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Institution: University of Kent
Unit of Assessment: A4: Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience
a. Context

Founded as a department of Social and Applied Psychology, the School of Psychology at Kent has always placed social relevance at the core of its research, and has forged links with Government departments, charities, hospitals, schools, prisons and the business community. During the current REF cycle, these links have broadened considerably, leading to new, productive collaborations including those mentioned below. Together, these collaborations have changed social policy, remodelled offender rehabilitation programmes and improved public health and wellbeing. We generate impact across all of our three research groups: **Social Psychology, Cognition and Neuroscience** and the recently developed **Forensic Psychology** group, which we have strategically built up since RAE2008 (see REF5).

The Social Psychology group works with: Government users such as the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL), Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC); charities such as Age UK, Rights and Equality Sandwell, People United, the Anne Frank Trust, UK; and companies such as Lloyd’s insurance and Roke Manor. The group conducts research in areas such as prejudice reduction, defence, ageism and family-friendly work policies. One impact highlight (in addition to our four case studies) is Age UK’s use of our ageism research to lobby effectively for changes to the Equality Act 2010 and for legal protection against ageism across the European Union. This research has also been cited in three DWP reports, has been used by the Gerontological Society of America in its policy report, has contributed a module to the European Social Survey, and is being developed with FP7 (European Commission) funding.

The Cognition and Neuroscience group works with: Government users such as the Home Office; NHS partners in primary and secondary care; the BBC; the Royal College of Art; and Promis, a private rehabilitation clinic. The group conducts research on topics such as face recognition, addiction and reducing neurological disability. An impact highlight in addition to the REF3b vestibular stimulation case study is the treatment of problem drinkers in collaboration with St. Martin’s Hospital Canterbury and Promis.

The Forensic Psychology group works with: Government users such as the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), HM Prison Service, Lord Mayor of London’s Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), Police Forces (e.g., Kent, Stockholm), the Arson Task Force, Fire and Rescue Services (e.g., Kent, Northumberland), the NHS; and charities such as Factory East, generating research that informs offender evaluation and treatment for problems such as sexual offending, firesetting and gang-related crime. Our research has led to changes in legislation and to major enhancements of assessment and treatment of sexual offenders and firesetters (see REF3b). An additional impact highlight is work showing the deleterious effects of viewing pornography on children and young people, which prompted the Government to implement changes to the national curriculum and to increase the difficulty of accessing online pornography.

These partnerships have been made possible by our investments in staffing and research capacity (see REF5), our longstanding reputation for excellence in socially relevant research and our strategic approach to impact (sections b and c). They ensure that our research does not only impact on the psychological and related sciences, but also has a positive impact on society.

b. Approach to impact

The School of Psychology has developed and refined a strategic approach to impact through innovation and enterprise activities, funding and active encouragement of staff participation in research and dissemination, media engagement, and training and employability initiatives. Our activities are conducted within the framework of the University’s Research and Impact Strategy in prioritising research that has a positive impact locally, nationally and internationally.

Development of innovation and enterprise activities: The School has seen a significant rise in enterprise funding since RAE2008 with support at the University level through Kent Innovation and

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Enterprise (KIE), who provide a range of services to support collaboration with external partners. For example, there has been a fivefold increase in our total funding from UK industry, commerce and public corporations. Recently, we have had research directly commissioned or funded by non-academic partners (e.g., Kent County Council [KCC], DSTL). Several of our academic staff members are engaged in consultancy work for governmental and non-governmental organisations such as the Forensic Psychology group's work on mandatory polygraph testing funded by the MOJ; consultancies by members of the Social Psychology group (KCC, DWP, DCLG); and the Cognition and Neuroscience group's commercially funded trial for the treatment of migraine sufferers (with Scion Neurostim, a medical device company at Duke Medical School, USA). We work closely with a variety of non-academic users and, where possible, aim to build long-lasting collaborative links. One exemplar is our relationships with DSTL who have seconded a member of their staff to the School and who also fund a postdoctoral researcher based in the School. Several projects have been funded by DSTL to examine how defence-related issues such as cybersecurity and counter-terrorism may be understood and addressed through psychological study.

The appointment of a fixed-term Enterprise Officer in 2009-10 has facilitated collaborative projects with industry partners. Building on this success, the position was made permanent in 2013 and now also includes responsibility for employability. The School also has an academic Director of Enterprise (DoE), who – by liaising with staff, users and KIE – directly facilitates research that has been funded by non-academic users and works closely with KIE to foster business relationships.

Funding: The School grants all academic staff £1,000 annually to facilitate research, impact and engagement. The School has established an annual seed fund of £15,000 dedicated to the development of research that can lead to impact. Staff members can also put forward individual proposals for funding to the Psychology Strategy Group (comprising the Head of School and senior staff members) to support impact-related research and activities. Also, staff members can apply annually for Faculty grants of up to £5000 for projects with significant impact potential and 'Ideas Factory' funding is awarded annually to University staff members who have designed programmes to benefit outside organisations. One example from the Social Psychology group was the development of a workshop on organisational power that was delivered to the Institute of Financial Services (IFS) School of Finance. We have also fully funded the School's Child Development Unit – a purpose-built facility for research with children – which has allowed staff to forge working relationships with organisations such as the National Childbirth Trust.

