

<b>Institution:</b> University of Sheffield
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 20 Law
<p><b>a. Context</b></p> <p>The School of Law has long experience of applied research and engagement with user groups in fields of law, socio-legal studies and criminology. Types of impact include inputs into governments' policy making and legislation, changes to professional practice in the legal and criminal justice systems, and influences on Parliamentary processes leading to substantive law reform. UK government and public bodies that have benefited from the School's research include the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Home Office, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Parliamentary Select Committees, Probation Service and Probation Trusts, National Offender Management Service, Ombudsmen, Law Commission, Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council, National Information Governance Board for Health and Social Care, National Research Ethics Service, and UK Intellectual Property Office. Other beneficiaries include legal practitioners in the private sector such as Matrix Chambers, and campaigning groups and non-governmental organisations such as the Howard League for Penal Reform, English Heritage, and Victim Support Europe. The School's research has had international influence on professional practice and on legal and policy reform in jurisdictions outside the UK including Australia, Germany, Gibraltar, Ireland, and New Zealand.</p>
<p><b>b. Approach to impact</b></p> <p>The School treats impact as a fundamental part of research culture rather than as a separate activity. Engagement with practitioners, government bodies and user groups is at the heart of our mission to promote the interdisciplinary understanding of law, socio-legal studies and criminology globally.</p> <p>In 2008, Farrall took on the role of impact champion. School impact strategy has evolved in the context of the University's Impact Innovation and Knowledge Exchange programme and support from the Faculty's Research Exchange for the Social Sciences (RESS) hub. With a budget of £1.5m over the past 5 years, RESS has helped foster relationships with non-academic users and audiences in inter-disciplinary fields (including housing and planning, international governance, environmental protection, youth and childhood studies, local government and public health) in which 29 members of School staff are engaged.</p> <p>Based on experience of working with external bodies in criminology and socio-legal studies, key features of our approach to impact include: (i) collaboration with users in identifying relevant areas of common interest; (ii) the sharing and co-production of knowledge through partnership in research processes; (iii) dissemination of results of research through conferences aimed at practitioners as well as academics; and (iv) the deepening of engagement with users involving the building of trust in long-term partnership networks.</p> <p>The School is committed to developing societal benefits of high-quality academic research wherever such potential exists, both in individual scholarship and in collaborative projects. Colleagues are encouraged to identify impact potential through biennial Research Planning meetings (at which research plans are reviewed for the forthcoming five year period with two senior colleagues) and the <i>Research Buddy</i> scheme. Opportunities to develop and discuss impact plans are provided through <i>Redlining</i> (involving structured research activity during specific weeks in the academic year and in vacations) and the <i>Thinking Aloud</i> programme (REF5).</p> <p>The School encourages staff engagement with practitioners and other research users by the flexible scheduling of teaching and administrative commitments to enable membership of advisory or consultative boards (e.g. Taylor's position as Chair of the Ethics and Confidentiality Committee of the National Information Governance Board for Health and Social Care, and Stirton R's membership of the Sheffield Teaching Hospitals Clinical Ethics Group). Staff may apply to the School Research Fund to undertake impact activities, e.g. for travel and subsistence where external funding is lacking or has ended. The School's dedicated Research Support Office (RSO) supports applications for funding to external bodies and to the University for Knowledge Exchange grants, maintains links with practitioners and users through specific Research Centre e-mail lists, and organises dissemination activities to non-academic audiences.</p> <p>The centrality of impact within School research culture is reinforced through guest presentations by</p>

**Impact template (REF3a)**

external experts and members of the policy community, e.g. Professor Paul Wiles (former Government Chief Social Scientist and Chief Scientific Advisor to the Home Office, and Honorary Chair of Criminology in the School). We promote awareness of the impact agenda amongst the PGR community and support the development of impact within PGRs' research plans by fostering links with national and international-level external users through internships (e.g. Irwin-Rogers' ESRC-sponsored internship at the Sentencing Council in London; Bell's visiting position at the Human Genome Institute in Montreal; and Hescott's three-month internship at the European Patent Office in Munich).

School staff engage routinely in various types of research with impact, for example: evaluating government policy (Shapland and colleagues' research on the effectiveness of Restorative Justice schemes and on quality in probation supervision); informing changes in the practice and training of criminal justice professionals (Farrall's research on why people stop offending); influencing reform of judicial procedure (Shelbourn's research on sentencing for heritage crime) and administrative justice mechanisms (Kirkham's research on Ombudsmen); and contributing to substantive law reform (Plomer's research on the regulation of patents in human stem cells, and Taylor's on access to confidential data for medical research).

International beneficiaries of the School's research include the European Commission and European Parliament (Acosta, Hervey, MacLeod, Taylor); the International Committee of the Red Cross (Buchan); the Gibraltar and New Zealand Ombudsmen (Kirkham); and UNESCO's International Bioethics Committee (Kuppuswamy). UK users include the Howard League for Penal Reform (Farrall, Skinns); the English and Welsh Probation Trusts (Farrall, Robinson); National Offender Management Service (Shapland, Robinson, Farrall) and police services (Bacon, Skinns, Shapland); English Heritage (Shelbourn); the Health Research Authority (Hagger, Stirton R); the MoJ (Farrall, Shapland, Robinson); the Home Office (Shapland, Robinson); the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (MacLeod); and the Ministry of Defence (Buchan, Tsagourias).

