Impact template (REF3a)

Institution: Newcastle University
Unit of Assessment: 20 Law
a. Context

Newcastle Law School has a long-standing commitment to the pursuit of research impact. The School Research Strategy places emphasis on the goals of maximising the impact of its research and identifying a range of pathways to impact. It also expresses a commitment to resourcing School research activity so as to secure impact. Researchers in the School are committed to generating impact in a wide variety of ways that yield benefits in a range of domains (*e.g.*, legal, political, cultural, and economic). In its pursuit of impact, the School also recognises the complex patterns of reciprocal influence between law and society. The School's overarching research themes (the sociological imagination, lawyers as social architects, and interdisciplinarity) indicate the seriousness with which Newcastle researchers have reflected on the complex relations between law and society. Our commitment to bringing tangible benefits to regional, national and, in some cases, international users also reflects Newcastle University's mission as a 'civic' university – conducting excellent research with a socially relevant purpose. The principal beneficiaries and users of our research include the following:

1. *Governmental and Public Bodies*. The School's research has had an impact on the European Union and its constituent institutions in the area of European Union Law and human rights. In trusts law its outputs have had impact on the Ministry of Justice, and the Law Commission for England and Wales. Various governmental bodies, including Natural England and Natural Resources Wales, have used the School's research outputs in environmental law. Outputs from our Finance and Financial Law Research Group have had an impact on regulatory agencies (the Financial Services Authority (UK) and the *Conseil Deontologique* (Morocco)). The House of Commons' Foreign Affairs Select Committee has used Murray's work to support its conclusion that Saudi Arabia is a 'vital but complicated counter-terrorism partner for the UK and wider international community'.

2. *The Legal Profession and Judiciary*. The School's research has had wide impact in the legal profession: *e.g.*, in the field of gender and the legal profession, embracing male practitioners and the work-life balance (including parental rights and duties) (Collier), with trusts and estates practitioners and on legal and lay Trustees (Dunn). There are many examples of Newcastle outputs being cited by the courts in the UK, Europe and internationally: *e.g.*, its research on asylum (Gil Bazo) has been used by the judiciary acting in both judicial and non-judicial contexts, and by legal practitioners arguing cases before the English Courts and the ECHR; its research on tort and political philosophy (Mullender) has been used by the Supreme Court of India (MCD *v Assn, Victims Of Uphaar Tragedy*, Supreme Court of India, 13th October, 2011).

3. *The Policy Community and the Public*. The School's research has had wide impacts on processes of law reform and policy formation in the UK, the European Union, and in its constituent member states. The School's outputs on environmental regulation have, for example, influenced the work of non-governmental conservation bodies (*e.g.*, the National Trust) and stakeholder groups, and of landowners involved in developing new models for community management of common land. The School's research also raises awareness, through the media, of issues of practical concern to the public, public and private bodies, and others: *e.g.*, Mullender's contributions to the BBC's *Look North* News Programme (on the injustices and perverse incentives arising from 'success fees' (awarded to solicitors) in the field of accident compensation law (June 6th 2011)) and potential breaches of the right to life (ECHR, article 2) arising from the police's inability to respond promptly to emergency calls where a 'real and immediate' danger exists (*e.g.*, violent domestic abuse) (July 16th 2013).

b. Approach to impact

The School recognises that there are diverse pathways to generating socially beneficial and long lasting research impact. We have adopted a multifaceted approach that reflects: (i) the special characteristics of its target audiences; (ii) our impact goals; (iii) the diverse and wide character of our research; and (iv) the particular skills and preferences, and networks of individual researchers. The School has built relationships with law-making bodies, regulators, bodies concerned with

policy formation and implementation, and with the media. We have developed and maintained relationships with users of our research in the following ways:

1. *High quality public engagement, which establishes an on-going interest in our research among members of the public.* The School seeks to maintain a programme of public events at which it can disseminate its research to members of the public, as well as to key legal, policy and regulatory actors. For example, two conferences on anti-social behaviour in 2011 and 2012 (Brown), were attended by members of the public as well as police, local and central government officials, housing professionals and other policy actors. Our AHRC-funded conference 'Sustaining the Commons' (July 2013) was attended by individual farmers and other stakeholders, as well as by a wide range of policy actors and representatives of public bodies (Rodgers).

2. *Presenting and disseminating research to policy actors and inviting them to participate in events and networks that we organize.* For example, our workshop on 'The role of International Organizations and Human Rights Monitoring Bodies in Refugee Protection' (Brussels, June 2013, Gil Bazo) included UN, EU and national government officials, international human rights monitoring bodies, politicians from the European Parliament, and legal practitioners appearing before the Court of Justice of the EU and the European Court of Human Rights. Murray (as co-convenor of the SLS Public Law and Human Rights section) has organized a series of conferences (running from 2013 to 2015) whose target audience includes politicians, judges and other public officials.

