Institution: University of Nottingham

Unit of Assessment: Sub-Panel 22: Social Work and Social Policy

a. Overview

The School of Sociology and Social Policy (SSP), which includes the Centre for Social Work, is returning as a single organisational unit to sub panel 22.The School conducts theoretically-informed and applied disciplinary and interdisciplinary research in social policy, social work, sociology and public policy. Our research is unified by a common concern with social justice. Interpreted broadly, this includes addressing the realities of marginalised groups, giving witness to experiences of everyday life, identifying issues of recognition and representation, and informing policy, practice and wider publics (including service users and carers). Research activities are organised under four research centres: Health, Well-being and Social Care; International Centre for Public and Social Policy; Identities, Citizenship, Equalities and Migration Centre; Institute for Science and Society.

b. Research strategy

At the time of RAE 2008 our core objectives were:

- increasing research grant capture;
- increasing our involvement in collaborative research within the university and with national and international partners;
- increasing the number of PhD students and enhancing their experience and success;
- contributing to core social scientific debates within our respective fields of study, and working with policy makers, practitioners, service users, carers and wider publics to promote our research findings and deliver maximum impact.

Since RAE 2008, the School has developed its research strategy significantly and ambitiously in the light of changes to the funding environment, higher education, the economic climate more generally (with its impact on public sector and charitable funding of policy research), and new opportunities, e.g. those afforded by the University's Doctoral Training Centres and the 'impact agenda'. With regards to our strategy, our success can be seen as follows:

Increased research grant capture
In the REF period, the School has submitted 119 proposals for external funding, of which 64 have been successful (**53% success rate** compared with 45% in RAE 2008). Research income in the REF period has totalled **£6,116,100**, compared to £2,596,413 in RAE 2008, an increase of **136%**. Success has been achieved through a process of rigorous internal peer review which, since 2010, has been augmented by external review and support by dedicated staff in the University's Centre for Advanced Studies (CAS).

Involvement in collaborative research
A major University-wide initiative during this REF period has been the establishment of interdisciplinary research and knowledge exchange Priority Groups, including Research Networks, to identify and enhance critical mass, promote interdisciplinary research, address grand challenges, and identify future emerging areas. **Becker** has led the 'Children and Childhood Network' and **Grundmann**, the 'Science, Technology & Society Priority Group'. All of the School's research centres are involved in University Priority Research Groups.

Additionally, **Manning** as Director of the interdisciplinary Institute of Mental Health led a successful bid for funding (£8,706,408 over five years) for the Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care (CLAHRC), one of nine such units in the UK. The School's staff have made

significant contributions to the CLAHRC programme which has extended our collaboration with the NHS and other disciplines, both within and outside the University.

Increasing the number of PhD students and enhancing their experience and success
In this REF period, **88 post graduate research students (PGR)**, in total, registered for a doctorate in the School (81 in RAE 2008). Fifty six successfully completed their doctorates, compared with 42 in the previous period. In the current period, the School received funding for 68 PGR studentships. We have established a weekly seminar series for PGRs; the students publish their own online journal, 'ENQUIRE'; they organise international postgraduate conferences and are supported by the **ESRC Doctoral Training Centre**, established since RAE 2008.

Contributing to core social scientific debates and promoting our research findings to deliver maximum impact
We have achieved greater understanding of how to reach our audiences and deliver external impact. This has influenced the configuration of research centres and the development of new research themes. Consequently, we now have eight themes delivered through four research centres achieved by consolidation of previous research centres and the integration of a new research centre, the Institute for Science and Society. The centres and themes are as follows:

<u>**Centre for Health, Well-being and Social Care**</u> (Convenor: Middleton; Outputs by Becker, Clawson, Ferguson, Fyson, Joseph, Kramer, Laird, Manning, Middleton, Morris, O'Connell-Davidson, Pilnick, Schneider, Sempik, Shaw)

Theme 1: Children and families. Research addresses the needs of young carers and a hitherto hidden group of young adult carers; child welfare and protection including family engagement in care and protection proceedings; the use of multiple services by families; family involvement in Serious Case Reviews; child trafficking and the gap between States' spoken commitment to children's rights and the lived experience of migrant children; abortion and the politics of reproductive rights.

