

## **Equality Impact Assessment – UK Research and Innovation Future Leaders Fellowships Scheme: Renewal Process**

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is committed to promoting equality and participation in all their activities, whether this is related to the work we do with our external stakeholders or whether this is related to our responsibilities as an employer. As a public body, we are also required to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations when making decisions and developing policies. To do this, it is necessary to understand the potential impacts of the range of internal and external activities on different groups of people.

### **What is an Equality Impact Assessment and when might UKRI use it?**

Equality Impact Assessments may be employed by UKRI as a tool to enable us to consider the likely impact of our strategies, policies and activity on different groups of people. For example, we may conduct an Equality Impact Assessment when developing a new scheme, or considering changes to an existing one. We expect that very rarely our actions will create barriers to participation. The assessment may however flag issues that are not of UKRI's making but we will, where it is in our remit to do so, recommend actions and adjustments. Some impacts may not be exclusive to the scheme or change that is being evaluated and may need to be addressed throughout our organisation. In some cases, we may not have enough expertise and we will consult with others.

### **Our leadership and building on good practice**

It is our ambition to be recognised as a leader in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and to build on our record of achievements to date, following on from the RCUK, Innovate UK and HEFCE action plans. These plans are updated from time to time and Equality Impact Assessments may help us to prioritise actions.

Current good practice that is relevant to the UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships Scheme includes our:

- *Grant terms and conditions*, including recognition for sick leave and all forms of parental leave
- Commitment to Unconscious Bias Training for all peer reviewers and inclusion of measures to reduce the likelihood of bias affecting decision making in the FLF assessment processes.
- Annual publication of application and success rates by demographic. We commit to publish and evaluate application and success rates for Future Leaders Fellowships competitions after each round.

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	<b>UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships scheme: Renewal point</b>
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>The Future Leaders Fellowships scheme (FLF) operates on a 4 + 3 year funding model (time pro rata for part time fellows) in which during their fellowship, fellows will be able to apply for up to a further 3 years of funding. All fellows are eligible to apply, irrespective of whether this was indicated in their original proposal or if they hold an open-ended position.</p> <p>The proposed programme of work is linked to the aims of the original fellowship and a maximum of £567k over a maximum of 3 additional years can be applied for (with the value that can be applied for pro rata for shorter awards and the duration extended for part time fellowship renewals).</p>
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	Relevant stakeholders within and external to UKRI have been consulted with regards to the process, namely the FLF Project Board, finance partners, and UKRI Executive Committee. External consultation has been carried out with the FLF External Advisory Group, and feedback from the engagement hub considered when drafting the process.
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	Current FLF award holders, and those successful in applying to future rounds of the programme.
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	This is being developed in parallel with the delivery of the renewal process and will incorporate any early learning as the process develops.

Protected Characteristic Group	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address potential negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
<p><b>Disability (we include mental and physical disabilities)</b></p>	<p>Possibly, negative.</p>	<p>Je-S data indicates the 5% of FLF's funded through rounds 1 – 4 identify as disabled. We expect those identifying as disabled to face greater challenges in moving host institution, so care needs to be taken to ensure that the renewal process does not impact those that identify as disabled to a greater degree than those who do not.</p> <p>Movement and mobility, short or longer term, are key elements of the scheme. We expect that this will be harder to achieve for those with a disability.</p> <p>In addition, if a Fellow opts to transfer host organisation at the renewal point, UK employment law requires employees to serve a minimum term before eligibility to be paid sick leave. This is likely to impact on disabled applicants who may experience more sickness.</p> <p>The application system Je-S does not comply with disability accessibility schemes. There are no plans to update this in anticipation of a new application funding system.</p>	<p>Care needs to be taken so that fellows who identify themselves as having a disability are assessed commensurate with their needs and opportunities and appropriate adjustments made to the assessment process as required.</p> <p>Hosts must make reasonable adjustments as required to support their fellows.</p> <p>We will ask that UK employers do not apply a minimum qualifying period for paid sick leave.</p> <p>We will review application and success rates after renewal meetings and consider if additional steps need to be taken to ensure those identifying as disabled are not disadvantaged.</p>

