

<p><b>Institution: De Montfort University</b></p>
<p><b>Unit of Assessment: 22 Social Work and Social Policy</b></p>
<p><b>a. Context:</b> This unit embodies a long-standing commitment to multi-disciplinary, applied and participative research that, through close collaboration and co-production with stakeholders, seeks to directly advance social work, social care and social policy. We consciously seek to ensure that our research has real benefits in the lives of users – a driving force for the unit is commitment to build a better society and a recognition that societal impacts are realised through developments in policy and practice in social work, health and social care services, criminal justice (including police and probation), and youth services. Significant research has been undertaken for government departments (e.g. Department of Health, Home Office, Ministry of Justice, Cabinet Office, the former Department for Education and Skills) and national voluntary bodies (see below) that has resulted in impact, evidenced through changes to legal and statutory guidance and the implementation of research-informed training programmes. Our societal impacts can be traced directly to our research, which has consistently been designed to directly influence services working with people facing complex and multi-faceted needs.</p> <p>Recognised as world leading in RAE 2008 for the development of participative applied research, impact has, for a long time, been inherently embedded within research from the unit. Impact is built into research design, enabling beneficiaries to shape and respond to findings. The main beneficiaries of this work have been national and local non-governmental organisations, government departments in the UK and internationally, NHS Trusts, local authorities and public sector organisations. In each case, publications, tools and reports (including training materials), methodological innovation, guidance (incorporated into service design), professional standards, partnership working (between state agencies and ngos), equality and diversity strategies, and informing national policy change, have been developed to improve practice, inform debate, influence policy and ensure the <i>use</i> of research findings, thereby leading to impact through knowledge, skills, capability and practice. The work of the unit demonstrates local, regional, national and international impact from our research (e.g. Boeck's participative work with Leicester City Council on social capital/resilience; Kemshall's work on sex offenders; Fish supporting LGBT people with cancer; Canton and Probation Practice; Dyson and Sickle Cell; Larkin and Carers; Fleming and children and families' services in Eastern Europe; Ward and parents of gender independent children, Canada; Kemshall and Hilder, Women Against Violence in Europe).</p>
<p><b>b. Approach to impact:</b> Our approach has always been one of conscious and proactive orientation towards ensuring impact from our research. Staff in this unit have strategic and operational practitioner experience in the key professions: health (Culley, Dyson, Johnson, Yates), social work and youth work (Fish, Fleming, Yates, Boeck), carers (Larkin) and criminal justice (Kemshall, Canton, Hine, Ward). A close relationship with key users is assured through the nature of the unit's portfolio. Production of professionally endorsed CPD programmes through professional bodies (e.g. the National Youth Agency, the General Medical Council, General Optical Council/DOCET, NOMS, Police Leadership and Powers Unit, The College of Social Work) also enables a continuous relationship with practitioner and policy stakeholders. Through workshops, seminars, research partnerships and nurturing networks, members of the unit have cultivated close working relationships with a range of organisations influential in our research areas.</p> <p><b>How staff have engaged with key users to develop impact:</b> Members of the unit have been successful in obtaining funding to develop and sustain networks and international collaborations to enable future pathways to impact. For example, the AHRC-funded Madness and Literature Network (AH/G0009686/1 2008) and the International Health Humanities Network (AH/J002208/1 2011/13) and associated websites (Brown); the ESRC Learning Exchange Network on 'Sex Offender Public Disclosure-Learning from the UK Pilots and International Research' (ref ES/J010251/1, 2012, Kemshall); ESRC funding for a Carers' Seminar Series (ref ES/J021229/1, 2012, Larkin); the JISC funded DIEGO (Disseminating Impact from Engagement with User groups and Organisations 2011-12) project [see REF5]. Fleming linked with Impact Analysts from University of Edinburgh to apply a previously developed impact approach to evaluate the impact of participatory research with findings disseminated nationally. Members of the unit maintain good contact with stakeholders through newsletters, meetings and other pro-active engagement activity. Effective, non-academic dissemination as a critical first step towards securing impact is encouraged throughout the unit. Communication about research findings goes beyond academic dissemination and includes interpretation and dialogue with practitioners and users – for example,</p>