Theme 2: Social work and social care for adults. Research addresses academic and applied issues of social care and social work to inform policy and practice for vulnerable adults. Studies include safeguarding of adults with learning disabilities; the functioning of Learning Disability Partnership Boards; the role of support workers in dementia care.

Theme 3: Health and well-being. Studies address issues of mental health and well-being; psychological trauma and critiques of the psychiatric system; new ways of thinking about human functioning grounded in positive psychology and person-centred psychotherapy; ethnicity and mental health; factors affecting decision-making in antenatal screening.

<u>**International Centre for Public and Social Policy**</u> (Convenor: Roberts. Outputs by Fitzpatrick, Jas, Laird, Manning, Roberts, Stafford)

Theme 4: Policy analysis. Research includes studies of theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of social/distributive justice; analysis of current welfare reforms and proposals for future directions of social policy; analysis and evaluation of social security policy and practice (notably welfare to work and employment interventions); coordination of social security within the EU and the delivery of services; equality legislation (in particular disability); evaluation of health care provision in different countries; international health policy.

Identities, Citizenship, Equalities and Migration Centre (ICEMiC) (Convenor: O'Connell-Davidson. Outputs by Bott, Holmwood, Karner, Kramer, O'Connell-Davidson, Parker, Pero, Stevenson, Treacher, Warren, Yip, Zontini)

Theme 5: Identities. Research includes studies of history/memory, affect and identity; the role of genealogy in kinship and its consequences for identity; post colonialism and gender; nationalism and contemporary globalisation; cosmopolitanism and cultural citizenship; social movements and identity formation; sexual, religious, youth and cultural identities.

Theme 6: Mobilities and migration. Studies include migrants' political engagements, exclusions and incorporation; the changing nature of integration policies; gender and migration; transnational families; migration and ageing; global flows and local lives in the inner city; forced migration and human trafficking.

Theme 7: Work and inequalities. Studies include work time and work life balance; economic well-being in cross-national perspective; moral economy of inequality (including free and unfree labour and modern slavery); the university and the knowledge economy.

Institute for Science and Society (Convenor: Nerlich. Outputs by Grundmann, Hobson-West, Holmwood, Meloni, Mohr, Nerlich, Raman)

Theme 8: Science, knowledge and society. Research explores the social, cultural and political implications of advances in science and new technologies. Studies include climate change and emerging diseases; science, politics and media representation of climate change; neuroscience and ethics; transparency, expertise and evidence in policy-making; science, publics and the making of politics; and knowledge regimes and the organisation of social science disciplines.

Future Directions

The School's research strategy will continue to be developed by its Research Committee, led by the Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange. The Committee includes the leaders of the four research centres, the School ethics officer and the newly-appointed Faculty Director of Research (Becker). It provides leadership and management for strategic objectives and their delivery including approving School budgets for research support and study leave applications.

We intend to continue supporting and developing the four research centres and their associated themes. The Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange and research leads will be tasked to deliver the strategy over the next five years by:

1. delivering high quality outputs through more effective mentoring and peer review; and widespread dissemination through, for example, open access (measured by REF and overall School citations);

2. increasing and diversifying grant capture by supporting both small and large scale, individual and collaborative research bids, recognising, for example, the value of smaller grants in career development and facilitation of larger applications (measured by total income and income per FTE; and increased RCUK and major charity funding per FTE);

3. creating a vibrant environment for doctoral students and maximising funding opportunities to attract high quality applicants (measured by DTC success rates, completion rates, doctoral publications);

4. embedding the impact agenda within our research activities and increasing engagement with our audiences through, for example, innovative dissemination of research findings (measured by REF, measurable engagement and utilisation of research by policy-makers, practitioners and wider publics);

5. recruiting, developing and retaining high quality research-active staff (as measured by staff turnover and individual citations).