3. *Advising research users on policy and strategy.* For example*,* Dunn has made consultation responses to the Law Commission and worked with Law Commissioners on the design and rationale for their reform agenda in trusts law. Gil-Bazo has given expert advice on asylum law and policy to the European Parliament. Murray is Special Adviser to the Joint Committee of the House of Lords and House of Commons on the draft Voting Eligibility (Prisoners) Bill 2013. Pedersen was a specialist adviser in a small-group expert consultation by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2013). This consultation explored obligations under human rights law relating to environmental protection and transboundary and global environmental harm and had the purpose of assisting the International Expert in the preparation of his next report to the Human Rights Council.

4. *Involving research users in an iterative process of collaborative research design - to ensure that the findings of our research are relevant for them.* The School strategically engages end users and policy actors in the co-production of knowledge and research outputs, and embeds knowledge transfer in the design and implementation of externally-funded research projects. For example, our AHRC project on the environmental management of common land engaged key stakeholders – the National Trust and the Foundation for Common Land – as project partners with a central role in designing and implementing the project's research programme. Likewise, it engaged them in disseminating its outcomes through project symposia and workshops for research users and key stakeholder groups.

5. *Conducting research that non-academic research users (including think tanks and government departments) fund directly.* For example, Dunn has carried out research for (and funded by) the Law Commission on the use of trustee exemption clauses. Gray has acted as a consultant on financial risk-management to the European Parliament, and has been an invited participant in Bank of England policy seminars on financial risk-management in the wake of the financial crisis.

c. Strategy and plans
The School directs its financial and human resources by reference to the priorities established in its School Research Strategy. Research managers in the School have revised this document to ensure that resourcing for activity that generates, identifies, and captures research impact is adequate and targeted to maximum effect. The following are key aspects of our strategic approach to research impact:

1. *A Strategic Approach to Generating Impact.* The School has integrated the identification of pathways to research impact into its support arrangements for developing research funding

applications and into the operation of its research groups. The School has a Director of Research Funding and a Research Grant Bid Writing Support Group that assists its researchers to prepare applications to external bodies for research funding. This enables colleagues to benefit from the experience of senior research active staff with experience as PIs, in order to identify potential avenues to research impact when writing and preparing grant applications. The School has also identified the pursuit of impact as a formal objective of its three research groups.

2. *Identifying, Enhancing and Capturing Research Impact.* The School Workload Allocation Model gives an allocation of 40 hours to a member of staff with relevant legal research experience to promote and capture the impact arising from the School's research. This is a multi-faceted role that is concerned not only with tracking impact data (quantitative and qualitative) but also with: (a) the interpretative task of ascribing significance to it; (b) spreading the use of good practice (*e.g.*, the use of questionnaires attuned to the practical concerns of user groups, and obtaining feedback from users in order to refine and improve the impact of School research and School events): and (c) capacity-building (*e.g.*, by promoting awareness within the School of relevant research methods), so as to embed the pursuit of impact within its research environment.

3. *The Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal.* The School's research also reflects Newcastle University's 'societal challenge' themes, which are key to its role as a 'civic' university. The School works closely with the Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal (NISR) to promote the University's social renewal challenge themes. Hollingsworth is the Institute's *social justice theme champion* and the University's lead researcher responsible for generating and promoting interdisciplinary research on social justice and injustice. She has a NISR budget to support her work and to promote events and research with wide impact: *e.g.*, a workshop that will involve housing practitioners and computer scientists in developing technology (an app, for example) to help housing authorities comply with their legal obligations relating to antisocial behaviour. The School's *Street Law* project also generates research impact through its work with youth groups in Newcastle upon Tyne and the North East region.

4. *Monitoring and Capturing Research Impact.* The School monitors the generation of research impact through its formal reporting mechanisms for research. For example, the School has used 'research-related activity' forms (completed by its researchers) to monitor annual research outputs, impact and activity by its academic researchers. This monitoring process has enabled the School to identify and track many sources of impact.

d. Relationship to case studies
The Unit's case studies reflect its strategy for generating impact outlined above:

Case Study 1: *Asylum and Human Rights in the European Union.* This case study contributes to legal changes that will secure the human rights of asylum-seekers in the EU. The dissemination of research to policy actors and invitations to them to participate in events and networks that we organize has played a significant part in bringing these changes about (above b.2).

Case Study 2: *Improving the Environmental Management of Common Land* has wide ranging impacts and benefits for governmental bodies, policy actors, NGOs and individuals (landowners, commoners, local community groups) with an interest in the management of common land in England and Wales. These impacts and benefits reflect a determination to involve research users in an iterative process of collaborative research design (above b.4).

Case Study 3: *Trustee Exemption Clauses* is an example of research that a non-academic research user (the Law Commission) has directly funded (above b.5). This work has had impacts of wide ranging reach and significance in the trusts industry and for the administration of private trusts.

All three case studies demonstrate our capacity to build and develop sustainable mechanisms that enable the public to engage with legal research. The benefits are clear: changes in legal practice implemented by public bodies, benefits to private actors and organizations, and public discourse informed by greater understanding of legal norms and practices and their relevance to social problems – and a more purposeful and participative research culture within our own Unit.