

EIA - Funding for PPP to accelerate the discovery and development of therapeutics for 'aging' V3

School/ Directorate
School of Life Sciences

Person Responsible
Inke Nathke

Created
22nd February, 2018

Last Review
22nd February, 2018

Status
Screened

Next Review
30th September, 2020

Screening Data

What is the name/title of the policy/activity?

A national public-private partnership to accelerate the discovery and development of therapeutics for 'ageing' - the 'innovative Therapeutics for ageing'

Describe the aim, objective and intended consequences of the policy/activity.

The aim of the application is to appoint 1.5 FTE, in order to scout for innovation projects to translate into therapeutics for diseases related to 'ageing'.

Who is responsible for the policy/activity and who implements it?

Professor Michael Ferguson, Regus Professor of Life Sciences, University of Dundee.

Who is effected by this policy?

The Scottish University Life Sciences Research community with an ultimate aim of improving the lives of older people. Candidates for the posts will be affected by the implementation of the recruitment process if approved.

Is there any indication that this policy is relevant to equality and the protected characteristics or that those with any of the protected characteristics will have a different experience in relation to the intended outcomes of the policy?

- Yes

The project supports research into ailments related specifically to ageing. In that sense it has a direct link to the protected characteristic of age. It will also relate to the protected characteristic of disability, given that many disabilities are age related. In relation to race there is a difference in terms of the genetic risk types for disease across many minority ethnic groups that impact differently on health. In relation to sex, different diseases affect the different gender groups and in Scotland in particular men are at greater health risk due in part to diet and lifestyle. Women have a longer life expectancy in general across all ethnic groups although they do experience ill health for longer toward the end of life.

The recruitment of researchers for the work can be affected by the recruitment process and there is potential for elements of bias in the way in which an individual is recruited.

Recommend this EA for Full Analysis?

Yes

Comments

The application for funding in itself does not relate to equality, however the project for which the funding is sought has significant positive implications for a number of the protected characteristics;

Age - the project will look at disease in older people specifically in order to identify a means of reducing the impact of those diseases by innovative means.

Disability - it is recognised that the numbers of people with a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010, increases with the ageing process. Given that the population of older people in the UK is rising, that will result in a rise in the numbers of people experiencing disability.

Race - experience of health and ageing differs across different ethnic groups and between genders. In the UK, although many of the minority ethnic groups experience similar life expectancy to the white British population, there is a trend that those groups to experience longer periods of ill health toward the end of life. This is in part due to social disadvantage and exclusion.

Sex - women across all ethnic groups generally live longer than men. However the main consideration which will be relevant to the project is the fact that there are particular conditions that have a greater impact on men or women i.e. dementia is more prevalent in women. The project will take account of the differences across different genders, looking for early markers in both.

There is an element of equality relevance to the recruitment process for researchers into the posts. The recruitment process should be set out in a way that is non bias in its form.

Rate this EA

Low

Impact Assessment Data

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Age?

- Yes

It is a specific project aimed at identifying treatments for age related illness and disease and to identify risk markers that will allow treatments at the right time.

In terms of age, the majority of researchers fall into the age brackets 30 - 39 and 40 - 49. In life Sciences 51% of researchers are between 30 and 39 years old. The recruitment manager for the posts will look at the skills required for the post and will be supported by HR to ensure a fair and transparent selection procedure.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Disability?

- Yes

Many disabilities as defined by the Equality Act 2010, are increasingly acquired with age and so work to identify treatment will have a positive impact.

Source; UK Government - Disability Relevance Estimates 2002/03 - 2011/12

In relation to disability, the Recruitment Guidance for managers provides guidance on equality and diversity and the requirement for reasonable adjustments throughout the recruitment process, including the advert. The University has a Disability Services and provides Disability Needs Assessments for students and staff, to allow for reasonable adjustments to be introduced.

In relation to researchers at the University and specifically in the School of Life Sciences, around 2% have disclosed having a disability.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Gender Reassignment?

- No

It has no direct implications for gender re-assignment, although it is acknowledged that there may be a number of health issues that may be exacerbated in old age by re-assignment procedures.

In relation to Gender Re-assignment, the Recruitment Guidance for Managers includes consideration of protected characteristics. There is an action in our 2017 - 2021 Equality Action Plan to develop a policy for staff and students who wish to transition.

At this point we have no formal data regarding the numbers of researchers or staff we have who have re-assigned.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Marriage and Civil Partnership?

- No

Marriage and Civil Partnership have no bearing on the genetic or social impact of disease in older people.

In terms of recruitment for these posts, marital or civil partnership status will have no bearing on the recruitment. The recruitment manager for the posts will look at the skills required and will be supported by HR to ensure a fair and transparent selection procedure, to meet the University's commitment to equality.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Pregnancy and Maternity?

- Yes

Not in relation to the project, assuming that in the category of 'ageing' people contributing to the project, would eliminate those women who are likely to bear children.

In terms of recruitment for the posts, there will be no barriers to anyone who is pregnant or nursing applying for the post, however once appointed, health and safety risk assessments will be used to identify where there may be risk to either the unborn child or mother.

The recruitment manager will be guided through the recruitment process by HR and our Recruitment Guidance for Managers, which includes equality and the protected characteristics.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Race?