c. People

i. Staffing strategy and staff development

Most academic staff are based in the School (although one has a full-time, and one a part-time secondment to the Institute of Mental Health, and one a part-time clinical secondment from the NHS), and almost all staff have joint teaching and research appointments. As a consequence of changes to the funding of undergraduate degrees we have moved towards a 'collective' strategy for research-led teaching by creating and managing four pathways of linked modules in our undergraduate degrees that map onto our four research centres (although they do not have the same titles). **This integration of teaching and research strategy has enabled us to address issues of sustainability and succession planning by ensuring teaching and research needs are kept in alignment, and recruitment and selection of new staff serve this unified purpose.**

As of 2013, the number of Category A staff in the School stands at 37, with 15 chairs. We have increased our numbers since RAE 2008 (34, with 12 chairs). The research strategy directly informed the appointment of eight new staff since 2008 and strengthened and enhanced existing expertise within each research centre. We anticipate the retirement of five members of the School within the next five years who will be replaced by academics with research expertise that aligns with our research centres and teaching pathways.

The University's **Equal Opportunity Policy** has developed Disability, Gender and Race Schemes and Action Plans and includes an online training package. Staff in the School undertake this training and the School is committed to implementing a policy of Equal Opportunities. Of 37 Category A staff, over half (21) are women; of nine associate professors, four are women. There are 15 professors in the School and six of these are women. It is part of the School's strategy to equalise, as far as possible, the gender balance at all levels within the School. The School and the University operate a transparent promotion structure, with no caps set on number of promotions per School. Four of the six members of School staff who were promoted during the REF period were women, two of whom were working part-time when they were promoted. Five School staff successfully completed the University's Professional Development unit's programmes aimed specifically at women, designed to help them to achieve their career goals and potential through formal training sessions and informal networks. The School has 5 ethnic minority members of staff, two of whom were former PhD students. In 2008-2013, five staff were supported in taking a period of paid parental leave.

The School operates a **formal induction process** concerning all policies, procedures and priorities. It operates a **workload audit** to equalise teaching loads and research time. Annual **Personal Development and Performance Review** (PDPR) ensures that staff receive appropriate support and reward. This process helps individuals to establish and assess their own research plans and achievements each year. Staff are encouraged to and supported in attending relevant training courses. The School operates a **study leave** system which provides the opportunity for staff to concentrate on research activities every seventh semester on the basis of a plan approved by Research Committee.

During the REF period, 24 Research Fellows or Associates were hosted in the School and 13 were employed on the census date. Each is assigned a mentor, other than the PI, and are fully integrated into the collegiate practice, research activities and support systems of the School.

The School takes full advantage of the **European Commission's 'HR excellence in research'** badge incorporating the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers*, which has been awarded to the University. A wide range of training and development opportunities are available to research staff to develop and extend their professional skills and knowledge: including identifying research partners, collaboration and dissemination.

The University operates an **Early Career Research Network** that links to national and international schemes and our early career colleagues are allocated a **School mentor** who provides support.

The Centre for Advanced Studies for the Arts and Social Sciences (CAS), part-funded by the School, supports, coordinates and manages applications for research funding within the Faculty and School, including costings, and promotes research collaborations within and beyond Academe. It also offers targeted support for early career researchers (ECRs), including the popular 'Bid Boot Camp' to hone skills in writing research grant applications. Two former PhD students (Madziva, Okyere) were awarded nine month post-doctoral CAS bursaries in open competition to develop their research and publications. Both have now gone on to further academic and research posts within the School. Two further School PhD students (Pearce, Jordan) have been appointed as researchers in the School in the REF period.

The School complements the support from CAS with a **Research Proposal Support Group**, which provides feedback and advice on grant applications and allocates a **mentor** to support the development of all proposals. School administrative staff provide support for research, including a full-time, dedicated Finance Manager who helps to prepare applications and oversees the administration and management of successful projects.

Various **seed-corn funding and grants** are available from the School and the University to support research (particularly scoping and workshops) including substantial support for the Science, Technology and Society Priority Group and the Children and Childhood Network (both led by members of the School). Six members of staff received individual pump-priming funding in this period. **All members of staff have access to School funds to be used for research activities and conference attendance** (including international conferences), with up to £1,200 per person being made available each year.

