Environment template (REF5)

Institution: Brunel University
Unit of Assessment:22 Social Work and Social policy
Overview: Research in Social Work and Social Policy at Brunel is characterised by a multidisciplinary approach that focuses on improving the wellbeing of young and old; is informed by the voices of users and stakeholders; and aims to maximise political, practical, professional and academic impacts. Social work research is located in the School of Health Sciences and Social Care and has 3 key themes: user participation, children and young people, and ageing/later life; it is aligned with 3 University Research Centres – Citizen Participation, led by Prof Beresford; Youth Work Studies, led by Dr Alldred; and Children and Youth, led by Profs Harwin and Madge – and a University Collaborative Research Network, Brunel Institute for Ageing Studies (BIAS). Since 2008 we have graduated 7 doctoral students; 18 staff (16.1 fte) have been awarded 36 grants valued at £4 million which have supported 17 postdoctoral fellows; and our staff have published 156 peer reviewed research outputs, 50% co-authored with national and international collaborators.
b. Research strategy: Our Research Centres promote the development of excellent research, production of high quality outputs and impacts, and effective dissemination of research via seminars, workshops and master classes. They provide leadership and mentorship, and drive both disciplinary and cross-disciplinary study in our key research areas. The **Centre for Citizen Participation (CCP)** provides education, training and consultancy in user involvement and public participation in research and policy development. It has a specific commitment to user-led and emancipatory approaches to research and to the involvement of service users and the subjects of [social and] public policy. The approach of CCP infuses the research undertaken across our substantive research themes. Leadership in research focussing upon children and young people comes from the **Centre for Child and Youth Research (CCYR)**, which promotes interdisciplinary collaboration in the design, conduct and dissemination of research concerning the lives of children and young people and is associated with the Norwegian Centre for Child Research. The **Centre for Youth Work Studies (CYWS)** joined our School in 2010 and has a special focus upon work with young people on sexuality, sexual health, bullying and homophobia and strong European research partnerships. Leadership in research on ageing and later life across the University is provided by the **Brunel Institute for Ageing Studies** (BIAS), which focuses on research aimed at improving the quality of life and health of older people.
Achievements since 2008:(a) In 2008 we took a strategic decision to build a gerontology research group, the Brunel Institute for Ageing Studies (BIAS), by recruiting additional staff: 1 professor, 3 lecturers and an administrator. In recognition of its success in gaining external funding (16 grants, value of £3 million), BIAS was awarded a Collaborative Research Network status. This enables us to work more effectively within the School and across the University to facilitate interdisciplinary research in ageing. This is done via internal events, monthly workshops, public lectures and outreach activities and by hosting major academic meetings (British Society of Gerontology Annual Conference 2010) and supporting the development of national/external collaborations. The success of these activities is evidenced by the award of 30 collaborative research grants. The International Social Work Group closed after the departure of the Director, providing the opportunity to embed international perspectives across our research themes and centres.
(b)**Increased our external grant income** four-fold from £1 million to £4 million since 2008 with the award of 36 externally funded peer-reviewed grants to 18 members of staff from 15 different funders. This reflects the enhanced support and training for grant writing at the University level led by the Research Support and Development Office; the development and implementation of a robust system of internal peer review to enhance the quality of our applications; and the activities of our research centres/BIAS and our collaboration with national and international colleagues (e.g. Alldred's £450k EU grant on bullying and homophobia).
(c)**Strategically investing in staff with quantitative expertise**: 4 of the 6 staff appointed have quantitative methods expertise and we have invested in a dedicated statistical advisor post and the provision of training in quantitative methods. Our increased quantitative expertise is evidenced by the award of research grants using such methods (Victor's ESRC secondary data analysis award; Sullivan's Alcohol and Elder abuse study; Alldred's EU grant; Gilhooly's ESRC incontinence study; Vivat's spirituality study).
Plans for the next 5 years: Our 2012-2020 School Research Strategy builds on the University plan to place the University in the upper quartile of UK higher education institutions. Responsibility for the development of research strategy within Social Work rests with the School Research

