 14-18 to look at the world from a social science perspective and capture in a picture how the world has changed in the last 50 years, or how it might change in the future. The photo competition reached a wide range of young people from 270 schools across the UK - engaging 1,633 pupils in reflecting on changes in society. Fifty-one images were exhibited including the 11 winners. The exhibition has since been on tour to Bournemouth, Manchester, Plymouth and Sheffield. The winning entries can be viewed at www.esrc.ac.uk/photocomp, and some of the exhibited images have been used to illustrate the front cover of this report, case studies (10, 19 and 26), and in the wider work of ESRC. The Changing World Photo Competition was shortlisted for a CIPR (Chartered Institute of Public Relations) PRide award for the public sector campaign category.

13. Ensuring dignified hospital care of older people

A study of the care of older people in NHS Acute Trusts has resulted in better care in hospital. The ESRC-funded research looked at how much healthcare staff within four hospital trusts throughout England and Wales respected elderly people’s dignity. Dr Winifred Tadd’s team developed teaching resources to train existing and trainee healthcare workers at several teaching institutions and hospital trusts. The research findings have strongly influenced healthcare policy in England and Wales; ‘Dignity in Care’ is now a clear policy goal for NHS Wales and included in the regulatory framework of Health Inspection Wales. Early evidence suggests that this research has led to changes in practitioner behaviour, and a focus on ensuring that elderly patients are offered care that upholds their dignity.

ESRC Centre for Economic and Social Aspects of Genomics

14. Online support for relatives of coma patients

Professors Jenny Kitzinger and Celia Kitzinger have created a much-needed online resource supporting relatives of patients in long-term coma states. The healthtalk.org website has provided information and support to more than 4,000 visitors, including solicitors and health professionals as well as family members with relatives in a coma, vegetative or minimally conscious state. Training sessions based on the online resource have been delivered in hospitals, rehabilitation centres and care homes, improving communication and decision-making between professionals and family members. The research directly informed the Royal College of Physicians’ National Clinical Guidelines on Prolonged Disorders of Consciousness and led to the inclusion of specific guidelines on the family’s role in decision-making. The research findings were also cited in recommendations by the House of Lords Select Committee on the Mental Capacity Act. ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize
15. Paving the way for the Minimum Wage
ESRC-funded research in 2007 provided crucial evidence for the introduction of a UK National Minimum Wage and paved the way for the introduction of a minimum wage in Hong Kong in 2011 and in Germany in 2015. The UK National Minimum Wage raised the real and relative pay of low-wage workers, narrowed the gender pay gap and positively influenced pay for one in ten workers. ESRC’s Centre for Economic Performance did not find any evidence that the minimum wage would lead to large-scale job losses, and showed that claims that a minimum wage would destroy up to two million jobs were unfounded. The introduction of a minimum wage in Hong Kong showed that around 10 per cent of the working population benefited from the change.

ESRC Centre for Economic Performance; REF2014

16. Countering ‘honour’ crimes and forced marriage
Over the past 17 years, Dr Aisha K. Gill’s pioneering research on violence against women, so-called ‘honour’ crimes and forced marriage has raised awareness and improved support for victims, enabled better prevention strategies and the successful prosecution of perpetrators.

Dr Gill’s research has helped to develop legislation and national policy including the Forced Marriage Act (2007), the National Police Honour-Based Strategy and two-year action plan (2008-2010), and the criminalisation of forced marriage under the 2014 Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act. The NHS, Department for Education and civil society organisations have used Dr Gill’s research to develop good practice guidelines, improving engagement with victims and their families as well as perpetrators.

