

Impact template (REF3a)

<p>Institution: University of Worcester</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 4 Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience</p>
<p>a. Context</p> <p>Much of the research generated by the submitting unit is applied in nature and designed to be of benefit to non-academic users. Researchers in two areas, clinical/health psychology and occupational psychology, are particularly focused on generating research with impact but this is also true of other research areas in the unit.</p> <p>Researchers in clinical/health psychology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undertake commissioned research and evaluation for health and social care providers locally regionally (e.g. Department of Health West Midlands) and nationally (e.g. NHS Education for Scotland) seeking to improve health and social care provision and thus to provide public health benefits; • work with the voluntary sector (e.g. Cancer Care) primarily to evaluate and improve programmes offered by charities; • undertake research for local, national and global businesses, particularly in the healthcare sector (e.g. Mölnlycke Healthcare) to examine the efficacy of healthcare products from the user perspective, bringing potential commercial benefits to the business through subsequent product development but also to the product users; • engage with social enterprises (e.g. Care Farming West Midlands) to build an evidence-base to support their work. <p>Researchers in occupational psychology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undertake research with public sector organisations (e.g. West Mercia Constabulary) with a particular focus on work force development; • work with local businesses (e.g. Wellwithin) to improve their performance. <p>Other research within the unit is also impactful: for example, cognitive psychologists (Farrell) have developed EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing) for patients with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder which has benefitted victims of sexual abuse, returning military personnel, and those suffering the consequences of environmental disasters (e.g. it has been used with the victims of recent earthquakes in Pakistan and India).</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The University of Worcester's (UW) Strategic Plan (2007-12), identified the following key objective: "to support the development and expand the reach of our areas of research excellence, in particular interdisciplinary and multi-professional research and consultancy with social and/or community identified impacts". The submitting unit's approach to impact echoes this University objective.</p> <p>It has established close links with applied research groups from other subject areas in the University. In particular, it has worked with: the Association for Dementia Studies, a multi-professional group of educationalists, researchers and practitioners who are expert in the field of person-centred dementia care (e.g. on an evaluation of the impact of touchscreen technology on people with dementia); the Centre for People at Work, a research and consultancy centre with expertise in human resources and occupational psychology (e.g. on a project to improve membership retention for a fitness club); the Health, Fitness and Physical Activity research group in the Institute of Sport and Exercise Science (e.g. on a commissioned evaluation of child weight management programmes).</p> <p>As emphasised in section a, it has collaborated with a wide range of research users:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and social care providers, e.g. D. Upton's research for Wolverhampton Primary Care Trust (PCT) on developing health promotion activities which benefited their patient population (2010-12). • Commissioners, e.g. P. Upton's review of weight management strategies for overweight children, undertaken in collaboration with the Department of Health (DoH) West Midlands (2009-10).

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- Charities, e.g. Jones worked with the *Alive!* Charity on I-Pad use for those with dementia in (2011).
- International businesses, e.g. Upton's/Solowiej's work on wound healing with Mölnlycke Healthcare (2008).
- Local businesses, e.g. Helen Watt's research for Wellwithin, a local fitness club, on membership retention (2008-11).
- Government agencies, e.g. Catherine Steele's research commissioned by West Mercia Constabulary on Career Competencies to benefit career support and development for staff within their organisation (2006-9).

The unit's research has demonstrably contributed to the operation and development of the research user's with which it has collaborated, but the robustness of the research has ensured that it has impact beyond the immediate user. For example:

- findings from the Food Dudes Project (2010-2012) – which examined the effectiveness of a healthy eating intervention for children in the West Midlands - have had an immediate impact on school meal providers, schools, commissioners, etc. in the West Midlands, but have also been presented at e.g. the International Society of Physical Activity and Behavioural Nutrition in Austin, Texas (May 2012) because of their wider implications for child health;
- D. Upton's research on wound care has fed into practice developments in North America and Asia after being disseminated at the World Union of Wound Healing Societies in Yokohama, Japan (September 2012) and at the European Wound Management Association Conferences (Copenhagen, 2013; Geneva, 2010; Helsinki, 2009).

