

<p>Institution: University of Bolton</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 04 Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience</p>
<p>a. Context</p> <p>The non-academic user groups, beneficiaries and audiences for the Psychology Research team's research vary across the three research groupings: Economic Psychology and Decision Research, Computing and Cyberpsychology, and Applied Psychology.</p> <p>The Economic Psychology and Decision Research Group have worked with the Office of Fair Trading and a major UK bank, on issues concerning the regulation of information presented to users of consumer credit and Payment Protection Insurance (PPI). In particular, as described in one of the case studies, this has led to major benefits for very large numbers of credit consumers with respect to changes in the way the sale of PPI is regulated in the UK. In addition, the group are working on the provision of advice and education for credit consumers, in co-operation with universities in Italy and the UK.</p> <p>By clarifying the nature of Internet-related and computer gaming addictions and publicising the results of studies in the mainstream media (and subsequently provoking debate on internet sites ranging from About.com to Netmums.com.), the Computing and Cyberpsychology Group's, research has benefitted both pathological users and their families, helping these people to understand whether a problem exists and, if so, what the nature of the problem is and how they might go about tackling it. Also, work with autistic children has involved the development of a game to help these children recognise emotions, "Emotiquest." This game has attracted interest from the NHS, school and professionals working with autistic children. The Director of the National Autistic Society has been promoting this game to NAS schools.</p> <p>In terms of Applied Psychology, the recovery work in mental health has been conducted in partnership with people who have mental health problems themselves. Most of this work has been written up in professional journals and in three books, to reach the widest possible audience. Three series of journal papers have been published in the journal Mental Health and Social Inclusion. The first was five papers on Recovery Heroes. The second, four on Historical Recovery Heroes. The most recent has been on Remarkable Lives. A paper on the mental health problems of Darwin, Nightingale, Lincoln and Churchill was published in History Today in February this year. Our forensic work has looked at both the community prevalence of violence as well as work with clinical populations.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>While academics have historically been good at disseminating the findings of their research, this has often been through narrow academic channels. However, there has been more focus in recent years upon achieving impact outside of academia, and we have tried to ensure that our research has an impact upon members of the population who are directly concerned with our findings.</p> <p>The work around PPI was instigated by a grant from the ESRC and a contribution in kind from the Co-operative Bank. The research was disseminated via traditional academic outlets such as journal papers and conference presentations. It was also disseminated via reports to the Office of Fair Trading and the Financial Services Authority. Press Releases issued by the FSA incorporated the findings from research conducted at the University of Bolton. Factsheets were also produced by the FSA summarising the findings.</p> <p>To ensure impact in terms of research findings reaching as many members of the public as possible who are affected by issues researched, and to ensure that communication is non-technical, researchers in the Computing and Cyberpsychology group have used University and British Psychological Society (BPS) press-releases. Subsequent to these press releases, members have been as responsive as possible to journalists' enquiries. Another approach that led to several instances of non-academic dissemination was Charlton's listing in the BPS database of media-friendly experts on internet and computer gaming addictions, and computer-related anger. Advantage has also been taken of externally organised events such as the Manchester Science Festival, which is an annual event conducted over a number of days at a number of sites. This seeks to enhance members of the public's engagement with science.</p> <p>The recovery work led to the making of a film about recovery, made by a woman with lived experience</p>

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and featuring four people with mental health problems. This had a public launch and has been uploaded onto YouTube and watched 5627 times. It has been used in a project to change attitudes towards mental illness. This work has been disseminated largely via professional networks, rather than peer review channels. Unusually for academic work, it has been done in partnership with people who use mental health services and has led to

c. Strategy and plans

Our main aim is to study real world problems and their solutions. As a university we have long established community roots. Some 80% of our students come from the North-West Region with 40% from the town of Bolton alone. As a Department we now have a corpus of psychologists to tackle a range of applied problems over the next five years. Among the specialisms we now have covered are clinical, forensic, educational, occupational and therapeutic psychology. We intend to extend our community involvement. We will be centrally involved in a replication and extension of the original Worktown Project, conducted in the town of Bolton from 1937-39. This was the start of a movement called Mass Observation. It involved a team of researchers observing the everyday lives of the citizens of Bolton. It also features the photographs of Humphrey Spender. Our current work aims to bring together a range of colleagues across departments and academic groups, to provide the research input to a number of projects that will involve the local council, the Octagon Theatre and other community organisations. This will see the development of new areas of research, such as Happiness and the evaluation of a local cultural passport (this is where individuals are given a sum of money, in the form of vouchers, to spend on cultural activities). We intend to form new partnerships with clinical services, given the fact that Carson has spent 32 years in the NHS and has local clinical connections, so that our academic research has a more direct clinical application. Another area we are planning to develop is a "successful ageing" project, which will utilise the university's expertise in both physiological and neurophysiological monitoring in programmes to enhance the mental and physical wellbeing of older members of the local community. We also want to engage in more collaborative international research, especially in the applied field. Links have already been established with the City of Zhaoqing in China, with both the local community and the university. A number of local Chinese professionals will be conducting PhD research into positive psychology interventions, supervised by staff from Bolton. We also intend to extend our forensic work as well as our work in therapeutic interventions. In terms of the latter, we intend to re-align our counselling and psychology undergraduate degree to make it a more direct route into counselling psychology and cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT). We currently run a postgraduate diploma and master's degree in CBT. We are looking to develop a practitioner doctorate in therapeutic interventions and also to establish a university clinic offering evidence based psychological treatments to local people with mental health problems. We intend to use this strong clinical teaching base to conduct clinical research.

d. Relationship to case studies

Both of our case studies show the degree to which real world impact has been important in our research. The PPI work has had a major impact as mis-selling of PPI policies has affected thousands of consumers. Our research showed major problems with these policies. The use of University and BPS press releases led to widespread dissemination of our findings on Internet and computer game addictions in the UK and International newspapers, in magazines and on radio. Also, under the auspices of the Manchester Science Festival, in October 2012 a public presentation of the findings on computer-related addictions took place at the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester. This dissemination also led to discussion of the issue of these addictions on Internet discussion forums and to the work being taken up by the computer games industry, with concerns that some games may lead to children becoming addicted, therefore possibly opening-up the industry to litigation.