Her expert evidence about ‘honour’ killings and forced marriage contributed to the conviction of Shafilea Ahmed’s parents for murder in August 2012. Dr Gill is currently a member of the HM Inspectorate of Constabulary’s Expert Reference Group on Honour-Based Violence, and advising on how the police should deal with ‘honour’ crimes, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize

17. Online map for public toilets
Access to public toilets can be crucial to enable trips out of the house for elderly people with bladder problems — but information on where toilets are, when they are open and who can use them is difficult to find. Using open data published by councils, researchers funded through the New Dynamics of Ageing programme have launched the web-based Great British Public Toilet Map, with location and information for over 10,000 public toilets across the country. The map is accessed by 7,000-8,000 visitors each month, and over 80 local councils provided data for the Great British Public Toilet Map. ESRC New Dynamics of Ageing

18. Reducing communal tension in Northern Ireland
Sectarian divisions continue to have huge personal and financial costs in Northern Ireland, estimated at £1.5 billion a year. Over the past 12 years, research by Dr Dominic Bryan and colleagues has transformed understanding of how the use of flags affects tension between communities, feeding into reconciliation strategies. Findings informed the Northern Ireland Government’s Shared Future policy document, and have helped District Councils and the Rural Community Network, as well as organisations including Mediation Northern Ireland, to pursue strategies for mediation and peace-building. Since 2009, Dr Bryan has influenced government policy approaches through his membership of the Flags Protocol Review Group. In 2013 the research informed the Richard Haass negotiations, and it has influenced the United Nations’ work on divided societies, with findings cited in the United Nations 2013 report on ‘Human Right to Culture in Post-Conflict Societies’. ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize

19. Treating insomnia with self-help
Over 10 per cent of people in Britain suffer from insomnia, yet the only treatment usually offered is a course of sleeping tablets. As part of the New Dynamics of Ageing programme, researchers at Loughborough University trialled self-help sleep management based on the principles of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) — with over 80 per cent of treated patients reporting a reduction in symptoms, without any unwanted side effects. The resulting self-help training programme has been adopted and rolled out by NHS across the UK, and training has been provided by the researchers to health authorities in Oxfordshire, Nottinghamshire, Berkshire and Leicestershire. ESRC New Dynamics of Ageing
International impact

We enable UK social scientists to collaborate internationally, supporting their work with peers across the globe. International research collaboration has been associated with greater citation impact, and partnership with other leading research nations increased the impact of UK research\(^\text{15}\). The UK Research Councils are one of the main Delivery Partners for the Newton Fund,\(^\text{16}\) which aims to develop science and innovation partnerships that promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries. ESRC has utilised the Newton Fund to maintain our key leading role internationally, by strengthening international engagement around existing and emerging research priorities in the UK and globally. Through the Newton Programme, 

- we have funded two International Centre Partnerships calls in the Social Sciences and Humanities with China and South Africa.
- we have also funded substantive research programmes on Urban Transformations including Healthy Cities, and the Social Science of the Nexus in partnership with South Africa, China and Brazil.
- we, and the South African Department for Science and Technology\(^\text{17}\) have funded an exciting new data resource to enable use of the European Social Survey questions in the next wave of South African Social Attitudes Survey; this resource will enable new insights into South Africa’s socio-political values and attitudes.
- we allocated funds with the International Social Science Council’s Transformations to Sustainability Programme\(^\text{18}\) to develop Transformative Knowledge Networks between social scientists and colleagues in other disciplines and fields in Newton countries.

We have also been agile and strategic in our response to the recent migration crisis in Europe, and for the first time, ESRC provided £1 million Urgency Grant funding for social science research into the migration crisis. The Urgency Grant will support leading UK social scientists to conduct research with migrant and refugee populations who have entered Europe across the Mediterranean.

We along with Arts and Humanities Research Council and Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, have led on the development of a pioneering lead agency agreement with the Social, Behavioural and Economic Sciences Directorate of the US National Science Foundation, which aligns the UK and US research interest and reduces barriers for US and UK research collaborations.

Our decade-long collaboration with the Department for International Development (DFID) has been instrumental in combining scientific excellence and impact, and helping us improve the lives of the poorest people. Our funding has brought social science research and development practice closer together to produce substantial impact dividends. Applying the highest quality of social science research has helped us understand the dynamics of poverty and development, and revealed whether particular development interventions are effective. Our research also provides insights into the broader social, political and economic dynamics that perpetuate poverty, as well as those that may enable people to escape from poverty. Such broader understanding arising from our research is essential for policymakers to take effective decisions that influence life and development in the poorest countries.