The unit has collaborated with a number of research users to co-fund PhD programmes with a clear aim of developing the service provided by the user and in most instances with a much broader impact agenda. Five PhD studentships have been funded in this way over the REF period:

- With Care Farming West Midlands (2009-12) to explore the impact of Care Farming in the UK. This research has been disseminated both locally and internationally and has resulted in an increase in support offered to care farms by DEFRA's (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) Rural Development Programme for England and, as a consequence, resulted in benefits for farmers, commissioners of health and social care services, charitable organisations and, ultimately, their service users.
- With *AimHigher* (2009-12) to review the programme's effectiveness and how models of support for students can be developed and implemented.
- With Public Health Worcestershire (2010-13) to examine alcohol awareness among a middle-aged rural population and to develop an intervention accordingly.
- With Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust (2010-13) to explore and improve access to Direct Payments for people living with dementia in rural communities.
- With Telford and Wrekin NHS Trust (2012-15) to examine attitudes towards healthy life expectancy in a deprived population are explored and can influence the development of successful health education messages.

The impact of the unit's research has been facilitated in several ways:

- Through a publication strategy that values, not only the peer-reviewed article, but also the professional journal article (e.g. the work of D. Upton and Solowiej was reported in professional journals for nurses and health care assistants, 2010). Most research is disseminated in this dual way.
- Through presenting regularly at practitioner conferences.
- Through working closely with user groups who help disseminate the relevance and value of the research findings more widely in society. For instance, in conjunction with the local health economy, the Worcester Health Research Network (with over 80 members) has been established and regular networking events have helped disseminate research findings and demonstrate how they can be used to best effect for the benefit of clinicians and patients.
- Through using active networks - locally and nationally - to promote the value of their

research and to engage with relevant communities to improve impact.

- Through working with partners in running conferences, seminars, workshops, etc. where research outcomes, recommendations and impact can be disseminated (e.g. the 2013 University of Worcester Research Focus Conference, *People, Policy and Practice*).

c. Strategy and plans

The submitting unit’s strategy for the next five years emphasises the importance of its research having a significant and enduring impact on economy and society, nationally and internationally, but especially regionally and locally, with a strong focus on improving health and well-being. Elements of the submitting unit’s approach to impact over the REF period have been particularly effective in ensuring that its research brings benefits to non-academic users and these have fed into this strategy. These are: inter- and cross-disciplinary working within the University; close collaboration with research users, particularly in the area of health and social care; the dual dissemination strategy; co-funded studentships. Other key drivers for the new strategy are: staffing; applied research groups; public engagement.

Staffing: Emphasis is now being placed on the importance of employing staff with a significant track record of undertaking research with impact but also with the potential to lead others in undertaking impactful research. In 2013, three professorial appointments were made, each appointment having a strong applied focus to their work: Elizabeth Peel, Professor of Psychology and Social Change, Eleanor Bradley, Professor of Health Psychology (the latter submitted to UoA 3); Joanne Smith, Visiting Professor, Early Interventions in Psychosis. Their work has had significant impact on local, national and international services and on local communities. For example: Peel’s ongoing collaboration with the third sector organisation PACE (a leading charity promoting the mental health and well-being of the LGBT community) is impacting on government policy as well as community practice. Thus, the Department of Health’s 2011 draft suicide prevention strategy incorporated work she was directly involved in.

Applied Research Groups: Professorial staff (Bradley, Peel, Smith, D. Upton) will each lead a research group focusing on an applied research area. In this way, early and mid- career researchers and research students will be supported in their research aspirations but also to develop research with the potential to change people’s lives for the better.

Public Engagement: The submitting unit is intent on ensuring that it engages the public with its research in line with the University’s commitment to the *Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research*. A significant strand to this strategy is to make maximum use of the Hive, Britain’s first joint university and public library, which provides a unique physical space for such engagement.

d. Relationship to case studies

The case studies exemplify the approach to impact in the submitting unit in a clear and concrete manner. The first, “**Improving the experience of patients with acute and chronic wounds**”, demonstrates how research has led directly to changes in practice, at both a national and international level. It shows how staff from the submitting unit (D. Upton and Solowiej) working with colleagues from other research areas at UW (Richard White, Professor of Tissue Viability) and with national and international businesses (Smith and Nephew, Mölnlycke Health Care, the Urgo Foundation) have produced research with clinical significance worldwide. The case study also highlights the unit’s approach to dissemination through practice-focused publications. The second case study, “**Enhancing the evidence base for child health interventions**”, exemplifies working closely with research users (the PCT) and with potential beneficiaries (children who are overweight) in order to develop evidence-based interventions. In the period, it has been a policy of the unit that regionally (in this example, West Midlands) commissioned research will result in publication and dissemination via peer-reviewed journals alongside its impact on services, communities and people (e.g., work of D. Upton and P. Upton on the Food Dudes resulted in local dissemination to school teachers, school meal providers and commissioners along with articles in international journals).