

Institution: Leeds Metropolitan University
Unit of Assessment: 4a
<p>a. Context</p> <p>Psychology research at Leeds Metropolitan University has always had an applied focus, and given our location within the Faculty of Health & Social Sciences, the main users of our research are practitioners, professionals and policy makers working in areas related to health and wellbeing (broadly defined), including the NHS, public health and local authorities, forensic services and occupational health. Both our research groupings – Social and Health Psychology and Cognition and Action – produce research that is relevant to these users. Our research has impact beyond the UK and influences both policy and practice across Europe. Psychology staff are central to the new Centre for Applied Social Research (CeASR), which has a particular focus on applied policy research, and there is now a Health Psychology strand to the Institute of Health and Wellbeing (IHW), where research activity focuses on applied health projects funded by external agencies. Our research produces impact by providing an evidence base that informs policy and practice, thereby leading to improved outcomes for patients and other user groups. We also work to make science more accessible to the public by promoting discussion of our applied research.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>We have four major approaches to achieving impact from our research, as follows:</p> <p>[i] Collaborative research and dissemination</p> <p>Various projects led by Psychology staff have comprised multi-disciplinary teams involving stakeholders: National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)-funded research on penile cancer (Branney), NHS-funded male weight management research (Gough), Department for Energy & Climate Change (DECC)-funded energy-use research (Fylan) and EU-funded (Daphne programme) research to reduce sexual bullying across Europe (Milnes/Turner-Moore/Gough). This strategy has produced grant success and promotes dissemination to stakeholders and impact that reaches far beyond the research team. For example, Branney's work on penile cancer (Case Study 2) was undertaken as a multidisciplinary collaboration between clinicians and academics in direct response to an unmet patient need. When the funding for this project ended Branney continued to work with the research team to disseminate research findings to user groups, including a touring mixed media exhibition. The University fully supports this impact work and provides both time and funds to enable it to continue beyond the funded period of the initial research grant.</p> <p>More typically, dissemination events take the form of a summary of the research findings followed by breakout groups that discuss how the research can be applied. This often leads to continuing relationships with users. Recent events include a UK roadshow of research findings on psychology in optics for opticians and optometrists (Fylan: 2008-11), and an event with Leeds City Council and stakeholders on the findings from a Department of Energy and Climate Change project on energy use (Fylan: 2013). Another recent example: Turner-Moore, in collaboration with Waterman (Leeds) and Briggs (Chair of the Practice Committee for the National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers) have formed a think tank, comprising key UK policy-makers and treatment providers from prison, probation, mental health and community services, to explore the practice, prevention and policy implications of the Phase One findings from The Sexual Thoughts Project (STP), an international study of men's sexual thoughts and interrelationships with sexual offending. The inaugural meeting of the think tank was held on 4th March 2013 at Leeds Metropolitan University. In addition, our university hosts the Yorkshire Health Psychology Network meetings. This is a group of health psychologists working within the NHS and the public and private sector as well as those who</p>

are based with universities within the region. The network meets monthly at Leeds Metropolitan University and offers professional support for Chartered and trainee Health Psychologists, provides CPD in the form of invited speakers and exchange of ideas, as well as facilitating general networking. Wang is currently the Network's secretary.

[ii] *Research for policy makers*

Our second approach is to produce research for policy makers that can be used to directly inform policy decisions. For example, our research with the Department for Transport (Fylan, Case Study 1) has shaped how offender motorists are dealt with by the police. Our work for the Department for Work and Pensions (Fylan) has helped shape government policy around the fit note and services to help GPs support patients back to work (Fitness for work: the Government response to 'Health at Work - an independent review of sickness absence, January 2013). Our Centre for Applied Social Research (CeASR) supports staff to develop their policy research and holds regular meetings designed to maximise impact from policy research. CeASR funds a staff release scheme in which staff can apply for a sabbatical that they can use to disseminate their policy-relevant research. The University supports staff by valuing research reports produced for policy makers, rather than focusing solely on research outputs written for academic journals; this policy is embedded in university research and enterprise strategy and supported through events, consultancy activities and funding applications which involve stakeholders and produce policy-relevant reports.