For example, research at the Social, Technological and Environmental Pathways to Sustainability (STEPS) centre is informing how we ensure that necessary access to antibiotics is available globally and resistance doesn’t spread. STEPS researchers have shown that ‘unorganised’ markets in many poorer countries, while enabling people to treat infections and reduce mortality, also encourage overuse of antibiotics. The STEPS review of strategies shows that a double approach is needed – not only influencing drug providers and users to reduce consumption, but also to ensure easy access to antibiotics when genuinely needed.

Map showing concentration of ESRC/DFID research focus.
Changing views on Zimbabwe’s land reform

Based on his 15-year study of rural livelihoods in Zimbabwe, Professor Ian Scoones and his team have successfully transformed understanding of how the Zimbabwean land reform affected the country, leading to policy shifts within the region and internationally.

In 2000 President Mugabe forcibly removed many of the 4,500 white owners of Zimbabwe’s large-scale commercial farms, redistributing the land to black subsistence farmers. Professor Ian Scoones, of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, has led a detailed study of 400 households in over 16 sites in the Masvingo province to find out what happened to people’s livelihoods when they got land.

The research reveals that many smallholders in the resettlement areas have actually been successful: investing in the land, building homes, accumulating cattle, employing workers and producing crops for sale.

Professor Scoones’ research has encouraged an evidence-based review of the effects of land reform in Zimbabwe and elsewhere in Southern Africa, and inspired a wider public and policy debate notably through the weekly blog Zimbabweland, which generates over 30,000 views a year. The research evidence underpins new policy initiatives by government and donors targeting land, agriculture and livelihoods, including a reappraisal of approaches to food security assessments and livelihood resilience-building for smallholder farmers. ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize

Cost-effectiveness of anti-poverty interventions in Bangladesh

There have been many different aid and development interventions aiming to lift people out of extreme poverty, but few studies show the long-term effects of aid. An ESRC-DFID-funded analysis of longitudinal datasets for Bangladesh enabled Dr Agnes Quisumbing to assess the long-term impact of anti-poverty interventions such as microfinance, new agricultural technology and direct payments to families for education. The research looked at the cost-effectiveness and impacts of the various programmes, and showed that some interventions can lead to different outcomes for men and women. This finding is now being reflected in policy initiatives by the Government of Bangladesh, and incorporated into USAID* agriculture-nutrition programmes.

The research findings and recommendations have also made important contributions to policy debates in Bangladesh, and as a result the government increased the level of the Primary Education Stipend in line with the project’s recommendations. ESRC-Department For International Development grant

Smart water pumps – improving health and increasing return on investment

Community hand pumps provide 200 million rural Africans with their drinking water supply – but one in three hand pumps do not work. The lack of clean drinking water due to non-functioning water pumps has large but avoidable impacts on health and poverty, and has also adversely affected the return on £780-970 million invested in such infrastructure over the last two decades.

A team led by Dr Rob Hope at the University of Oxford has developed a ‘smart hand pump’ that can automatically report faults through SMS text messages, ensuring that faulty water pumps in remote areas can be fixed rapidly. The average time it takes to fix faults has been reduced from a month or more to less than three days. The team ran a trial on the management of communities’ handpumps that explored pooling pump maintenance and financial risks, smart monitoring and payment technologies. The research showed that a fairer and more flexible payment model based on reliable service delivery was likely to be highly effective, and also provided insights on provision of a sustainable rural water supply. This research, funded by the ESRC and DFID, has been recognised and cited by Kenya’s Water Services Regulatory Board as a groundbreaking approach that could be applied across Kenya. The smart hand pump model is also being considered by UNICEF for scaling up across the East and Southern Africa region. ESRC-Department For International Development grants

* USAID is the lead U.S. government agency that works to end extreme global poverty and enable resilient, democratic societies to realize their potential
Social science shapes policy and practice

Our research plays a major role in informing government policy, from welfare and benefits to health and education. It also ensures that we understand how markets and social attitudes influence the application of science and technology. Whilst climate experts identify the scale of global warming, it is social science that helps understand people’s behaviours and identifies potential interventions for behavioural change – influencing the development of policies that gain the trust of governments, business and the public.

