

Institution: Queen Margaret University
Unit of Assessment: UoA 4 Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience
a. Context

The main non-academic user groups, beneficiaries and audiences for the unit's research are:

- Practitioners who provide services to specific groups of people, e.g. schoolchildren and occupational groups, and organisations that seek to promote the interests and inclusion of individuals who are at risk of being socially-disadvantaged, including not-for-profit sector agencies, the Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, Disability Football projects and outward bound programmes;
- Individuals, including those who receive services from the groups above and those who receive services from a broad range of practitioners, e.g. mothers who receive information on birth choices, users of cancer care centres, young people who identify as LGBT, and refugees/asylum seekers;
- The media and the public to whom research findings might be relevant, e.g. in advancing social equality, or improving health and welfare;
- Policy-makers and their advisors who are responsible for development and implementation of public policy on relevant issues.

The main types of impact specifically relevant to the unit's research are:

- Impact on practitioners and services through the application of research findings and development of best practice;
- Impact on health and welfare through improvement in well-being and enhancement of individual experience by reducing social disadvantage;
- Impact on society, culture and creativity by enhancing public understanding of issues, promoting debate in the media, and influencing changes in social policy to improve social equality, welfare and inclusion;
- Impact on public policy and services by influencing policy debate and development and implementation of policy.

How these relate to the range of research activity in the unit

Research activity in the unit is focused on the two themes of *discourse* and *cognition*. Research conducted within the theme of *discourse* examines topics relating to discourse and communication, particularly issues of identities, social equality (and inequality), and elements of individual communication. Findings from this research are especially relevant to understanding social disadvantage and promoting social equality. *Cognition* research in the unit involves the study of individual perception, memory and decision-making, examining how individuals understand and process specific forms of information and the consequences for decision-making and behaviour. Research within both themes is designed to have an impact on relevant practitioners and the health and welfare of individual beneficiaries and also to inform public understanding and debate and the actions of those who are responsible for developing relevant policy.

b. Approach to impact

How staff in the unit engaged with and developed relationships with key users to develop impact:

- By building on and extending previously-established relationships with key users. For example, research into LGBT issues (Rivers) reflected long-standing links with LGBT groups and individuals while research into farmers' decision-making (Willock) built upon and developed further previous relationships with the Scottish Agricultural College and with farmers. Similarly, Chisholm's research into communication problems in mother/child relationships built upon established relationships with the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Edinburgh;
- By disseminating widely research findings to potential key users. A public lecture in 2013 (McVittie) detailed findings of two projects conducted by the Unit (psychiatry in the media, confabulations in neurologically-impaired patients) to an audience that included policy-makers, service providers, and potential research users. Another recent event was organised by members of the Unit in collaboration with The Ideas Team, a sub-group formed by Artlink, an organisation which aims to increase opportunities to take part in the arts for those who experience disadvantage or disability in the East of Scotland. This two-day event attracted an

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audience of researchers, carers, other professionals, and local government representatives and comprised extensive interactions and discussions with non-academic users upon whom the relevant research findings might have an impact in enabling access to the arts. The Unit also routinely issues press releases that summarise research findings for public audiences, with many of these reports being taken up by national newspapers and/or radio;

- By forming new relationships with key users. During the census period O'May worked extensively with two social enterprises, the Homeless World Cup and Street Soccer Scotland, leading to her participation in events in Italy, Brazil and France to raise awareness of homelessness, sport for development, and research conducted in the Unit into how sport can promote social inclusion. McVittie and Goodall developed relationships with the Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives, NHS Health Scotland, and the Scottish Trades Union Congress, leading to a study of young people's experiences of abuse in the workplace. Discussions and relationships with the community foundation of a leading football club have led to impact in terms of research into the potential for disability football to promote social inclusion (McVittie, O'May). Members of the Unit also participate in the Scottish Funding Council's Innovation Voucher Scheme, which is designed to facilitate links between Scottish HEIs and small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs). This scheme allows SMEs to be involved in research that is immediately applicable to future practices, such as developing community-based projects and engaging members of socially-disadvantaged groups, and that might enhance the health and welfare of their employees with wider impact in promoting social inclusion and individual well-being.

Evidence of the nature of those relationships

- Members of the Unit have been invited to participate in key advisory groups, e.g. the LGBT *Hearts and Minds Group* established by the Scottish Executive (Rivers);
- Members of the Unit are invited by non-academic users, such as community projects and not-for-profit sector organisations, to collaborate on joint projects, e.g. studies of social inclusion through sport and other outdoor activities (McVittie, Goodall, O'May);
- Invitations to address meetings of key users, e.g. the Scottish Trades Union Congress on the health and well-being of young people in the workplace (McVittie, Goodall);
- Invitations to participate with key users in discussions with policy-makers, e.g. the Scottish Parliament Cross-Party Group on Palestine (McVittie);
- On the basis on relationships established by the Unit (O'May), Queen Margaret University (QMU) is considered to be a 'Community Partner' of Street Soccer Scotland <http://www.streetsocscotland.org/the-cause/>).

