

<p>Institution: University of York</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 20, Law</p>
<p>a. Context</p> <p>The University has a rich tradition of socio-legal research conducted in a number of social science departments and related research units. Much of this research has been ‘applied’ with clear policy relevance and, at times, direct policy implications and impacts. Part of the rationale for creating the Law School in 2007 was to complement and supplement this strength and to act as a hub for the various strands of socio-legal work in the University. By linking and strengthening York’s existing and diverse network of users of social science, the Law School aims to build upon these significant foundations and to maximise the broad impact of this socio-legal research. In addition, the Law School is developing strength in depth in doctrinal research and is already developing a track record in this regard.</p> <p>Thus the focus of the University’s legal research portfolio has and will continue to be diverse but with a notable emphasis on socio-legal research. Although the list of potential beneficiaries of this research is extensive, we aim to be of significance for three main user groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy-makers: to influence and inform the development and implementation of evidence based policy relevant to the delivery of public services • The legal services sector including the legal profession and the justice system: to influence and inform the development and understanding of law and legal doctrine • Citizens: to improve their ability, capacity and understanding of law to advance their own rights and interests.
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>Law at York seeks to have impact by working alongside, and targeting activity at, three primary groups of beneficiaries. Through focusing on citizens, policy makers, and the legal services sector, the unit promotes the widespread impact of all the various forms of legal research being undertaken at York.</p> <p>Policy-Makers: A key element of York’s approach has been to support centres of research excellence across the social science disciplines with strong connections to policy-makers. These research centres have built up particular expertise and developed reputations for research capacity and excellence, including a focus on law and legal phenomena. Much (though not all) of the work of these centres has been commissioned by policy-makers (as demonstrated in our Impact Case Studies). For example, the <i>Centre for Criminal Justice Economics and Psychology</i> engaged closely during its lifetime with policy-makers in Central Government and related agencies and produced a large volume of research that informed public debate and led to policy developments in the field of criminal justice (e.g., comparative work on criminal legal aid spending; work on prison offence behaviour monitoring). The <i>Social Policy Research Unit (SPRU)</i> and the <i>Centre for Housing Policy (CHP)</i> also have long-standing relationship with key government departments, conducting commissioned work that often crosses the borders of socio-legal research, directly influencing policy developments (e.g., SPRU’s practice recommendations for personal advisers in Jobcentre Plus; CHP’s work on social/local lettings agencies in England and Wales). By developing policy-relevant research expertise and maintaining relationships with policy-makers, these research centres have enabled themselves to conduct commissioned research, to advise policy-makers and so to facilitate the impact of research beyond academia.</p> <p>The Law School during this REF period has appointed staff to link and strengthen this broad network of experienced socio-legal research centres as well as develop new connections with other cross-disciplinary centres. Examples include: Hunter (joint research projects with the Centre for Housing Policy); O’Brien, (Early Career Researcher leading ESRC project with joint mentoring from SPRU); Bell (research projects commissioned by Govt. (DEFRA) with range of disciplines in the York Environmental Sustainability Institute); and Halliday (membership of a new Chronic Disorders of Consciousness Research Centre). In this way, the Law School has been establishing a hub for socio-legal, interdisciplinary research that informs and influences key policy-makers. The Law School’s clear interdisciplinary ambitions have always been to facilitate the broad and significant impact of that research for policy-makers through the insights and connections between law and other disciplines in the wider University.</p> <p>Legal Services Sector: Doctrinal legal research at the University of York has been influential in</p>

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informing the development and understanding of law and legal doctrine. Our approach to impact here has been (1) to appoint excellent doctrinal scholars; (2) to encourage and financially support their building of networks and their engagement with key practitioners (including hosting research events to which practitioners are invited); (3) to encourage publishing in key outlets; and (4) to undertake targeted dissemination of work to lawyers and judges. Despite the relative youth of York Law School, these techniques are already producing some 'green shoots' of doctrinal impact in terms of their use in litigation: examples include research on public liability insurance - *Durham v BAI (Run Off) Ltd* [2012] UKSC 14 (**Steele**); vicarious liability - *JGE v English Province of Our Lady of Charity, JGE v Portsmouth Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust* [2012] I.R.L.R. 846, per Ward LJ at [56], Davis LJ at [117] (**Morgan**); and fiduciary power - *Futter v HMRC* [2013] UKSC 26 at [1] (**Nolan**).

Citizens: During this REF period, the Law School has created and developed two significant impact initiatives that have been aimed at promoting the rights and interests of citizens. The creation of the *Centre for Applied Human Rights (CAHR)* in 2007 was another example of York's desire to create cross-disciplinary research initiatives with a clear impact agenda and focus. This research and teaching centre (created with the Department of Politics) explores the challenges of putting human rights into practice in a global context and has a particular focus on protecting international human rights defenders at risk. It hosts a 'Protective Fellowship' scheme for overseas human rights defenders, allowing them to spend up to 6 months at the Centre, during which time they participate in the Centre's activities as well as developing their own reflective practice through training and academic study. The Protective Fellowship Scheme is linked clearly to the research agenda within CAHR. This exposure to CAHR academics and their socio-legal research is intended to increase defenders' effectiveness and their ability to influence policy and practice when they return home, thus enhancing the sustainability of social activism. So far, 36 defenders from 30 different countries have benefitted from this scheme.