Media engagement and dissemination: From the beginning of each research project, staff members are encouraged to identify potential media impact and to liaise with the University Press Office about disseminating research to the public. Psychology is one of the most active schools within the University for public engagement. Between January 2008 and October 2013 the School has been mentioned in 989 print and online articles in 604 unique titles, with a circulation of nearly 640 million. Examples of our prominent research include the impact of conspiracy theories on attitudes and behaviours, boys' academic performance in schools, treatment of neurological illness, perfectionism in sports and ageism in Europe. Our staff members have also appeared on programmes such as Newsnight (BBC2), the Today Programme (BBC Radio 4) and BBC World News (for a summary of our media coverage, see <http://tinyurl.com/ukcpsymed>).

Psychology at Kent supports other dissemination activities, such as the facilitation of an international workshop on gang membership (Eurogang Network), which has allowed the Forensic Psychology group to develop relationships with non-academic users such as the police and forensic practitioners. We have funded a broad range of research dissemination activities since RAE2008 including international meetings on emotions, perfectionism, social cognition, political psychology and social development. We continue to take an active approach to disseminating research with impact potential which also includes an active web presence (e.g., the Everyday Ageism Project, grouplab blogs). We have also run several professional workshops for non-academics, including workshops on risk assessment and training for clinicians (see <http://tinyurl.com/ukcpsycimp> for an overview of our impact activities). Members of the School have also presented their work at public engagement events such as Café Scientifique, The University of the Third Age, Skeptics in the Pub and the ESRC Festival of Science.

Training and employment initiatives: Initiatives across the School also assist in the development of relationships with non-academic organisations. These include undergraduate and MSc student

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placements, CASE studentships and the undergraduate Work Experience Scheme (WES), all of which involve Psychology staff setting up relationships with non-academic partners. During this REF cycle, we have also seconded members of our School to Government offices (e.g., the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology and the Behavioural Insight Unit).

c. Strategy and plans

In 2013, the School has developed an explicit Impact Strategy building on all the mechanisms we have already in place to generate impact (see section b). The strategy will be facilitated by our newly appointed, full-time, permanent Enterprise and Employability officer (EEO), who will work with academic staff, the DoE and KIE to grow our impact. Our Impact Strategy specifies three key objectives and new (i.e., additional) mechanisms to achieve them:

- *Develop the reach and significance of our most impactful research.* To achieve this objective, the School's strongest case studies of impact (eight are developed currently, including the four in REF3b) will be updated annually in partnership with the School's REF co-ordinator, which is now a permanent role. Researchers will be asked to identify the resources and support they need to grow impact. This will enable the School to prioritise its ongoing investments in impact, and to help us develop our most important impacts should key researchers leave the University.
- *Identify and develop emerging impacts.* To achieve this objective, all staff will submit an impact plan as part of their annual research appraisals, in which they identify existing or potential user groups and impacts, and will receive feedback from the DoE and EEO.
- *Create new impacts.* Attracting the interest of external partners and alerting staff to opportunities will help us achieve this objective. More specifically, this will involve: (i) hosting meetings and inviting external partners to meet us, as we achieved in our launch of the Centre for Research and Education in Forensic Psychology (CORE-FP) and the meeting we organised to host DSTL in 2010, both of which have contributed to further impact, (ii) appearance of external and KIE speakers in School Research Seminars (see REF5, section c) to highlight impact and enterprise opportunities, and (iii) the creation of webpages devoted to showcasing our impactful research and research capabilities, and our media coverage (see section b).

d. Relationship to case studies

Our case studies reflect the reputation and expertise of lead researchers and have been facilitated by infrastructure, administrative support and funding, both from the School and the university.

Our **vestibular stimulation** case study highlights the impact of a novel treatment for neurological disease and has led to improved patient wellbeing and change in clinical practice. It has been facilitated by the developing links between members of the School and local health professionals and the School's ongoing support of its Centre for Cognitive Neuroscience and Cognitive Systems.

Our other three impact cases represent the fruition of our investment in the Forensic Psychology group and the CORE-FP, which was launched in 2010. The launch was funded by the University and the School and was attended by many non-academic users. The School has invested significantly in staffing and support for the activities of the Centre's staff (e.g., by supporting staff to achieve Chartered Forensic status and to work one day a week as clinicians). The **polygraph** case study highlights an evaluation of the MOJ's mandatory polygraph testing for UK sexual offenders released on licence. The research led to a change in Government legislation that will make it compulsory for sexual offenders in England and Wales to be polygraphed as part of their licence conditions and was facilitated by the School's financial investment and administrative support for CORE-FP. The **firesetting** case study highlights the impact of an empirically informed theory of firesetting on the treatment practices of clinicians who work with adult firesetters. It was facilitated by the School's ongoing support for Professor Theresa Gannon's clinical work at a secure forensic facility. This has also been the case for the **female sexual offending** case study, which highlights research that has improved the treatment and assessment of female sexual offenders.

Reflecting on how these case studies have evolved has informed our future strategy to undertake research that will have significant impact and reach beyond academia. In the coming years, we will continue to develop and enhance our support mechanisms to ensure that the results of the School's research continue to have a positive impact on society.