ESRC research enabled Scottish voters to come to a better informed judgement about their decision in the Scottish Independence referendum. Our timely investment enabled social scientists to scope key issues in the debate and to engage the public and the UK and Scottish governments in these explorations (case study 24).

Social sciences inform Parliament: 45 per cent of REF2014 impact case studies referring to Parliament came from the social sciences

The ESRC is a core investor in Project Oracle, the children and youth evidence hub for London, providing social science know-how and expertise to help service providers, funders and academics who are striving to improve the life chances for children and young people.

What Works Centres

Social science is relevant to the interests of all government departments and all sectors of the economy, and high-quality social science research has always been an important source of evidence to inform policy-making, effective delivery of public services and professional practice in areas such as teaching, policing and business. This is now happening in a more systematic and effective way through the ESRC’s close involvement with the What Works Network, in partnership with government departments and the devolved administrations.

Through the ESRC, these networks have been able to access independent, high-quality evidence syntheses across a broad range of social policy areas, including local economic growth and crime reduction. Some of the initial findings from the What Works Network include ‘hot spot’ policing – patrolling in small areas where crime has been concentrated – to reduce crime and not simply move it to another area. Another example is the Employment Training Review, which revealed shorter, more practical on-the-job training programmes to be more effective than longer, classroom-based initiatives. The What Works initiative is providing clear and accessible advice to decision-makers at local and national levels.

Over 10 years ago, the ESRC Genomics Policy and Research Forum established a collaboration with the OECD Working Party on Biotechnology, which is continuing to the present day. The forum has driven exchange of knowledge with the OECD colleagues via visiting fellowships, co-hosting both major international policy conferences and exploratory policy forums, and organising frequent international visits. This has enabled the ESRC-funded researchers to bring a social science input to the policies of OECD member countries, and guidance to industry and government on biotechnology and sustainable development.

Social Science Section at the Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology

The ESRC-supported Social Science Section at the Parliamentary Office for Science and Technology (POST) became quickly embedded during 2014/15, and was instrumental in developing briefings on a range of topics including social media and big data, alternative currencies, palliative and end-of-life care, and measurements of living standards. The section also helped introduce new practices in Parliament by joining with the House of Commons Working Group for Members’ Continuing Professional Development, developing a new quick-turnaround briefings service and delivering a research methods course for House staff, in collaboration with the House of Commons Information Services. The UK model of POST will likely be replicated in other countries. For example, the Mexican Academy of Sciences is planning to establish a parliamentary office of science and technology based on the UK model for parliamentary scientific advice.

23. Policy impacts of our Economics Centres

Evaluation of ESRC-funded Economics Centres has highlighted the key contributions these centres have made on a range of policies, through the evidence they provide, and the shaping of national and regional policies.

For example, the Centre for the Microeconomic Analysis of Public Policy (CPP) was involved in the provision of data and figures that underpinned policy development on the Single-Tier Pension. The CPP also influenced the final shape of the Pupil Premium funding scheme. The Centre for Competitive Advantage in the Global Economy (CAGE) had a role in the Future of Manufacturing foresight review, and its analysis of the implications for UK government policy. CAGE also provided technical advice on the government’s use of National Wellbeing measures and statistics. The ESRC-supported Spatial Economics Research Centre (SERC) has played a key role in shaping and delivering the Manchester Independent Economic Review, and in translating the evidence into robust policy recommendations (see case study 1). SERC also influenced the development of the National Planning Policy Framework.
24. The Future of UK and Scotland
In 2014 a total of 3.6M people voted Yes or No in the Scottish referendum – a turnout of 84.5 per cent in Scotland as a whole, and a new record for any election held in the UK since the introduction of universal suffrage in 1918. The independence referendum relied upon independent evidence to inform the public debate. The ESRC-funded Future of the UK and Scotland research programme provided valuable analysis which played a major role in key debates on the Scottish currency question, inequality and the future of higher education. The research programme produced regular briefings for a diverse audience of officials and decision-makers, gave evidence to UK and Scottish Parliament Committees and shaped the approach of the Scottish Parliament’s Inquiry into Scotland’s Economic Future Post-2014. In the run-up to the historic referendum the programme logged 213,000 visits to its website, securing over 100,000 downloads of its e-book Scotland’s Decision, had over 1,100 mainstream media citations and more than 2,000 attendees at over 25 events around Scotland. The ESRC-funded Scottish Fellows were the key independent commentators on all major channels governing the referendum including Radio 4, 5Live and SkyNews. ESRC Centre On Constitutional Change

