Celebrating outstanding social and economic impacts of ESRC-funded researchers
Welcome to the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize

As the UK’s largest organisation for funding research on economic and social issues, the ESRC is committed to supporting the very best research with wide-ranging impact.

Social science contributes to greater knowledge and understanding of the many challenges our society faces. By ensuring that ESRC-funded research makes the biggest possible impact, our research shapes public policies and makes businesses, voluntary bodies and other organisations more effective as well as shaping wider society.

The ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize is an opportunity to celebrate the outstanding economic and social impacts achieved by ESRC-funded researchers. I take this opportunity to praise all the applicants for demonstrating their commitment to achieving impact throughout the research process.

The Rt Hon David Willetts MP
Minister for Universities and Science

Professor Paul Boyle
Chief Executive
Economic and Social Research Council

“Economic and social science research affects almost every aspect of our lives, from shaping public policy to business practice, yet its value often goes unnoticed. These awards recognise the significant contribution this important work makes to the economic and societal impact of the UK’s world-class research base. My congratulations to all the prize winners.”

The At Hon David Willetts MP
Minister for Universities and Science
Paul Grice served as chair of this year’s Celebrating Impact Prize panel. He is Clerk and Chief Executive of the Scottish Parliament, and previously worked for the Department for Transport, the Department of the Environment and the Scottish Office. He also chairs the ESRC Methods and Infrastructure Committee, and sits on the ESRC Council.

Juliet Mountford is Director of UK service development at the British Red Cross, formerly serving as a director at the Cabinet Office Efficiency and Reform Group. She was also programme director of the Office of Civil Society, and has worked directly with the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, providing policy advice on family and parenting issues.

Meet the Speakers

David Aaronovitch is a regular columnist for the Times, having previously written for the Guardian, Observer and Independent, where he won the 2001 Orwell Prize for political journalism. Formerly president of the National Union of Students, David has also worked in both radio and television broadcasting, and is the author of Paddling to Jerusalem and Voodoo Histories.

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Dr Alan Gillespie is Chair of the ESRC Council, with an extensive background in both the public and private sector. He graduated from the University of Cambridge with a PhD in Economic Geography, funded by the then Social Sciences Research Council, and has since worked for organisations including Goldman Sachs and Ulster Bank Group.

Professor Paul Boyle is Chief Executive of the ESRC, also serving as RCUK International Champion and President of Science Europe, and was previously Head of the School of Geography and Geosciences at the University of St Andrews. In September, Paul will take up the post of Vice-Chancellor at the University of Leicester.

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Aileen Murphie is Director of Local Government Value for Money at the National Audit Office, having spent ten years auditing the Home Office and Ministry of Justice. Aileen also spent time in the Cabinet Office, including the Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit and as Delivery and Public Sector Reform Co-ordinator to the Minister for the Cabinet Office.

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Outstanding Early Career Impact

Olivia Maynard, University of Bristol

Olivia Maynard’s research shows that standardised packaging of tobacco products changes behaviour amongst smokers, and just as importantly, non-smokers. This is a key issue of public policy that is highly contested by the tobacco industry, which means that she has been forced to rebut serious challenges to her work.”

Deborah Arnott, Chief Executive, Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)

Meet the Finalists

Outstanding Early Career Impact

PhD or early career researchers who have demonstrated outstanding impact

Olivia Maynard’s study of how plain, standardised packaging impacts on people’s attention to tobacco health warnings is a key part of a growing body of evidence underpinning recent reviews and changes to legislation. The research was used most recently by Sir Cyril Chantler, who conducted an independent review of existing research on plain packaging. Based on the review findings, the UK government announced in April 2014 that they would introduce plain packaging in England.

Maynard used eye-tracking technology to measure the eye movements of adults and adolescents when viewing branded and plain cigarette packs. The study was the first to use objective behavioural measures to investigate the behavioural impact of plain packaging, and suggests that it could be an effective means of tobacco control.

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Hannah Lambie-Mumford, University of Sheffield

Hannah Lambie-Mumford’s research on emergency food provision in the UK has provided evidence to inform the food poverty debate. Her investigation of the rise of the Trussell Foodbank Network and FareShare, two UK charities involved in providing emergency food supplies, is helping policymakers, charities and the media understand the demand for, and operations of, emergency food initiatives.

Lambie-Mumford’s work also goes beyond the provision of food aid to raise issues concerning the underlying causes of food poverty itself, shaping the terms of reference for the April 2014 All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into hunger and food poverty. By working closely with churches and other organisations involved in food assistance projects on the ground, Hannah is stimulating debate on the practical ways churches can act around food poverty.

“Hannah Lambie-Mumford’s clear and well-articulated understanding of the issues arising from her PhD research have been invaluable not just in helping us shape our thinking on the issues, but to have a substantial impact both on local practice and national policy.”

Niall Cooper, Director, Church Action on Poverty
Meet the Finalists

Outstanding Impact in Society

Researchers who have made a contribution benefiting society or a specific group of the public

Dr Lorna Warren, University of Sheffield

Following an innovative research project under the New Dynamics of Ageing programme, Dr Lorna Warren is using the channels of policy and education to challenge the way older people are represented in society.