Committee, chaired by the Deputy Head for Research. The Committee is responsible for all aspects of research including PGR students, integrity and ethics, career development of researchers, issues of equality and diversity as well as quality and impact/knowledge mobilisation. The Committee oversees the implementation of our School Research Plan, which has 8 key objectives to enhance our research profile: (1) *investing* in staff and infrastructure, (2) *improving* our research skills base, (3) *innovating* in research and methods, (4) *internationalizing* our research, (5) *interdisciplinizing* our projects, (6) *informing* the public and our stakeholders in our research, (7) *impacting* on social work policy and practice and (8) *implementing* our strategy and action plan. The Committee has a representative from each Research Centre, plus a nominated deputy ensuring representation at each of our termly meetings. The Research Centres develop annual plans within the context of the overall strategy, which are presented to the Committee for discussion and evaluated annually. Our Associate Deputy Head Research has specific responsibility for PGR students and chairs the PG Studies Committee. Our Impact Champion leads the transfer of research into policy/practice and co-ordinates the implementation of the impact strategy via the Impact Management Executive Working Party (IMagE).We also have an equality and diversity sub-committee. The Research Committee holds the responsibility for evaluating the success of our strategy in achieving the following objectives at the individual and research centre levels:

Increasing and diversifying research funding by:- (a) focussing upon research questions that are professionally, methodologically, conceptually or empirically of national/international importance (e.g. Horizon 2020); (b) embracing innovation in terms of research topics, as well as in methods whilst building on our established substantive and methodological expertise; (c) accessing new sources of grant income such as NIHR/EPSRC funding via the creation of sustainable long-term research links with engineering/design academics and health/social care staff and provider organisations (e.g. those already established with Hillingdon Hospital and Local Authority) and international collaborations with Europe, North America and Australasia. Meetings and seminars, combined with 'brainstorming' sessions organised by our Research Centres/BIAS focussed upon specific research initiatives facilitate the development of cross-disciplinary research that addresses key RCUK priorities. Our internal system of peer review, overseen by the research committee, is central to the achievement of this objective.

Consolidating publications in high quality journals by focussing upon original and relevant research questions, enhancing the rigour of our research and adopting sophisticated analytical and theoretical frameworks. Support for knowledge mobilisation (impact/knowledge transfer) is provided at University level by competitive funding for Knowledge Transfer Leave and Knowledge Transfer Secondment Schemes(e.g. awarded to study of caring in minority communities and loneliness projects).Mentoring of staff by experienced researchers, research centre seminars and annual staff appraisals underpin the delivery of this objective as do the conferences, practitioner workshops and seminars organised by our research centres which underpin the generation of a vibrant and sustainable research culture.

Enhancing the research capacity of our staff: We will continue to develop our expertise in quantitative methods via a series of workshops, including use of secondary data sets, delivered by our specialist statistical adviser. We enhance our knowledge base via internal seminars lead by the research centres which also compete annually for University funding to deliver tailored seminar series focussing upon specific areas (e.g. seminar on A question of religion: young people and identity in contemporary multi-faith Britain hosted by CCYR; Youth Hedonism Seminar Series in 2012-3 lead by CYWS) and generating new external collaborations.

Consolidate research activity into a single substantive research theme focussing on the lifespan and integrating our interests in ageing, youth and childhood underpinned by our core value of user involvement and engagement. Specific research topics will be informed by societal/policy/practice relevance as well as conceptual and/or methodologically originality including: (a) population ageing, a major social challenge identified by Horizon 2020; (b) 'new ageing' populations – i.e. those with chronic illnesses (such as cystic fibrosis) who, in previous generations, would not have lived long enough to reach old age; (c) growing up and growing old in the context of diversity (d)vulnerability in childhood, youth and old age(e) evaluation of social work and social care.

c. People, including: Staffing strategy and staff development: The University and School staffing policies are designed to promote world-leading research with impact and support the development of a vibrant academic environment. Senior managers have undergone special

training in equalities and diversity in research. All members of staff are required to attend equality and diversity training sessions upon appointment and to update their understanding of equality and diversity via an annual web training exercise. The Head of School is the University's Equality Champion whose leadership is central to creating and maintaining an inclusive culture where equality is practised and diversity is valued (e.g. the establishment in 2011 of our Equalities and Diversity Research Sub Committee to ensure that our research strategy does not inadvertently discriminate against people because of their gender, ethnicity, or any other characteristic). The University has achieved an Athena SWAN Bronze award for its efforts to promote the equal opportunity of women in science-related subjects. While the award is specific to science subjects, the University is embedding the policy and practices across all disciplines.

Investing in staff with strong research profiles or, for early career researchers, demonstrable potential for research leadership, underpins our recruitment strategy. This is central to our objective of expanding our national/international research profile by increasing grant income, enhancing the quality of research outputs and maximising the impact of our research. Since 2008 we have enhanced our research capacity by strategically investing in new staff whose research meshed with our key research themes of ageing and youth/childhood (Victor, Martin, Jupp) and/or provided methodological expertise in quantitative methods (Liu and Rajan-Rankin) replacing 5 staff who left (1 Professor, 1 Reader and 3 Senior Lecturers/Lecturers). All appointments are research active, hold professional registration as appropriate and hold full academic contracts that encompass research, teaching and administrative portfolios. We support and develop staff to undertake high-quality research by a range of activities including in-house support (e.g. mentoring and membership of research centres); University level (e.g. staff development courses) and bespoke programmes.