- Yes

It is known that different ethnic groupings have different experiences relating to age and health. The different disease types experienced by different groups are often as a result of genetics, however social experience (poverty and employment), as well as diet and culture can result in different outcomes for BAME communities. In particular those from the Caribbean, African, Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities report greater levels of ill health. The project is about looking for markers for clusters of health issues in older people, in order that interventions can be taken earlier in life to prevent the effects of the diseases and will look across a range of ethnic groups.

In terms of recruitment for the post, at present our research cohort across the University is 19% BME. The School of Life Sciences currently has 24% of its researchers who are BME.

The Recruitment Guidance to Managers provides direction in terms of the process of recruiting and takes into account equality and diversity and the different protected characteristics, including race.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Religion and Belief?

- No

There are no direct links to Religion and Belief, although there may be a relationship with Race that certainly does have relevance to the project, as described above.

In terms of recruitment, the recruitment manager for the posts will look at the skills required for the post and will be supported by HR to ensure a fair and transparent selection procedure. We do not currently hold detailed information on the religion of individual researchers.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Sex?

- Yes

Different diseases affect men and women and in older age, there are ailments which are specific to one gender or the other i.e. prostate cancer affects men, whilst breast cancer will mainly affect women. Diseases such as dementia are more prevalent in women (65% to 35% for men) and 68% of those diagnosed with osteoporosis are women. The project will look at all genders when seeking markers for early diagnosis and intervention.

In relation to researchers, 54% across the University are women. In the School of Life Sciences that number is 45%. The School is committed to Gender Equality and has achieved the Athena SWAN Bronze Award and an associated action plan to support gender equality across all disciplines in the School. They promote widely family friendly policies to all staff and host regular events and promotions for gender equality.

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Sexual Orientation?

- Yes

There is a significant difference in life expectancy of gay men by comparison to all other men. This is mainly due long term HIV infection and the associated effects on the immune system. This project will not look specifically at HIV, however will look at age related immune dysfunction, which could impact positively on those affected by HIV.

The recruitment to the posts will be based on the University Recruitment Policy and the Recruitment Manager will be guided by that policy and HR. Inclusion of the support for equality in adverts and throughout the process of selection and recruitment is encouraged. The sexual orientation of a candidate, if disclosed, is secure and not disclosed to anyone without the express permission of the individual. There is no logical reason why sexual orientation is relevant to the recruitment for these posts.

Taking account of the findings so far, is there a possibility that the implementation of this policy would result in a different experience or a detriment for those with protected characteristics?

- Yes

There would be a difference in so far as older people would have improved access to treatments for age related disease, however it is acknowledged that because the focus is specifically on age related disease, other protected groups would only benefit once they reach the point at which they become susceptible to these diseases.

There may be a relevance to the recruitment process, however the University has a Recruitment Policy that takes account of the need for diversity throughout the procedure, from advert to appointment and including the diversity of the selection panel. The Recruitment Manager is guided throughout by HR in relation to equality.

Based on your findings so far, what recommendations or changes (if any) would you make in relation to the policy and how it is implemented?

None at this stage.

At this stage the application is for funding to appoint staff to progress the research. If that bid is successful, the monitoring process will monitor for inclusiveness throughout the recruitment process.

Where you have recommended actions/changes to the policy, what are the timescales for completion of these

22-02-2018

What monitoring arrangements do you have in place to identify changes in any impact or relevance?

Throughout the translation process we will discover whether a therapeutic would be stratified to a particular group. Stratification will be recorded and there will be written reports to SFC biannually.

The discovery of stratification could affect the assessment reported here and it would be revisited at that point and updated accordingly.

In relation to the recruitment process, records will be kept of the advert, and each stage of the process to ensure diversity and equality is maintained.

Comments

There is relevance to five of the protected characteristics, these are age, disability, race, sex and sexual orientation. The main relevance is due in the main to the different genetic influences on different groups. However there are issues such as reduced function of the immune system, which also encourage the onset of age related disease and this may be the case in relation to some disabilities and to sexual orientation,

particularly for gay men.

This application for funding will support work to identify risks at an earlier stage and introduce appropriate interventions that would limit the effect of these diseases and therefore benefit patients and reduce the financial impact on health and care services.

In relation to the appointment into the research posts, the recruitment process is recorded and records kept of numbers of applicants, those successful and those rejected. In addition where selection panels are used, we monitor the make up of the panel.

These methods will be used to ensure equity in the process.

Organisation Sign-off Data

Having read the EIA, do you approve its findings and recommendations?

- Yes

What are your reasons for approving/not approving the EIA?

The provision of funding to provide researchers for this work will benefit people generally. However its main aim to support research into age related disease will specifically benefit older people and ultimately the care and health provision for older people.

If you have approved the EIA, do you agree with the monitoring arrangements in place?

- Yes

At this stage the bid will support the appointment of researchers. Their appointments will be made in line with the University's Recruitment Policy and the Recruitment Manager will be guided by HR. This system has a monitoring process related to the protected characteristics which is set in place to support equality in the workplace. The research may take the project in a number of directions and it is difficult to say what they may be. For that reason the monitoring process is structured to take account of the findings throughout the research, report on them and take direction from them at that time.

Where you have not approved the monitoring process, what other steps do you require to be taken?

Not applicable

Comments

Considerations of impact on protected groups are adequate. The research is potentially beneficial to elderly making it important to carry out.

Next Review Date

2020-09-30

Outstanding Actions

No outstanding actions