In the art-based project 'Look at Me! Images of Women and Ageing', a group of 41 women from Sheffield aged 43-96 created ‘untraditional’ images of themselves which were then exhibited in several venues in the UK. Now, Dr Warren and colleagues are introducing workshops that explore age-based stereotypes in schools, with a view to include ageism in Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education. To raise greater public and policy attention to these issues, Dr Warren last year co-launched a Charter against Ageism and Sexism (ChASM), developed in collaboration with Women in Journalism, research group Women, Ageing and Media, and the National Union of Journalists.

“When I came in here I thought it was the end – now I’ve done [the project] I know that’s not true”

Extra care housing resident from Sheffield, a participant on the ‘Look at Me! Images of Women and Ageing’ project

Outstanding Impact in Society

Researchers who have made a contribution benefiting society or a specific group of the public

Professor Debra Myhill, University of Exeter

Professor Debra Myhill and colleagues can now clearly demonstrate that embedding grammar in the teaching of writing can have a positive impact on children’s written work. In one study, researchers found that when grammar was linked meaningfully to the writing being taught, children’s writing scores improved at double the rate of children not taught in that way. A further outcome is that many teachers now think differently about the teaching of writing. Through practical guidance and engagement with teaching professionals, the team have helped ‘demystify’ the process of writing and develop teachers’ ability to show children how writing works.

The involvement of multinational company Pearson Education is also ensuring that the research achieves significantly greater reach than would otherwise have been possible.

“We have been greatly influenced by Debra Myhill and her research into the impact of contextualised grammar teaching on progress in writing. Indeed, this teaching approach has now been adopted by Pearson UK as one of the defining pedagogical methods for improving literacy standards in secondary schools”

Daniel Cuttell, Senior Manager English: Learning Services, Pearson UK
Meet the Finalists

Outstanding Impact in Business

Researchers who have generated business impact through successful knowledge exchange and engagement

Professor Neil Wrigley, University of Southampton

Professor Neil Wrigley has led a research team whose pioneering work on food retailing has changed the debate on retail sector practices, contributed to government policy, and helped convince key industry players of the value of large-scale, high-quality academic research.

His investigation into the problems of food access in deprived urban communities (commonly referred to as ‘food deserts’) is acknowledged to have influenced national and international policy on urban regeneration. In the USA, for example, the importance of access to healthy foods has become a cornerstone of the Obama Administration’s food policy, and in the UK, Professor Wrigley’s pioneering three-year study into the impact of new ‘in-centre’ and ‘edge-of-centre’ supermarket development is widely used in planning proposals and enquiries. The findings provided evidence that supermarket development does not necessarily lead to less trade in the town centre – but rather encourages local shopping overall.

“Professor Neil Wrigley’s rigorous, balanced and evidence-based report has made a timely and important contribution to the debate about the nation’s high streets”

Philip Clarke, Chief Executive, Tesco plc

Videos and case studies of all tonight’s winners will be available online after the ceremony.

www.esrc.ac.uk/impactprize #impactprize
Meet the Finalists

Outstanding International Impact
Researchers who have achieved impact at an international level in business, policy or societal issues

Dr Sabina Alkire, University of Oxford

Dr Sabina Alkire and Professor James Foster of the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) have developed an innovative methodology for measuring poverty, capturing aspects such as poor health and lack of education to provide an at-a-glance poverty ‘rating’ which shows not only who is poor, but also how they are poor.

The new method is helping a growing number of governments to more effectively design, implement and monitor their efforts to reduce poverty. The Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network (MPPN), co-founded by OPHI, now counts officials from over 25 governments and international organisations as its participants.

“Mexico’s National Council for the Evaluation of Social Policy (CONEVAL) has used a new multidimensional poverty method to guide public policy not only to reduce poverty, but also to reduce vulnerability through better economic and social mechanisms. The methodology established by CONEVAL would have been impossible without the Alkire Foster methodology”

Gonzalo Hernández Licona, Executive Secretary, CONEVAL, Government of Mexico

Dr Stuart Basten, University of Oxford

Dr Stuart Basten’s research into Asian fertility helped convince the United Nations to revise its forecasts on future population trends, with particularly large effects for Pacific Asian economies.

Policymakers all over the world turn to population forecasts produced by the United Nations (UN) as the key source of authoritative projections on future population trends. Known as the World Population Prospects (WPP), these forecasts are hugely significant in formulating policy, particularly in developing countries and emerging economies where much of the future population growth will be concentrated.

Identifying a shortcoming in the UN’s 2010 forecast, Dr Basten offered the UN an alternative view, and the UN’s redesigned WPP for 2012-2013 provides a forecast which is not only more in tune with current evidence, but is based on a stronger methodology for use in the future.

