| **Institution: University of Leeds** |
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| **Unit of Assessment: UOA C-22 Social Work & Social Policy** |

**a. Context**

Since its inception in 1974, the School of Sociology and Social Policy (SSP) has maintained a commitment to engage research partners from the worlds of policy, professional practice and civil society – a strategy that predates calls for 'evidence-based policy' and 'research impact'. In line with our current research strategy (outlined in REF5b), our impact since 2008 has been based on investments in research collaboration to inform and improve access to social justice. Collaboration is, thus, as important in our relationships with non-academic partners as it is in our academic work.

The beneficiaries of our research are diverse but may often be characterised by their experiences of social injustice, marginalisation or social welfare - for example in their roles as informal carers, migrants, young parents, disabled people, ethnic minorities, sex workers, hospital patients, prisoners or users of other community and family supports. These characteristics reflect the core interests of our seven research centres, which span all dimensions of the equality and diversity landscape. Our research frequently employs participatory methods to engage such beneficiaries directly in the co-production of knowledge and in the co-generation of agendas for change.

To achieve change, we have sought impacts on public policy, law and services, impacts on practitioners, and impacts on health and welfare, while extending our influence also into impacts on culture and society. We seek to generate public debate and to influence policy across the scale, from the local to the global. Thus, our primary research audiences and users are located within the policy, advocacy and practitioner communities most influential to the lives of our intended beneficiaries – including legislators, policy entrepreneurs, civil society organisations and practitioners able to deliver improvement in services, educational opportunities, individual rights, community and family supports. Many of our projects have been developed and conducted in strategic collaboration with these kinds of non-academic users, so as to maximise their utility.

These non-academic research partners are drawn widely from international, national, regional and local government bodies as well as third sector and informal organisations. For example, at the European level we worked with the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the European Social Platform, and the European Agency for Fundamental Rights. At the national level, we conducted research with bodies such as the Department of Health, Home Office, UK Drug Policy Commission, Government Equalities Office, National Audit Office, Institute of Licensing, or the Local Government Association. We have worked with the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Equality Challenge Unit, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, National Council for Voluntary Organisations, National Youth Agency, and the Muslim Council of Britain. At the local level we have engaged with Local Authorities, NHS Trusts, charities, residents associations, religious and community organisations. We also seek an active engagement with print, broadcast and social media to enhance our social and cultural impact, as illustrated in the following sections.

**b. Approach to impact**

Our research impact is secured through a variety of methods and media, appropriate to the expectations and requirements of different users. However, our core strategy is based on longer-term partnership building and we draw on School, Faculty and University investments to sustain this (see REF5). Here, we describe the approach and three of its formative elements. To emphasise the breadth of our collective impact activity, all of the preliminary illustrations below are additional to the evidence provided by the four exemplar case studies that follow.

*1. Core Strategy*: we seek close engagement with potential research users before, during and after the research process. We seek long-term dialogue with multiple, interconnected partners so that we develop their influence in agenda setting, research design and communication of outcomes. We plan for sustainable growth in research teams to service these developing relationships. We pursue bodies of related studies that shape the way informed publics think about social problems and thus help turn neglected problems into policy problems. Although our four case studies operate in diverse fields of policy and practice, this idea of 'cumulative co-production' is their common denominator. Several additional examples of lasting, engaged scholarship can be found in the school's output – of which we offer two of longevity and significance as example:

*ESRC Group on Care, Values and the Future (CAVA)*: formed in 1999 and led by **Williams,** with **Irwin** and **Neale** contributing work streams, demonstrated how one investment spins into the next,

developing a proactive network of users beyond academia (e.g. Department for Children, Young People and Families, the Family and Parenting Institute, and Parentline Plus). ESRC-funded research (2005-9) on migration and care, and the ethics of care (awarded 'outstanding' for impact) built on these and led to a commissioned report from the United Nations Research Institute on Social Development. This became a major contribution in framing discussions and recommendations on care services made by the European Social Platform to the European Commission in 2011 and **Williams** was recently appointed to the ESP advisory board.

*ERSC Timescapes:* funded from 2007-12 under the Changing Lives and Times Initiative. **Neale** was the national lead for a team of 30 academics from 6 institutions with **Irwin**, **Emmel**, and **Hughes** directing SSP-led projects. The broad aim was to promote Qualitative Longitudinal (QL) methods, data archiving, sharing, and re-use. Collaborations included Barnados, Home Start (Family Support Charity) Big Talk Education (SRE provider), and input to the Scottish Government's national parenting strategy. These networks, and the Timescapes archive at Leeds, led on to the national provision of training and capacity building for users as well as researchers.

*2. Infrastructure support:* our user partnerships have often arisen in investments from the University's extensive pump priming funds. 19 small-scale knowledge exchange projects were conducted with £31k of Faculty HEIF funds, building relations with external stakeholders to disseminate findings and develop future collaborations. For example, **Emmel** and **Hughes** consulted and interviewed key stakeholders, including the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service, Graham Allen MP and Frank Field MP to shape new research agendas. **Manzano** drew on the Fund for International Research Collaborations (FIRC), to develop collaboration between Leeds General Infirmary and Hospital Vall d'Hebron (Barcelona) as a basis for comparative research on organ donation. **Holliday** used similar seed-corn investment, leading to an ESRC award (£500k), which, in turn, contributed to NHS directorate review of the regulation of cosmetic surgery. **Davis** received alumni funding from Campaign at Leeds for research that enabled contribution to the Council of Europe's Charter of Shared Social Responsibilities.