Of the 18 (16.1 fte) staff returned, 7 are senior (Reader or Professor level) staff, 4 mid-career staff and 6 junior staff (including 2 ECRs).We have benefited from the appointment of experienced staff to take on key leadership roles (e.g. Associate Deputy Head for Research) from whose experience our future leaders can benefit. Via appraisal we have identified mid-career staff to take on key research leadership roles and a range of strategies including mentoring, attendance at University courses provided by the Staff Development Unit (e.g. ASPIRE leadership course) and bespoke customised training will ensure that there is a seamless transfer of leadership and responsibilities. ECRs are the 'next generation' of research leaders and are involved in the management of the research centres, attend a range of relevant committees (Research Committee, Ethics Committee) and Staff Development workshops as well as receiving mentoring to prepare them to assume responsibility for research leadership. The University promotion process, which is criteria-based and relates to both mid and senior staff, and overseen by Senate, actively rewards research which is both of excellent quality and which generates impact. The University Equality Champion organises workshops to support women intending to apply for promotion: since 2008 3 staff have been promoted (Madge to Professor, Ansell to Reader, Sullivan to SL).

Annual appraisal supports staff research activities by identifying and meeting career development needs at early, mid and senior career stages**.** Appraisal provides an opportunity to agree on research targets for the coming year and to reflect on broader career development needs which are then met through tailored packages of support, utilising University, School and bespoke resources and reviewed and refined annually. The University Staff Development Unit provides a comprehensive range of workshops for academics at all levels, including topics such as Research Ethics, Managing Research Staff, Influence and Impact for Researchers, Working with External Collaborators, and Preparing for Promotion and a 6 month Leadership Development Programme (ASPIRE) for those appointed to key leadership roles (Research Centre Director).

The University runs a competitive research leave scheme as part of the infrastructure to sustain and develop its research-intensive culture. This enables staff to concentrate on a specific programme of work that will lead to identifiable and measurable outcomes (publications and grant applications) that will generate impact. Harwin and Sullivan were both awarded research leave in 2009/10 resulting in; (a) Harwin's successful research proposal to Nuffield to evaluate the family courts pilot and (b) Sullivan's award of the competitive Tilda Goldberg Fellowship to develop a programme of work focusing on alcohol abuse and older people, (funded by Alcohol Research UK), and her development as a future research leader in social work (via the development of the G8 gerontological social work group).

Staff development is individualised and appropriate to the career stage of our staff. Two staff

meet the REF criteria of 'early career' (ECR) status and 3are newly appointed lecturers. New/probationary lecturers are assigned a research mentor (a senior academic to advise and support them in developing their research strategy) and linked with a research centre to help them establish their research portfolio (e.g. the grants awarded to Rajan-Rankin). Teaching and administrative responsibilities are reduced for the 3 years of their probationary term and a tailored programme of staff development overseen by the Director of Social Work Studies (Harwin). Newly appointed lecturers/ECR staff have priority access to funds to promote attendance at national and international conferences. Understanding Impact' forms part of the induction for new academic staff. Our research leaders provide opportunities for ECR/probationary staff to participate in research grant development by joining (or shadowing) research grant development, making their research networks available and providing opportunities to review papers for journals etc and gain experience of supervision of doctoral students via our Research Advisory Committee system.

Staff development is not confined to those at the early stages of their careers. For mid-career staff, especially those from a professional background who do not hold a doctorate, we provide opportunities to undertake this. We expect mid and senior staff to embrace research leadership and mentoring roles and tailored staff development is available to support staff in developing this expertise. We support our mid-career and senior staff to take leadership roles in the wider University and disciplinary communities by participating in research grant awarding bodies, organising national/international conferences and editing key research journals.

The University recognises and values its research staff and was awarded the European Commission's 'HR Excellence in Research' in 2011 in recognition of its commitment to the recommendations of the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers* has a publicly accessible Concordat Action Plan and a Concordat Working Group. Our Researcher Development Programme (RDP, led by the Graduate School) provides activities to support the delivery of the national Researcher Development Framework (RDF) which describes the knowledge, competencies and attributes of a highly skilled researcher and provides a framework for personal, professional and career development. These activities include researchers' network forums, a range of workshops, and opportunities for personal and career coaching, activities which are informed by CROS (Careers in Research Online Survey), a national survey of contract research staff conducted every two years.