As part of staff development, the School has encouraged and supported staff to apply for high profile awards and both early career and senior staff **have won prestigious competitive research fellowship** funding: McKenzie (Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship 2010-12, now School of Education); Holmwood (Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship 2009-10); Meloni (Marie Curie European Reintegration Grant 2011-14; Marie Curie Intra European Fellowship Award 2009-11); O'Connell Davidson (Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship 2013-16). These fellowships have contributed to the conceptual development of research themes within the School and have informed collaborative research bids within the centres and the wider University.

The University 'Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics' outlines the standards and context for all research in compliance with the requirements of RCUK Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct. The University Code is maintained and reviewed annually by the University's Research Board and Research Ethics Committee (Stafford was a member up to 2012). The ESRC Framework for Research Ethics is adopted within the Faculty of

Social Sciences and members of the School are actively involved in discussion of research ethics within the relevant professional associations (e.g. Holmwood, Academy of Social Sciences and BSA).

The **School Research Ethics Committee**, led by the School's Research Ethics Officer (Roberts), to which staff and postgraduate researchers submit proposals for scrutiny, approval and on-going review is also actively involved in the development of research governance practices beyond those currently required by the ESRC, for example, addressing the ethical implications of impact activities and outcomes, such as, the construction of informed consent and the use of data for impact activities. These ethical issues have informed our impact strategy (see REF 3a).

ii. Research students

The University of Nottingham is **one of 21 ESRC funded Doctoral Training Centres** (DTC), and one of 12 to gain single-institution recognition. It has a collaborative agreement with the Universities of Warwick and Birmingham for access to training, as well as the open training provided by other DTCs nationally through the National Centre for Research Methods portal.

The School offers DTC pathways in Social Policy (including social work, public policy and health), Sociology, and Science and Technology Studies. These pathways are directly aligned with the four research centres. All students in the School have access to the resources and facilities of the DTC, which is part of a wider, cross-University Graduate School, with areas for working and socialising, computer and seminar facilities. These are adjacent to the School in the newly built CAS building.

Members of the School are actively involved in the ESRC DTC, making a significant contribution to its management and taught-course programmes. Pilnick is Director of the ESRC DTC Training Board. Additionally, Grundmann represents the School on the Horizon DTC and Raman represents the School on the Fossil Fuel DTC (as part of the School's engagement and leadership of the Science and Technology Studies Research Priority Area). Holmwood is a member of the ESRC Training and Skills Committee for DTC policy and a member of its Working Party on Advanced Training.

A tailored research training programme is agreed with each postgraduate research student (PGR). An initial detailed training needs assessment is carried out and a training programme developed. Each PGR is allocated two supervisors, and formal academic supervision with both takes place a minimum of 10 times per year. In practice, students see supervisors informally more often, via regular research seminars and a variety of social functions. Students also receive group and individual support from the Postgraduate Research Convenor (PRC), a senior academic member of staff.

Our postgraduate research community is a lively and integral part of the School. Each student is a member of at least one research centre and is likely to have an involvement with a number of research themes within the School. They participate in centre seminars and workshops and will have access to a wide range of academics. PGR students meet formally once a week for a seminar series led by the PRC at which they present their own developing research, hear about the research of others, and address issues common across the doctoral process, such as ethics, and developing an academic CV. PGRs are also supported to present at national and international conferences. Those not in receipt of external funding for their studies are awarded an annual grant of £750 from the School to enable them to attend conferences. They are encouraged to publish as they progress and the School organises writing skills workshops and sponsors two annual PGR prizes (of £500 and £250) for the best papers published in peer-reviewed journals. All research

students have access to a personal computer, desk space, photocopying, stationery, shared printers and telephones in addition to standard and specialist University-level facilities and resources.

Well-established procedures monitor students' progress, overseen by the PRC. A record of each supervisory session between the student and supervisors is agreed and logged. **Supervision records form part of the formal progress review** through six-monthly joint progress reports by supervisors and **an annual, formal review addressing training, development and progress**. At the end of their first year, students submit a 10-12,000 word report for review. They are also required to meet with an internal assessor each year and they present a formal document at the end of their second and third years. The School has established a confidential feedback system for PGRs, managed by an independent party to provide us with an in-depth picture about the quality of training provision.