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<b>Gender reassignment</b>	Possibly, negative.	<p>The renewal application point or renewal start may have an impact on the support available and choices related to gender reassignment.</p> <p>Adjustment may be required of UKRI records (including Gateway to Research) and any communication materials (case studies etc)</p>	<p>UKRI terms and conditions are flexible in nature. All UKRI fellowships allow extensions to the fellowship to take account of absences as a result of reassignment. No cost extensions are also permitted to the existing fellowship award prior to the renewal point.</p> <p>Under current UKRI terms and conditions such a no cost extension request would fall under the 'exceptional circumstances' clause at the discretion of UKRI. The Future Leaders Fellowships team will be advised to automatically consider this an exceptional circumstance.</p> <p>We will not refer to any period of leave associated with reassignment as sickness absence.</p> <p>Three renewal assessment meetings will be held each year. The FLF team will aim to communicate outcomes from</p>

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			the panels within three months of the application window closing. Each Fellow will also receive their renewal outcome at least 6 months before their Fellowship end date.
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b>	Not enough information to assess.	Uncertainty around the outcome of renewal could have an impact on partners and partnerships.	The FLF team will aim to communicate outcomes from the panels within four months of the application window closing. Each Fellow will also receive their renewal outcome at least 6 months before their Fellowship end date.
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	Possibly, negative (assume all parental leave irrespective of sexual orientation or gender. Where the response refers to pregnancy we include surrogacy and adoption as well).	There are structural and financial impediments to taking parental leave: UK law requires employees to serve a minimum term before they become eligible for paid parental leave (over and above statutory benefits). New starters or their partners who fall pregnant or are pregnant at the time of application would thus receive little pay during their parental leave. Some employers have moved to a nil	In instances where this is not in place, UKRI may ask that UK employers do not apply a minimum qualifying period for paid parental leave (in all its forms, without reference to sexual orientation or gender) for the FLF scheme.  There are multiple rounds and the call remains open-ended,

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		<p>qualifying period for maternity or parental leave in recognition of this detriment.</p> <p>Fellows who are pregnant or on parental leave may find it difficult to find the time to apply.</p>	<p>meaning that Fellows can apply at any time throughout the year.</p>
<b>Race</b>	Possibly, negative	<p>Je-S data indicated that 15% of FLF's funded through rounds 1 – 4 identify as being from an ethnic minority background. Those within ethnic minority groups are more likely to be on fixed term contracts than those reporting white ethnicity and so may be more likely to not have an open-ended position at the point of renewal.</p> <p>HESA data indicate that of those in academic roles featuring research, 61% of those identifying to ethnic minority groups vs. 75% of those identifying as white are on open ended contracts.</p>	<p>Part of the host's commitment to supporting FLFs requires a pathway to an open-ended position. The FLF team will be monitoring contract type at the renewal point and any commitments made within the renewal and will open up discussions with hosts where an open-ended contract has not been granted or committed to.</p> <p>Host commitment to fellows will be monitored and conversations opened if any pattern emerges that indicates hosts may not be meeting the commitments made at the point of first application.</p>
<b>Religion or belief</b>	Possibly, negative	Some fellows may need to apply during religious holidays.	The renewal call remains open throughout the year, and each Fellow has the opportunity to

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			apply at any point during a submission window. Should the submission window not be appropriate for the fellow, we will work with them to find an alternative solution. This should alleviate pressure to apply at a specific time.
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	Not enough information to assess.		
<b>Sex (gender)</b>	Possibly, negative and positive	<p>This FLF is targeted at Early Career Researchers and in several fields we start to see evidence of a decrease in female applicants at this career stage. Increased funding that is flexible in nature could increase the number of opportunities available to women researchers in our sector.</p> <p>45% of round 1-4 FLFs identify as female and 55% identify as male. HESA data indicates that of those in academic roles featuring research, 70% of females vs. 73% of males are on open ended contracts</p>	<p>Part of the host's commitment to supporting FLFS requires a pathway to an open-ended position. The FLF team will be monitoring contract type at the renewal point and any commitments made within the renewal and will open up discussions with hosts where an open-ended contract has not been granted or committed to.</p> <p>Host commitment to fellows will be monitored and conversations opened if any pattern emerges that indicates hosts may not be meeting the commitments made at the point of first application.</p>

<b>Age</b>	Not enough information to assess.		
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**Evaluation:**

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	As illustrated above	
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will <b>proceed</b> .		
2. You can decide to <b>stop</b> the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. You can <b>adapt or change</b> the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias	<b>X</b>	As above
4. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore you are going to <b>proceed with caution</b> with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.		

<b>Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required</b> (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events:	<b>EIA will be made available on request to fellows@ukri.org</b>
<b>Date completed:</b>	21/04/2023
<b>Review date (if applicable):</b>	<b>N/a</b>