

# **ESRC Impact Acceleration Accounts**

## **High level strategic review**

### **March 2017**

ESRC has invested £18 million in 24 Impact Acceleration Accounts (IAAs), starting in 2014 and running until 2018. We reviewed our IAAs to inform future re-commissioning, to identify successes and future developments in the model and to understand how they enable impact from social science and more widely.

#### **Key conclusions of the review**

- The ESRC IAA model has benefitted knowledge exchange and impact for social science. The IAAs have encouraged cultural and behavioural change around impact, including a step change in impact activities and outcomes, and greater awareness and interest from social scientists and their users.
- The ESRC IAA model offers value for money, enabling significant impacts through modest investment, and leverages further funding.
- ESRC IAAs have supported new and existing partnerships, funded engagement activities that were previously difficult to resource, and built capacity across a full range of social science disciplines and users.
- The ESRC IAA model is uniquely suited to support social science knowledge exchange and impact generation. IAAs are flexible, recognising non-linear pathways to impact, promoting early thought about impact and allowing researchers to do the work at the appropriate point, including the embedding of impact generation within research.
- ESRC branding adds real value and supports effective engagement with non-academic stakeholders in a competitive university environment.
- While there are clear benefits to cross-research council IAA working in institutions, including the promotion of interdisciplinarity and efficiency gains through sharing systems/processes, our review finds that there would be negative consequences were IAAs combined into one fund.