*3. Media engagement:* supported by University Press Office, we embrace media engagement as a route to impact beyond academia. For example **Tate's** research on beauty and 'race' led to invitations as consultant on the film production 'Untold Beauty', interviews on Woman's Hour and 'Colour Coded' (BBC), and public lectures at the V&A museum. BBC4 commissioned a two-part TV documentary based on Shah and **Priestley**'s book *Disability and Social Change,* while interviews based on **Bagguley** and Hussain's *Riotous Citizens* were syndicated across US state newspapers, the BBC, Channel 4 and the Guardian. Following the 2011 inner city riots **Bagguley** featured in more than 40 interviews with international print, radio and TV media outlets from 20 countries. In addition to appearing on BBC Radio 4 Woman's Hour, ESRC Follow-on funding enabled translation of **Sanders's** research on the night-time economy into a mobile phone app for dancers, providing essential information about personal safety at work, tax awareness and self-employment.

*4. Developing consultancy roles and advisory positions:* impact is strengthened by active exchange between the policy making and research communities. Many SSP staff, in addition to those highlighted in the case studies, have held appointments in policy agencies. Examples include: **Greenhalgh** who is a standing member of the Quality Standards Advisory Committee of the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (as an expert in audit and measurement); **Hines,** who acts as consultant for the Charity 'Gender Identity, Research and Education', which advises the DCSF on gender and sexuality equalities issues; **Barnes,** whose work on disability discrimination led to board membership of the National Council for Independent Living, establishing key features in the Government's 2008 Independent Living Strategy; and **Davis**, who sat on the Council of Europe's Expert Advisory Group on Shared Social Responsibilities 2008-2011.

## c. Strategy and plans

Our impact strategy is developed within School and Faculty Research Committees and approved by the University's senior team on an annual basis. The development and promotion of impact remains a core feature of our research strategy going forward (as articulated in REF5b). We will maintain the portfolio of approaches described above whilst seeking out new partners and new ways of creating dialogue. Planned developments include:

*1. Impact tracking:* our Research Committee is establishing new systems to monitor and evaluate our impact activities, in which we will incorporate features from the ESRC Research Outcomes System (ROS). By tracking impacts, and sharing this good practice through case studies, we will

develop our resources to strengthen the research utilisation culture amongst our research centres.

*2. Early planning:* there is a well-honed process at School and Faculty level for appraising and improving both research and consultancy proposals at concept stage. All new researchers are also encouraged to attend training workshops on Pathways to Impact. Responding to increasing funder expectations that proposals include sections on 'users' and 'impact' we will target enhanced mentoring and review for these aspects to ensure more project proposals are 'designed for impact'.

*3. Recruitment strategy:* the ability to foster collaboration and impact will become an increasing consideration in staffing appointments – ensuring that we maintain a critical mass of leadership and commitment for research utilisation. Recent chair appointments (**Roulstone** and **Shildrick**) have added significantly to our policy/practitioner orientation. For research students, we will work with the White Rose DTC towards a target of 20% 'collaborative' PhD studentship awards.

*4. Interdisciplinary research:* our research strategy (REF5b) recognises that impacting on key global challenges requires interdisciplinarity. Using HEIF funds, sector-based Hubs have been created, forming a gateway to the University's expertise across 14 identified areas of strength (in which we lead on social care). Given the ever-present social dimension to technological change we are also creating new alliances with STEM subjects and their industrial partners. Boosting these links is an objective of our new research centre in health technologies and social practice (THeSP).

*5. International impact:* we have developed extensive European and global research collaborations with policy impact or potential (see case studies and REF5), arising from institutional seed-corn investments. We will target both internal and external pump-priming proposals to facilitate the engagement of non-academic and industry partners in international network initiation (e.g. through collaborative proposals for Marie Curie training networks).

*6. Follow up:* research commissioners increasingly have their own impact agendas, augmented with supplementary awards. We have had 4 ESRC Follow-on Fund award-holders already, and will utilise their success to support colleagues to emulate their innovations with other sponsors.

**d. Relationship to case studies**

The examples so far frame a broad approach to impact that has been deeply embedded in the School over time. The 4 chosen case studies that follow represent mature applications of this impact strategy. In each case, impact stems from long-standing associations and the development of a 'track record' with non-academic policy actors. The cases are chosen to emphasise our involvement with contrasting user constituencies – from casting the methodological foundations of 'evidence-based' policy making itself, through building anti-racist policies in Universities, to helping the EU fulfil its policy obligations on human rights, and, shaping British social policy debates and Government strategies. They also reveal how specific pathways to impact have benefited from the kinds of strategic investments from the University and School, signalled earlier:

**Case study 1** frames our impact on the evidence base for policy making, benefitting from substantial investment from the University Transformation Fund (see REF5d). **Pawson** has been joined by **Greenhalgh** and **Manzano** in a 'health hub' that has developed new collaborations for impact (e.g. NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, Hospital Trust and Patients Association).

**Case study 2** highlights the international dimension of our strategy. **Priestley**'s leadership, supported by pump-priming from the University's Fund for International Collaboration and impact enhancement student internships from Faculty HEIF, forged partnerships with European civil society and policy makers throughout the research life cycle (from agenda setting to policy impact).

**Case study 3** illustrates the growing reach of impact from the local, to national and international stages. **Law**'s in-house project, funded by University Academic Development Funds, and developed through HEFCE Innovation funding, led to long-term and on-going policy dialogue and development with impact in HEIs and European institutions, including the Council of Europe.

**Case study 4** exemplifies our long-term impact. Building on previous research at Leeds, initiated under the ESRC CAVA programme, **Yeandle**'s long-term partnership with national carers' organisations sustained high-profile dissemination and policy impact in the context of the Government's National Carers Strategy. Benefitting from substantial University HEIF and Transformation Funding, it now forms the basis for an extensive knowledge exchange infrastructure through Leeds 'Care Connect'.