Our PGR students founded and manage the online journal '**ENQUIRE**' (Electronic Nottingham Quarterly for Ideas, Research and Evaluation) and organise its annual conference. ENQUIRE provides an encouraging space for postgraduate academic research from the UK and internationally. Running the journal and organising the conference promotes development of key transferable skills e.g. managing the selection of papers and speakers, the refereeing process, editing and so on. PGR students are expected to present their work at the ENQUIRE conference and this provides valuable feedback and experience. In the REF period, seven editions of ENQUIRE have been published online, and four international conferences have been organised.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

In line with our strategy to increase grant capture, we have bid for and secured large-scale research funding, especially for collaborative projects, for example, the £1.6m Leverhulme grant. Large-scale funding also enables ECRs to contribute as co-investigators and develop the skills, expertise, reputation and confidence to apply for and secure larger funding in their own right as PIs. Grant capture is further incentivised by the School's strategy to return a proportion of grants to individual PIs and CIs using a School formula. These '**Personal Research Accounts**' can then be spent by individuals on pump-priming and other research costs, including the appointment of Research Assistants. This strategy is an effective mechanism to promote and to reward significant grant capture.

Funding opportunities are scoped by the Research Committee with regular monitoring and recording of grant capture against targets. Review and promotion criteria take account of grant capture, participation in collaborative bids, leadership roles within bid development, all as appropriate to the academic level of staff concerned. We have set internal (collective) grant capture targets for each source of funding (e.g. RCUK, charities, government) as part of our strategy to increase and diversify our research funding.

In this REF period the total value of awards was **£7,347,382.** These **came from a broad range of funders** that included UK Research Councils (including the British Academy, AHRC; BBSRC; EPSRC; ESRC; NERC) which accounted for 34% of funding; and UK charities (including Leverhulme, Carers Trust and BASPCAN) which provided 28%. Additionally, research awards were obtained from international foundations (European Commission, Swiss National Science Foundation); national government departments (DWP, DoH, Home Office, Department for Education, NHS); overseas governments (Australia, States of Jersey and Guernsey) and local authorities.

Significant **single** grants in the period include £1.6M from Leverhulme; £240,424 from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, £306,755 from the ESRC; £291,197 from the National Institute for Health Research; £180,542 from the Department of Health; £104,110 from the Wellcome Trust; £66,045 from the EU Commission and £118,600 from the Department for Work and Pensions.

Members of the School are co-located within a section of the Law and Social Sciences building on the main university campus. This location facilitates a **supportive and collaborative working environment**. All members of academic staff have individual offices with high quality, networked computers. There is a common room, used by staff and PGRs. The Hallward Library that houses the University's extensive social sciences collection is situated next door to the School. Its 'eLibrary Gateway' provides bibliographic databases, electronic books and journals. The Centre for Advanced Studies is situated opposite the School, facilitating our access to its research-support and management services.

Staff seconded to the Institute of Mental Health are located in a new purpose-built building on the nearby Jubilee campus. Funded jointly by the University and Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust, the IMH brings together research teams and clinicians and creates valuable opportunities for collaborative and transformative research.

e. Collaboration or contribution to the discipline or research base

Interdisciplinary research is central to our strategy and includes collaborative work within the School and across other disciplines. **Significantly, we are actively involved within and outside the University in cross-disciplinary research involving collaborations funded by each of the UK Research Councils. We work across and with almost 50 other disciplines**, ranging from biochemistry to veterinary science, and including economics, education, health sciences, law, media studies, nursing, politics and psychology. These activities are supported by the School's Research Committee together with the University's Research Priority Groups and Networks and the coordinating activities of the Centre for Advanced Studies. As stated above, we lead on the **Children and Childhood Network** and the **Science and Technology Studies Priority Group**, as well as leading the interdisciplinary **Institute for Mental Health** and playing a significant role in establishing the **CLAHRC**. Funds are provided centrally by the University for these collaborations. The IMH is now one of the largest groups of academics and researchers working on mental health issues in Europe with over 200 members. The Children and Childhood Network, with almost 100 academics from across the University, also hosts a dedicated PGR network bringing together doctoral students from various disciplines.