**c. Strategy and plans**

The School is well placed to exploit the potential for increasing the societal benefits of its research. In order to help achieve a step-change in impact performance, in 2012 the research leadership role was divided between two Directors of Research, one responsible specifically for impact and its relationship to external funding, and the other for individual academic development and outputs. The Impact Development Network (IDN) was created in April 2013 as a mechanism for enhancing relationships between staff and external users in fora specifically tailored to needs and interests of beneficiaries who have a central role in agenda-setting, in contrast to conventional dissemination events whose primary focus is academic research. The IDN shares lessons about how impact is best achieved and serves to educate both researcher and user groups as to what can realistically be expected of present and future collaborations. The IDN's remit is:

- To bring together School staff and colleagues located elsewhere in the University with external users to discuss how to 'do' impact and (arguably more importantly) 'think' about how impact might be extended and developed in the context of high quality academic research;
- To help scholars whose research has not yet had an impact dimension to reflect on how their work might develop in this direction, and to identify potential new areas for engagement with external users and non-academic audiences;
- To coordinate the School's approach to impact with strategies for grant capture and internationalisation (REF5);
- To monitor the relationship between impact activities and the production of high quality outputs, and to explore ways of maximising synergy between these aspects of the School's research mission (for example through workload allocation);
- To maintain a critical perspective on the development of the impact agenda, and guard against unintended consequences, such as conflicts of interest, through ethical monitoring and review.

A core aim in the forthcoming period is to extend the reach of socio-legal and criminological research to wider audiences at national and international levels. While continuing to foster close links with UK government departments, agencies, pressure groups and NGOs, the School will target funds specifically for the development of relationships with international user groups.

We will explore new avenues for research income which are judged likely to yield high quality non-

academic as well as academic outputs. Seed-corn funding will be made available at University as well as School level through the University's Festival of the Mind and the Crucible programme for ECRs and Lecturers whose research has impact potential. Individual and collective support mechanisms (above) will be used strategically to identify new impact opportunities, in particular among ECRs and less-experienced staff.

In addition to supporting conference and dissemination activities, the School will provide increased resources to facilitate staff engagement with user groups through external activities such as membership of committees and boards. Staff are encouraged to make use of the University's generous consultancy allowance (35 days paid p.a.) for such impact activities.

The School will conduct audits to review the quality of externally funded projects on HEFCE and other funding bodies' impact criteria. Colleagues will be supported in practical aspects of their impact work (booking travel/accommodation, arranging meetings and disseminating information) by the School's dedicated Research Support Office (2.6fte) and IT team (2fte).

As well as deepening and extending the reach of impact of ongoing research in our three major submitted case study fields (Restorative Justice; Desistance from Crime; and Administrative Justice and Ombudsmen), the School will identify priority areas for impact development through its regular research review processes (REF5). For example, following the appointment of Burrell in 2013, we are already exploring how world-leading research on IP rights and trademark law might be utilised for the benefit of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in the local community and nationally, through 'pro bono' work building on the School's track record of success in advising local citizens on legal issues via the Law Clinic.

Other priority areas where the link between high quality research and wider societal benefits has been identified and targeted for development include: (1) research on how to satisfy the need for protection of individual patient privacy in confidential information while enabling personal data to be used for medical research in the public interest (in connection with work for the Ethics and Confidentiality Committee of the National Information Governance Board for Health and Social Care) (Taylor, Chico); (2) research on the human rights compliance of the private military and security industries (in conjunction with advisory work for the UK Accreditation Service and Chatham House) (MacLeod, Rühmkorf); and (3) research (in collaboration with English Heritage), recommending new Sentencing Guidance for heritage crime that will enable Magistrates to adopt more proportionate sentencing practices reflecting damage to the public interest value of the historic built environment (Hall, Shelbourn).

#### **d. Relationship to case studies**

Case studies returned in REF2014 result from our long-standing commitment to excellent socio-legal and criminological research with societal benefits beyond academia. The School has developed the impact dimensions of research in these and other areas through its research strategy and staffing policy. For example:

- Shapland and colleagues' work for the MoJ (for which Shapland received the Outstanding Achievement Award of the British Society of Criminology 2013) was aided through the allocation of time resources for the development of a successful application for further funding to the EU, and by the grant of an additional period of study leave to Shapland to enable impact work to continue after the formal end of MoJ funding in 2008.
- The School helped enhance the international impacts of Kirkham's work with the UK Ombudsman (stemming from ESRC-funded research) by funding visits to New Zealand for two weeks (Nov 2012) and to Gibraltar for 8 days (Sep 2012), coupled with flexible timetabling to enable release from normal teaching and administrative duties.
- The impact of Shapland and Farrall's work for the MoJ on desistance from crime was increased through the granting to Shapland of a period of leave in 2008-09 to develop links with policy makers in the National Offender Management Service, and by providing pump-priming to enable Farrall (and colleagues elsewhere) to apply for an ESRC grant to make a film about why people stop offending.

Such experiences informed the decision to create the IDN both to maximise existing impact and to develop this dimension of colleagues' research in other fields with untapped potential.