## Impact template (REF3a)

creating accessible reports arising from research written in jargon-free English and placed on websites (the school's, research centres, government agencies, specially created), or distributed in hard copy/DVD to practitioner and service users audiences. Examples include: *Standards We Expect* (2011), a series of reports for practitioners and service users (which continue to get 100+ views per week); *Trying for a Baby* for South Asian couples (produced in Gujarati, Bengali, Urdu and Punjabi 2003, 2006 and ongoing); CDs 'Risk of Harm Guidance and Training Resource' and 'Assessment and Management of Risk' (2008 and 2011), training resources for evaluation of Children's Fund projects (more than 2000 copies have been used by services locally since 2009). Policy and practice guide for teachers about children with Sickle Cell (an open education resource, Dept of Education website (2010 - )). HEIF monies were subsequently made available to support raising awareness of this guide and an international meeting in 2012 briefed consultant paediatric haematologists from 11 countries and USA federal agencies (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, USA web-site (2011 - )).

Many staff utilise knowledge gained in academic research in the unit to inform their more applied or evaluative work undertaken with a wide range of practice organisations, thus ensuring the knowledge gained in research has wide impact on a range of practice organisations (examples of such applied work are: locally – Hine and Knight's study into the engagement of education, training and employment for 16+ yrs young offenders for Leicestershire Youth Offending Service; nationally – STEP UP, Smith et al 2011-12; Participation Works, Fleming et al 2008/10; internationally – Evaluation of the Royal St Lucian Police Force new recruit training, Stanislas 2007/11). Such reports make direct recommendations for practice and policy and frequently result in the organisations developing action plans to implement the recommendations (e.g. Leicestershire YOS reviewing how they manage and plan referrals and interventions for young people), demonstrating direct and significant impact on organisational policy and practice. Another element of ensuring the impact of our participative research approach is our long standing partnership with the RDS EM, and the placement of the Public and Patient Involvement worker in the unit (2008 - ).

Members of the unit manage a number of 'jiscmail' networks, which are used to communicate research findings, supply notification of publications and events and provide a forum for queries to and from practitioners. For example, 'minority-ethnic-health@jiscmail.ac.uk' (approx 550 members) served as the main 'community of practice' for NHS Evidence's 'specialist collection on ethnicity and health' (NICE, the NHS Institute for Health & Clinical Excellence) and the Social Work and Health Inequalities Network (approximately 300 members, in over 25 countries).

The unit has held multiple government commissioned contracts, for example, research by members of the unit for DfES examining the impact of Connexions on young people at risk of social exclusion was cited in two major government youth policies and distributed to schools, councils and local authorities to inform the reorganization of services (between 2005 and 2011).

Follow up work directly informed the 10-year youth policy strategy. The reputation of this work led to the members of the unit being visited by a Japanese delegation, including policy advisor to the then-Prime Minister to discuss how our youth research could inform Japanese youth policy (2010).

Our research findings are targeted for relevant professionals and practitioners and make a contribution to improved professional standards (Stanislas – police training 2007- ; Martin – Social Work education (2005- ); Canton developing a European Probation practice 2008- ).

Innovative and creative approaches of public engagement have included: public debates held at the university (e.g. the RSA Coffeehouse Challenge with 80 members of the public debating research and policy around anti-social behaviour).