“The depth of Dr Stuart Basten’s research and extent of his scholarly work in documenting the Pacific Asian situation, especially in major urban areas, was seminal in motivating the UN and its collaborators to revisit the statistical modelling used for the long-term fertility recovery assumption”

Dr Patrick Gerland, Senior Analyst and Population Officer, United Nations
Meet the Finalists

Outstanding Impact in Public Policy

Researchers who have contributed to the development of UK public policy at the local, regional or national level

Professor Shadd Maruna, Queen’s University Belfast

The team behind the Desistance Knowledge Exchange (DesKE) – Shadd Maruna, Stephen Farrall and Fergus McNeill – are widely acknowledged to be leading researchers on how criminals can leave crime behind. Yet, Professor Shadd Maruna insists that the real experts in how individuals stop re-offending are ex-offenders themselves. Building on the knowledge exchange expertise of Dr Claire Lightowler to work with ex-offenders, families, practitioners and policymakers, the DesKE team drew out the common threads from many individual success stories – helping to create and interpret a new body of rehabilitation evidence that is changing policy and practice in criminal justice. Based on this research, a high-level organisational review in the Scottish Prison Service has transformed its approach and at a local level the DesKE team helped to establish the Wirral Desistance Project, which brought together probation staff and probationers to explore what was working in the rehabilitation process.

“Research into desistance from crime has significantly impacted on both policy and operational practice, and is shaping the culture and service delivery models of providers across all aspects of offender services”

Ian Poree, Director, Rehabilitation Programme, Ministry of Justice

Dr Clifford Stott, University of Leeds

Dr Clifford Stott and colleagues developed a model of crowd conflict now widely viewed as the leading psychological theory of its kind. Based on his work to engage this theory with policy, police forces in the UK and further afield are reforming crowd strategy and practices with the aim of reducing conflict by ensuring that crowds can have their say. Many believe that forceful policing is essential in order to control crowds and act as deterrence. Dr Stott's research provided powerful evidence that crowds can be managed more effectively when the police concentrate on enabling lawful behaviour – such as protests – rather than merely trying to control criminal behaviour through fear and force. Today, Dr Stott’s ideas permeate police training and policy as well as the recent introduction of new police liaison units designed to avoid conflict through dialogue.

“Dr Clifford Stott has worked with the Metropolitan Police Service to research and develop theory which has fundamentally changed the way in which we manage crowd events and protest”

Mark Rowley, Assistant Commissioner, Specialist Crime and Operations, Metropolitan Police
Meet the Finalists

Lifetime Achievement Award

Professor Sir David Hendry, University of Oxford

Over five decades, Professor Sir David Hendry has developed macroeconomic models capturing how economies work, which are now embedded in software widely used by policymakers and decision-makers. Governments and institutions need economic models to help them use forecasts to understand how the world works when taking decisions. Based on long-term consistent research, Professor Hendry has devoted 45 years to developing economic modelling that captures the key features of a rapidly changing economic environment.

“Professor David Hendry’s contributions have exerted a great influence on the way we do practical econometric work. In particular, the automatic models election programme AutoMetrics is used extensively to guide improved empirical modelling, especially when there are structural shifts, avoiding wasted time on incorrect formulations so our economists can focus on analysis and specification”

Torbjørn Hægeland, Director of Research, Statistics Norway

Professor Hendry’s work has influenced public policy, business, and society in both the UK and in other countries and global institutions. He has used his models to contribute to work by HM Treasury and Ofcom in the UK as well as the International Monetary Fund, and central banks including the US Federal Reserve and European Central Bank. In collaboration with a private sector partner, Professor Hendry has successfully commercialised software through PcGive and Oxmetrics, and supported its take-up by practitioners in the private and public sector, helping to make modelling methodology more accessible.

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“You can read more about Professor Hendry’s lifetime of impact in the forthcoming summer issue of Society Now magazine.

www.esrc.ac.uk/societynow

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Life Image 171x196 to 251x273
The ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize, now in its second year, is an annual opportunity to recognise and reward the successes of ESRC-funded researchers who have achieved, or are currently achieving, outstanding economic and societal impacts. The prize celebrates outstanding ESRC research and success in collaborative working, partnerships, engagement and knowledge exchange activities that have led to significant impact.

A prize of £10,000 is awarded to the First Prize winner of each category, with a £5,000 Second Prize awarded to additional winners. Each prize is to be spent on furthering knowledge exchange, public engagement or other communications activities to promote the economic and social impact of research.

The Judging Panel

Paul Grice is Clerk and Chief Executive of the Scottish Parliament, and Chair of the ESRC Methods and Infrastructure Committee.

Rebecca Fairbairn is Head of the Knowledge Exchange Group at the ESRC.

Graeme Nicol is an SME Consultant and former ESRC Research Committee member.

Professor Sandra Nutley is Professor of Public Policy and Management at the University of St Andrews and a member of the ESRC Evaluation Committee.

Professor Sarah O’Hara is Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning) and Professor of Geography at the University of Nottingham.

Dr Emma Weitkamp is a Senior Lecturer in Science Communication at the University of the West of England.
The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funds research into the big social and economic questions facing us today. We also develop and train the UK’s future social scientists. Our research informs public policies and helps make businesses, voluntary bodies and other organisations more effective. Most importantly, it makes a real difference to all our lives.

The ESRC is an independent organisation, established by Royal Charter in 1965, and funded mainly by the Government.

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