Evidence of follow-through from these activities

- Research from the Unit is shared in regular meetings of continuing networks of non-academic users, e.g. The European Peer Training Organisation (EPTO), an organisation that trains young people to challenge all forms of discrimination (www.epto.org). Findings from research conducted by the Unit were discussed at the first EPTO Peer Forum event held in Budapest in 2013, at a subsequent seminar held in Hütten (Germany) in May 2013, and are currently under discussion for inclusion in a toolkit of best practice.
- Research from the Unit has had an impact on practice, individual welfare and health, public debate and public policy as described in the impact case studies.

How the unit specifically supported and enabled staff to achieve impact from their research

- By operating a mentoring scheme whereby junior and new members of staff receive advice and guidance from more senior researchers as to how to maximise impact from their research;
- By incorporating time for research and for generating impact into the Unit's performance enhancement review process, allowing each researcher annually to plan their research impact activities for the coming year;
- By providing development funding to researchers in the Unit to enable travel and attendance at events and participation in activities that are likely to lead to impact.

How the unit made use of institutional facilities, expertise and resources

QMU describes its mission as being "to enhance the well-being of individuals and the communities it serves through socially and economically relevant education and research". QMU was an early signatory to the Manifesto for Public Engagement, produced by the National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement, and seeks to contribute to society by sharing knowledge with the

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communities with which it works. Consistent with this mission, QMU provides facilities, expertise and resources that are designed to promote the impact of its research. The Unit has made use of:

- Spaces within QMU for conducting research and for disseminating findings to key users and public audiences;
- The services of specialist teams within QMU, particularly the Research and Knowledge Exchange Unit and the Marketing and Communications Unit. These units provide expert support to the members of the Unit in disseminating and promoting research findings and in identifying opportunities for forming new relationships with key users, such as enquiries that come through the Scottish Funding Council's Interface scheme:
- Internal funding from Institutional resources for engaging in research, travel, and participation in networks, engagement with key users, and other impact-related activities.

c. Strategy and plans

Strategy for achieving impact

The Unit's strategy for achieving impact is to build on and develop further the approach described above. Members of the Unit aim to consolidate and extend existing relationships and the range and diversity of relationships that they have with potential key users and beneficiaries.

Current and future goals and plans

Specifically, the Unit plans:

- to increase the number of press releases and summaries of research plans that it provides to key users and the public;
- to develop a database and/or mailing list of interested parties and key contacts that will enable focused dissemination and discussion with relevant user groups and beneficiaries;
- to facilitate more open-forum discussions of research findings with user groups and beneficiaries;
- to ensure that new research projects developed within the Unit include, from the beginning, a pathway to impact statement of how the findings from proposed research will produce impact and the steps that will be taken to do so;
- to require PhD candidates to demonstrate how their proposed projects will generate impact;
- to require applicants for academic posts to demonstrate that their research either has generated impact, or potentially can generate impact, for non-academic users.

The future goal of the Unit is, by implementing these plans, to increase the impact of most research conducted by members of the Unit on key users, beneficiaries and audiences.

d. Relationship to case studies

The two case studies exemplify the Unit's approach to achieving impact as follows:

- Rivers' research (Case Study 1) into young people's experiences of education was designed to have an impact on the well-being of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) young people and children of same-sex couples, and on best practice of education providers. This research built upon previous relationships with LGBT groups and led to the development of further relationships in the *Hearts and Minds Group*. This engagement led in turn to an impact on Scottish Government policy towards LGBT equality and inclusion in education; education services provided by Scottish schools and teachers; the health and well-being of LGBT young people and those from LGBT families; and society, culture and creativity, and public policy and services beyond Scotland;
- Willock's research (Case Study 2) was designed to have an impact on practitioners' understanding of farmers' decision-making. This work reflected and led to further development of relationships with staff at the Scottish Agricultural College. Engagement with practitioners thereafter led to an impact upon public policy and services in the implementation of EU Nitrates legislation, and development of guidelines, producing an impact on the well-being of farmers themselves. It continues to have an impact upon current Scottish Government policy towards agriculture and climate change.

These case studies therefore provide examples of instances in which the Unit's approach has resulted in impact with extensive reach and significance.