Furthermore, the Law School has a thriving Clinical Programme that includes research and practice. This comprises both a traditional Law Clinic and a more ambitious impact agenda centred on legal empowerment, legal literacy and the creation of a support network for Law Clinics across the world. The traditional Law Clinic is supported by doctrinal research and benefits citizens through the provision of legal advice on a wide range of matters. Academic staff act as consultants to the clinic and offer expert advice on a case-by-case basis, often based on their own research expertise. Since its establishment in 2010, the clinic has helped clients save or recover £120,000 through advice and assistance. The Clinic has also formed relationships with key local bodies to increase the reach of its work. *YorLaw* is a partnership between York Law School, York Citizens Advice Bureaux, Aviva Insurance and local legal practitioners, providing an outreach clinic offering free legal advice to the local and regional community. The broader impact agenda of the Clinical Programme builds upon a research foundation of legal literacy and the establishment of a network of Clinics around the world. This research, led by **Grimes** and funded by external funders as well as the University, has contributed directly to the establishment of Global Alliance of Justice Education (GAJE) and more directly new law clinics in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Georgia, Vietnam and Laos, benefiting the recipients of free legal advice in those countries too.

c. Strategy and plans

The overall strategy for developing the impact of legal research at the University of York is to continue to develop the initiatives that have been introduced since 2007 and target those user groups of our research identified above. Specific plans are identified below.

Citizens Researchers from the Law School and the Centre for Applied Human Rights continue to develop a research group focusing on legal empowerment along with other relevant social scientists at York. This group will harness the existing strengths of the Centre in developing world contexts, the research expertise of Law School staff who have conducted relevant work in domestic settings (e.g., **Grimes, O'Brien and Halliday**), and the experience of York social scientists who have conducted equivalent policy-relevant work in the fields of health and education (e.g., Kate Picket and Frank Hardman). This group are developing a programme of research that explores and tests the capacity of legal knowledge and legal processes to ameliorate the plight of the disadvantaged in various contexts. Over the next five years we will develop at least 3 significant policy-relevant research projects that examine the role of legal empowerment in national and international contexts (e.g., legal empowerment as health intervention; legal empowerment in

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transitional justice contexts; legal literacy and housing). Drawing on the experience and networks of existing user contacts within other related research centres, this research programme will engage and involve key stakeholders and funders at an early stage.

In 2014, we will further draw together strands of research on legal empowerment, legal literacy, clinical education and the Protective Fellowship Scheme operated by CAHR when the Law School introduces a postgraduate programme (LLM) in Clinical Legal Education, drawing on this existing research expertise. This programme will be targeted at those practitioners and students who can use their training to initiate clinical work in their home countries, thereby further extending the reach of the impact of our research on clinical legal education. The Law School will also continue to fund and support the work of the Law Clinic and its partners in relation to both the local area and developing country contexts.

Policy Makers The Law School will further develop its collaboration with other social science departments and research centres and will seek funding for more ambitious interdisciplinary research projects. By using and enhancing our social science collaborators' long-standing and diverse relationships with users, and by engaging with the research centres around legal issues, we will be able to increase the reach of the impact of legal research at York. Work in this vein has already begun. In addition to the examples of **Hunter**, **Bell** and **O'Brien** above, **Halliday** and **Morgan** are working with the Chronic Disorders of Consciousness Research Centre (along with researchers from the Departments of Sociology, Philosophy, English and Economics) to explore legal issues relating to those in permanent vegetative and minimally conscious states. Over the next 5 years, this group will develop a funded programme of research, including legal research, which speaks directly to difficult policy and practice questions about the care, treatment and end-of-life decisions relating to those with such disorders.

Legal Services Sector We will continue to ring-fence funds to support impact activities from doctrinal research, including the development and maintenance of relationships with key practitioners, relevant sections of the legal profession and related users of research. One specific focus will be to develop deeper links with a wider range of institutional users. For example projects looking at the working of the Land Registry (**Waring**); insurance industry (**Steele, Morgan**); and diversity in the Legal Services Sector (**Etherington**) will aim to build links to a wider network of potential end-users for research. We will facilitate these relationships through the encouragement of and support for research-led responses to law reform consultations and the hosting of events (such as practitioner and policy-maker workshops and Chatham House rules events) to develop research agendas and disseminate research findings.

Research Environment The Law School will continue to embed a concern with impact as a fundamental aspect of our research environment. This will include:

- offering training in the promotion of impact as part of the routine professional development of PhD students and staff. Individual researchers will be supported to practise writing for different non-academic audiences and to target non-academic beneficiaries in their dissemination.
- creating specific allocations in our existing workload model to incentivise and proceduralise impact activities as part of the research process
- development of the role of research impact director as part of the School's research committee.
- The inclusion of developmental support for impact and the role of related activities as part of annual performance review

d. Relationship to case studies

Although the research of many of the Law School's academics has enjoyed impact, given the youth of the School, the strongest impact stories from *York-based* research currently come from outwith the Law School itself. Both impact case studies are based on socio-legal research that took place within social science units that pre-date the Law School: (1) the Centre for Reviews and Dissemination; and (2) the Department of Social Work and Social Policy. These case studies exemplify the University of York's rich tradition of empirical work on law and legal phenomena that draws upon the disciplines of the social sciences and to which the new Law School is now contributing. The case studies have also informed our approach to impact, in particular, how we work with policy makers. The strength of these impact case stories also illustrate the benefits that the Law School will gain, as stated in our ambitions above, from engaging with colleagues who have developed diverse networks of research users and have built up experience of working with policy-makers and others to ensure that research has reach and significance beyond academia.