Our staff play **key leadership roles in many national and international research networks**, including: the Social Work Reform Board Education Advisory Group; UK Mental Health Research Network; ESA Medical Sociology Research Network; European Network of Excellence on International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion in Europe; Immigration, Immigrant and Trade Unions Research Network; BSA Work, Employment and Economic Life Study Group; ESA Gender Relations, the Labour Market and the Welfare State Research Network; BBSRC UK/US partnership on Bioenergy; European Neuroscience and Society Network. These leadership roles mirror the School's research centres and research themes so staff provide research leadership both to the School's centres and externally to national and international networks.

Many of the academics in the School **work in collaboration with external organisations from the Third and Charitable Sector, public bodies, and service users and carers.** Research on young carers, for example, has been prominently and repeatedly funded by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers (PRTC, now Carers Trust) and these studies have always involved young carers on steering groups, with all the necessary arrangements in place to enable and value their

contribution. PRTC has also co-funded two ESRC Case Studentships – linking the organisation's research needs with PGR training.

Most of the School's research on learning disability is conducted in partnership with the Ann Craft Trust – a leading national charity based in the School which works to safeguard and promote the well-being of people with learning disabilities. Research on dementia, trafficked children, youth sexuality, migration, immigration, and much more, involves service users, carers and service providers or advocates working in partnership with academics to conceptualise, undertake and deliver research. This partnership approach has also been instrumental in developing and supporting our impact strategy – see REF 3a.

School staff made significant contributions to national and international conferences with **over 200 invited keynote addresses**, for example, Communication in Antenatal Screening, Hong Kong (Pilnick), Principia College Modern Slavery Conference, Illinois, USA (O'Connell Davidson). The School was instrumental in organising eleven funded seminar series.

Members of the School **provide leadership to 47 refereed journals** as editors and/or members of their editorial and advisory boards including: Critical Social Policy; Child and Family Social Work; Ethnic and Racial Studies; Work Employment and Society; Mental Health Review Journal; Cultural Sociology; Environmental Communication. Three members of the School are editors of book series: *Understanding Welfare* (Policy Press, Becker); *Social Work in Practice* (Policy Press, Ferguson); *Histories of Sociology* (Palgrave, Holmwood). Many of the **outputs of the School have been translated into a wide range of languages**, including Albanian, Chinese, Czech, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Macedonian, Russian and Serbian.

Members of the School provide **peer review** for many national and international **funding bodies**, including: all UK Research Councils, NIHR, SCIE, British Academy, Department of Health, Welcome Trust, European Commission, and European Science Foundation. They also provide peer review for **over 120 journals of international excellence**, including: Journal of Social Policy, Social Policy and Society, Critical Social Policy, American Journal of Sociology, British Journal of Sociology, Sociology, Sociology of Health and Illness, British Medical Journal, Children and Society, Feminist Review, Journal of Social Work, Policy Studies Journal, Work and Occupations, Global Environmental Change.

Staff play leading roles in developing their disciplines **through learned bodies and professional associations**. For example, Holmwood is President of the *British Sociological Association* (2012-) and chaired the Heads and Professors of Sociology Council, UK (2007- 12); Grundmann was President of the Sociology and Social Policy Section of the *British Science Association* (2009-10); Pilnick is an Elected Officer of the *American Sociological Association* (2012-). Holmwood is also a leading member of four ESRC committees and sub-committees. He chaired the Sub-committee on Researcher Development, and co-chaired the Steering Committee for ESRC International Benchmarking Review of UK Sociological Research (2010). He is a member of the HEFCE Expert Reference Group on Monographs and Open Access. Warren is a member of the ESRC's 'Scientific Advisory Committee' for the 'Understanding Society' study (2012-). Schneider is a Senior Research Fellow and Fyson a Fellow of the NIHR School for Social Care Research. Becker, Holmwood, Manning and Nerlich are Academicians of the Academy of Social Sciences.

The School has an on-going commitment to continue with and to expand collaborations with external organisations and stakeholders locally, nationally and internationally, to build new research partnerships and networks, identify major challenges, and deliver rigorous research which informs and influences policy makers, practitioners and wider publics.