25. Shaping international climate change policy
Research at the ESRC Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy (CCCEP) was influential in informing the United Nations climate change conferences in 2009 and 2010. A 2009 policy brief from Dr Alex Bowen and Dr Nicola Ranger was used by Professor Lord Stern to recommend a global reduction in carbon emissions to 44 billion tonnes by 2020 – a recommendation endorsed by the UK Prime Minister, and reflected in the COP15 (Conference of the Parties) statement acknowledging the need for sharp reductions in emissions.

Dr Ranger and Dr Bowen were invited to contribute to the United Nations Emissions Gap Report, and published a policy brief ahead of the COP16 conference in 2010. The CCCEP researchers also contributed to an update of the Emissions Gap Report in 2011, which was acknowledged in the COP17 statement.
ESRC Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy

26. Research launching the Committee on Climate Change
The Committee on Climate Change (CCC), set up in 2008 to identify climate change targets and advise the UK government, was formed due to recommendations underpinned by ESRC-funded research. Professor Nick Pidgeon led a research project exploring public perceptions of climate change and optimal engagement with the public about climate change risks, and chaired an inquiry into cross-party work on climate change. The inquiry found that governments were afraid of implementing solutions that may be effective in the long term, but costly and unpopular in the short term. Professor Pidgeon recommended that a separate body be established to deal with climate targets, and the CCC was subsequently formed.
ESRC grant: REF2014

27. Police ‘stop and search’ practice
Key findings from ESRC-funded PhD research have had a major impact on police policy and practice, and been instrumental in bringing about changes in police ‘stop and search’ practices. Our research revealed the scale of stop and search in Scotland and, that most searches were non-statutory – ie, would require verbal consent, lacked reasonable suspicion, and in some parts of the country, were carried out disproportionately on children and young people. The study identified a lack of accountability, notably the absence of published statistics on the use of stop and search, and a longstanding lack of scrutiny over the use of the practice. The findings also suggested that the use of non-statutory stop and search was likely to be incompatible with Article 8 of the Human Rights Act – the right to privacy.
ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership

RCUK
Research Councils UK (RCUK) is a strategic partnership of the UK Research Councils which enables them to work together more effectively to enhance the overall impact and effectiveness of research, training and innovation activities. The RCUK Impact Report presents the activities that Councils are doing together, how cross-council working is being delivered, and the added value and impact that is being achieved as a result. The RCUK Impact Report can be found at www.rcuk.ac.uk.
<table>
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<th>2011/12</th>
<th>2012/13</th>
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<td>94%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>In September 2014, the ESRC introduced a new approach to evaluating the research that it funds.**'**Active registered users able to access the datasets available from the ESRC’s principal data facility, the UKDS; the figure is based on a 'snapshot' as recorded on 31 March 2015 rather than an annual average. The number of unique datasets delivered is an annual total. Data sourced from latest DISAC report (UKDS Annual Report)</td>
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<td>Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) data; First destination data in 2013/14 are for doctoral students who qualify or complete 1 August 2013 and 31 July 2014. (Source: Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Collection 2013/14)</td>
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<td>Of which Private Sector</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which Unknown or Other</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which Unemployed</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional Metrics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Researchers trained in media/PE skills</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>Researchers trained in media skills. 2014/15 data sourced from Researchfish, and represents various types of influence reported by researchers. Equivalent data was not reported in previous years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public policy influence</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>991</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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