



Introduction to the New Strategy Tim Gardam, Chief Executive

Thank you very much for coming this evening.

This strategy document has emerged out of conversations with practically all of you, so I hope you will find, when you read it, echoes of what you have said to us about what you value most about the Nuffield Foundation.

In our consultation, we asked you to describe what you thought should be most distinctive about us. And your common response was that we should never underestimate the value of our independence. As an independently endowed Foundation, we can offer grant-holders greater freedom to frame questions and encourage new thinking that otherwise might not be supported.

It follows that we should have a close engagement with those we fund and give you the support to enable your ideas to influence the right audiences.

However, we are also conscious that a successful Foundation should always beware of thinking of itself as being the sole arbiter of its own agenda, just because we have got the money. We want the discussions we have together to be helpful in refining your thinking and encouraging scale and ambition but we never want to constrain your freedom.

We want to create new partnerships, with new research talent and with other funders – it has been with Wellcome, the Research Councils, the Learned Societies, the Institute of Government and a number of others that many of the most original ideas we fund have emerged.

So our strategy is designed to evolve; it is not in any sense a closed statement of our interests. We will judge its success in part by the ways in which the projects it enables in turn requires fresh thinking about where new research is needed.

Another significant part of our work should also be to provide accessible syntheses of our many related research projects to give each one a greater resonance. One of you put it to us this way: academic researchers paint in pixels, Nuffield can help make the wider picture.

To this end, we have built our strategy on three broad interconnecting domains: **Education, Justice and Welfare.**

“Our primary objective”, we state here, “is to improve people’s lives through better understanding of the issues affecting their life chances. Our research is also

concerned with securing social inclusion in an increasingly diverse society and a data-enabled digital culture, and with safeguarding, through the justice system, the rights of the individual in relation to the State.”

For there are a number of cross-cutting themes here.

Many of our research grants focus on points of strain in the **domestic space of people’s lives - in modern family life and in childhood**, and the impact of early years’ experience on people’s future chances of life long wellbeing.

We also believe that the social well-being of the United Kingdom in the 21st century can’t satisfactorily be addressed without keeping at the centre of our thinking **the impact of digital technologies in our accelerating data driven society, the shadow that data now casts across the stuff of all our lives.**

We believe more account needs to be taken of **social geography**, as we delineate the fine lines between a successful diverse society and a dangerously fragmented one. We want to address the difficulties of enabling **social inclusion between and across generational divides.**

We are announcing a new programme that explores the social and economic implications of chronic illness and will expand our research on the implications of **physical and mental disability.**

And in a society where **trust in evidence** seems to have become so problematic, it is also our role to contribute to building the capability of public institutions to use research, so that people might have greater confidence that these institutions are acting to support them and their best interests.

Our objectives are not quite those of research council. We believe we have an overarching obligation to help make real in people’s lives the benefits that emerge from academic research into those lives.

This is why one cornerstone of our strategy will be to deepen the relationship between our research grants and student programmes.

The Foundation has always been directly engaged in education; many of us were at schools with Nuffield science and Nuffield Maths curricula. These days, each summer, thanks to 65 generous universities and our co-funders, we place in laboratories and other research institutions 1200 seventeen year olds, as many as possible from schools that could not otherwise offer the opportunity.

Our [Q-Step programme](#), co-funded with ESRC and HEFCE, embeds the skills of quantitative analysis in social science undergraduates. Last year 8,000 students, across 18 universities, took Q-Step modules and degrees.

We intend to grow and develop these student programmes, and launch new ones. We have already funded [UCL's CORE programme](#), designing an economics course for social scientists who are not economists.

All this reflects one of the binding ideas behind this strategy; the ability to think critically about data is an essential skill if one is to be an informed citizen and economically secure in the modern world.

We also want to grow our significance as a convening space, connecting researchers across different disciplines to those working in public policy and with those who implement policy in practice. We want Nuffield to be a place where you meet people in your field, yet who have somewhat different perspectives to your own.

We aim to realise these ambitions through a number of new initiatives.

We are setting up a **Strategic Fund** of £20m for a small number of major, longer-term projects in addition to spending at least £50m over the next five years on our normal grants programmes. We will publish early in 2018 the guidelines for application to the Strategic Fund.

We will also bring to fruition other long term projects: the creation of a [Family Justice Observatory](#) is one example; our Early Language Intervention programme another, where we will be able to scale up projects we have pioneered thanks to a new partnership with the Educational Endowment Foundation.

We are advertising for a new position in our grants team: a Senior Programme Head, an economist, to run our Welfare programme.

We are exploring how to establish new **Nuffield Fellowships**, opportunities for those in positions of public responsibility who wish to take some time to step back and consider a significant social issue in depth. We will announce the Fellowship application process in time for it to begin before the end of next year.

We also want to build on the record of The [Nuffield Council on Bioethics](#), which we co-fund with the MRC and Wellcome. The Council has pioneered thinking and shaped policy over 20 years and now has an independent authority, with a public status and international reputation. We believe there are other areas where, working with partners with similar initiatives might be equally effective.

You have heard how we think at the heart of this strategy are the enormous social implications of a data driven world.

David made reference just now to today's landmark [report from the Royal Society and British Academy on data use and governance](#). It focuses the need to understand more coherently the social impact of developments that are challenging the meaning in our lives of concepts such as privacy, consent and ownership. It concludes that the future data governance landscape will require new and coordinated stewardship, alongside the ability to monitor and act in response to emerging issues. It recommends to government establishing a formal stewardship body to oversee this governance landscape.

We endorse this analysis; government will now consider the report's conclusions. Our initiative is designed to complement this. We would like independently to work together to establish straight away, upstream of any formal stewardship body, a deliberative forum, a **Convention on Data Ethics**. We are very grateful to our colleagues for being prepared to support this in return.

This Convention on Data Ethics would be entirely independent of government, and learn from the model of the Nuffield Council on Bioethics. It will connect the work of data scientists and academics of other disciplines with industry, those working in public policy and with other practitioners and decision-makers in the sector. The Convention would offer an independent space for knowledgeable voices to identify emerging issues, publish their findings and improve public understanding of how evolving technological developments may play out in practice, clarifying the implications for different groups in our increasingly complicated society.

Our proposal comes out of a number of discussions with the Royal Statistical Society and with the Alan Turing Institute, the UK's national institute for data science. We very much hope that they, along with the Royal Society and British Academy, will be our partners in establishing the Convention by the end of next year.

The strategy contains much more detail than I have outlined here and we look forward to discussing its possibilities with you in the months to come.

And with that I will now turn to three of our trustees; **Professor Anna Vignoles**, Professor of Education at the University of Cambridge, **Lord Justice Ernest Ryder**, of the Court of Appeal and Senior President of Tribunals, and **Professor James Banks**, Professor of Economics at the University of Manchester.

They will in turn lay out what they think is at stake in the fields they represent of Education Justice and Welfare and how the research that Nuffield funds can shape the issues that will define them.