[iii] *Presenting our research at practitioner conferences*

Thirdly, our Faculty actively encourages staff to attend practitioner and academic conferences. Many staff within the Faculty are also healthcare practitioners, and this fosters a culture in which telling users about our research and helping them to apply it to improve their practice is both accepted and expected. For example, Fylan is frequently invited to present her work at road safety forums and is regularly consulted by stakeholders, directly or through professional associations (the National Association of Driver Intervention Scheme Providers). This has led to an increase in the amount and the quality of the evidence base on road safety interventions. As well, Horton manages the UK Dreams Forum, a network of dream workers, therapists, practitioners and academics. In November 2008 she co-ordinated an international meeting at Leeds Metropolitan University at which her research on dream recall was discussed in terms of its application to therapeutic settings. Fawcner has delivered invited presentations on her work on body image to international eyecare practitioner conferences, while Turner-Moore presents her work on male sexual offending at practitioner conferences, for example the Annual Conference of the National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers. She is also an invited speaker at conferences for Forensic Psychologists within the prison service, which has led consultancy to the National Offender Management Service regarding the re-design of the Sex Offender Treatment Programme.

[iv] *Engaging with the public using social media*

We also encourage the general public to take an interest in the research that we produce. For example, Golonka uses social media to communicate directly with non-academics interested in her research. She writes a blog (<http://psychsciencenotes.blogspot.com/>) and uses a Twitter account (@PsychScientists) along with Psychology colleague Wilson. For example, the blog describes and invites comments on the theoretical framework for a new approach to neuroscience and cognition. One of her blog posts was recently linked to by the New York Times (Boing Boing, Mind Hacks) and has been discussed in the online version of Psychology Today. In November 2011 the blog had over 353,579 page views and she had over 3127 Twitter followers, primarily from general interest / educated lay person as well as from universities or research institutions.

c. Strategy and plans

The Psychology research strategy prioritises impact and is built on Theme 3 of the University's strategic plan: "*Being a catalyst for social and economic progress in and for our region, nationally and internationally, through research and enterprise*". The main principle is to disseminate research beyond the academic community. Each member of staff is encouraged to develop a relationship with at least one external organisation in order to further the impact of their research. These links are reviewed during the annual Professional Development Reviews. Examples of organisations we work with are: the Association of British Dispensing Opticians; the British Contact Lens Association; the National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers (NOTA); the Association of Chief Police Officers; Leeds City Council; and The Men's Health Forum. Colleagues from such external groups work with us in developing funding bids (e.g. NHS and Mens Health Forum colleagues worked on the NIHR-funded Penile Cancer bid [Branney] and a recently submitted NIHR bid on social network interventions [Fylan; Gough]). During our annual Psychology research event we run workshops on working with external stakeholders who (could) use our research. This includes what we have learned from the previous year and plans for increasing impact over the year to come.

Impact is also encouraged more widely by the University strategy of running regular awareness-raising events and exhibitions that are open to the public to coincide with special interest days, such as Dyslexia Awareness and World Cancer day. All staff are given time to engage with research users and are encouraged to form collaborations and develop projects with them. For example, the School holds a staff development fund available for academics to attend conferences, and those targeted at research users are given as much priority as those targeted at the research community.

The new research Centre for applied Social Research (CeASR) – is integral to our School's strategy for increasing the reach of its impact as it focuses on European as well as UK policy and provides a support structure for sharing and developing expertise on policy research. It aims to establish, foster and deliver a series of inter-disciplinary research programmes with the explicit objective of having an impact on policy and practice in four programme areas. These are: communication; sex, gender, identity, power and risk; employment, work and welfare; and security. Two Psychology staff (Golonka and Rickett) co-lead the first two of these areas. The Centre links to external funders and stakeholders, focussing on real-world policy and practice problems. CeASR funds five bursaries for MRes students each year, and students who propose research with clear policy implications are given priority. Three PhD studentships are also funded each year, again with a focus on research that has the potential to impact on social and economic progress, in line with the University's strategic plan. In addition, there is now a Health Psychology strand to the faculty-wide Institute of Health & Wellbeing, with Psychology staff working with colleagues from other disciplines and external partners on funding bids e.g. on men's health (Branney; Fylan; Gough).

d. Relationship to case studies

The selected case studies reflect our expertise in Health Psychology and feature two different approaches that we use to achieve impact from our research. Fylan's work on developing interventions for offender drivers illustrates how health psychology research, coupled with our strategy of disseminating the research at practitioner conferences, can have a wide-reaching effect on how offender drivers are dealt with by the police, and thereby contribute to making the roads safer. Branney's work on developing an information base for patients with penile cancer showcases how we identified an unmet patient need and worked collaboratively with clinicians to produce research that will meet this need.