Many researchers are experienced in the successful engagement of service users and those whose voice is insufficiently heard – offenders, patients, health and social care service users, minority ethnic and disabled people, young and older people. A distinct element of some of the research in our unit is the engagement of those affected by the subject of the research as active collaborators in the research process (2009- ). This is exemplified by the employment of young people (aged 16-19) as Associate Research Assistants within the Centre for Social Action (CSA), fully supported by the university. The intention is to change how people think about and therefore respond to research. This learning has been utilised in a number of other projects, including working with South African schools where Fleming and Weich offered training and support via the internet and social media to the students undertaking research in their schools and communities to find out more about vulnerable children and how they are supported. This work came second in the All-Africa final for the Microsoft Innovative Teaching Award competition.

Further illustrations of activities undertaken to promote impact are given in REF5, section E.

**Support to enable impact:** The Unit draws upon institutional support for events, including marketing, arranging technical & IV support, and financial management. An example of this is the 2012 Health and Wellbeing event, where members of the unit showcased their work to users and practitioners. The RBI keeps databases of contacts, maintains the unit's webpages and ensures all research outputs are placed on the DORA system (De Montfort Open Research Archive) to ensure maximum accessibility to and visibility of our research outputs. Some engagement and impact activities require resource support beyond what is covered by specific research funding, especially as impact often arises from a number of incremental research projects. These resources are provided by the unit, which sees such activities as central to our mission. Members access central support for targeted external marketing, public engagement and press activity, including PR and media training. Central marketing designs and produces information leaflets, posters and publicity material arising from research projects. Members of the unit have made use of the university's Research Investment Fund to enhance the impact of our work (Culley, Boeck and Fleming, Dyson) through the creation of national and international networks of practitioners and academics.

**c. Strategy and plans:** Enhancing impact is a key focus of the unit and is incorporated in strategy documents at all levels. Engagement with practitioners and dissemination, debate and engagement are central to our activity. Support to enhance impact will continue to be developed as part of our strategy to maximise the impact of research. Over the next five years, the unit will: continue to develop research agendas in collaboration with communities of interest with whom we have longstanding working relations, whilst seeking to develop new relationships with new communities of interest and settings; develop new (and enhance existing) relationships with overseas universities to identify relevant research agendas to enhance international impact; ensure research applications are developed in negotiation with key community stakeholders; adopt an inclusive approach to all stages of research, including community members in research agendas, as joint applicants, as members of steering/ management groups, and incorporating community/professional workshops, writing for community/professional association newsletters as integral parts of the research application; enhance communication of our research profile and successes and their impact; maximise the potential of our research, through consultancy, training and partnership; and ensure information relating impact is recorded.

We will achieve this by: maximising the web presence for the unit's research, and promoting our research findings and their application; identifying, developing and maintaining robust and mutually beneficial strategic partnerships, which lead to funded, collaborative research activities (including international partners e.g. in India, Thailand and South America); successful funding applications to a range of funders to maintain our theoretical foundations; targeting funding applications for applied work, dissemination and engagement; disseminating the learning from the DIEGO project across the UoA and more widely to ensure that all researchers seek to establish and document the impact of their research on an on-going basis (and encourage the use of the repository for collecting and storing information about impact); Showcase events for the work of the unit; and enhancing staff development opportunities to enable researchers to take impact further and support attendance at external events on impact (e.g. Research Leaders of the Future). Through annual research planning, the unit's research groups report on plans for 'public engagement' activities, including public lectures or talks, media work aimed at a non-specialist audience, and working with key users and beneficiaries.

**d. Relationship to case studies:** All the case studies illustrate long-term, ongoing relationships between UoA22 researchers and stakeholders in their fields. They exemplify the Unit's achievement in terms of our approach to impact and have drawn in and build upon our participatory approach to research. From our long-standing experience of working with practitioners and service users we have become skilled in the range of ways of ensuring impact from our work. There are common themes through the case studies:

- Seeking and sustaining relationships with policy makers, practitioners and service users
- A commitment to co-production with those affected by the issues researched
- Seeking dialogue and debate with policy makers
- Promoting our findings through a range of media
- Accessible materials for practitioners and service user to use and inform practice
- Training and professional development