Since 2008 we have employed 17 Post-doctoral Research Fellows (PDRFs) supported by competitive research grants. These staff are managed by the project PI in accordance with the Concordat via annual review at which their subject, methodological and generic/transferable skills needs are evaluated using the 4 domains of the Researcher Development Framework. Identified training needs are met via a combination of formal courses (both in-house and external (the research Team Leadership course run by the Leadership Foundation was attended by Martin)) and bespoke activities including 'shadow' peer reviewing internal grant applications, organising conferences/meetings and leading the writing up/presentation of research papers. The Research Committee receives a summary of these appraisals and development plans which are discussed at the July meeting and inform the development of our research staff support activities. Opportunities exist for PDRFs to join research grants being led by senior staff (e.g. the ESRC seminar series awarded to Victor included 2 PDRFs as applicants, as did the secondary data analysis award). In line with University good practice in research all funded research projects have an established and agreed authorship policy with PDRFs given opportunities to publish and present at conferences. Our PDRFs have presented papers at national (British Society of Gerontology, British Sociological Association 2013) and international conferences (e.g. Gerontological Society of America 2010, 2011). All PDRFs employed since 2008 have successfully obtained posts following their employment with us either as lecturers (Hemming at Cardiff, King at Bournemouth) or further research posts (Williams at Oxford; Zubair at Manchester; Cairns at Dundee; Ahmet at the OU).

Responsible for assuring that the quality and integrity of our research is vested in the School Research Committee. Research is managed in accordance with University Statement of Good Research Practice which sets out the principles to which all researchers must adhere and clearly states the actions that constitute research misconduct for which there are established investigative procedures. The University reserves the right to audit research projects for their adherence to these key quality and integrity assurance criteria. Data collected by researchers is stored for a minimum of 5 years and maintained in accordance with Data Protection Act requirements. The Deputy Head for Research and Associate Deputy Head for Research run workshops on research

integrity for staff and PGR students. All research with human subjects is subject to review and approval by the School Research Ethics Committee within the framework of the University Code of Research Ethics. In 2008 we enhanced our Research Ethics Committee and its procedures for approvals. Membership consists of a Chair, who is a member of the Research Committee, a School Research Ethics Officer and Deputy, 11 members and an administrator. We report annually to the University Ethics Committee, who audit this, and to the School Research Committee.

Research students: University strategy and policy for doctoral students is managed by the University Sub Committee for Postgraduate Research Degrees of which our Associate Deputy Head for Research (Victor), a post established in 2009,is a member. We are committed to the academic and broader development of our doctoral students and evaluate these at induction and then annual review using the Researcher Development Framework and an appropriate training plan (including employability skills) developed and refined annually. We draw upon a range of University, School and research centre resources to support these development plans. The Graduate School runs a Researcher Development Programme consisting of workshops and seminars to develop personal and professional skills and enhance employability and our staff contribute to these (e.g. Gilhooly annually runs workshops on getting grants for final year research students with the Deputy Director of Research Support and Development Office). We introduce our research students to the Graduate School at induction; encourage engagement with other research students at the Graduate School and ensure that our students participate in the annual Graduate School Poster conference. Since 2004 the School has run a conference at which our doctoral students present posters and oral papers (depending upon their stage of development). This conference is run and organised by the students giving them opportunities to develop key transferrable administrative and generic skills. The Deputy Head holds an 'open house' meeting with all PGR students twice a year. Students are members of the appropriate research centre and are represented on the PG Studies Committee and the School Board.

The Mary Seacole Building, in which our School is housed, provides a large room with computers for research students and the Graduate School is a welcoming place for PGRs to come for advice and quiet study, which is accessible 24/7 by a proximity card. There is also a Postgraduate Common Room, a kitchen, a Quiet Study Room, a Conference Room, and internet kiosks. Away from the main Graduate School building, the Postgraduate Study Centre, Bannerman Centre, is a computer room accessible only to postgraduate students. In addition to the Graduate School, our students attend doctoral masterclasses, a series of seminars focussing on theory, methods and skills, hosted by the School of Social Sciences and to which our staff contribute (e.g. Martin, Vivat).

To maximise successful completion within the RCUK timeframe we operate a highly selective and enhanced admission policy and shadow Doctoral Training Centre best practice by holding progress reviews at 6 monthly intervals, there is also a formal 'confirmation' process at the end of the first year, as the initial registration for all students is for M.Phil. The annual progress review (which encompasses the establishment and monitoring of clear annual targets) ensures that doctoral students are on a trajectory to successfully complete within the established registration duration; as 18 out of 20 currently registered students are part-time, the 6 month progress reviews are a key mechanism for maintaining enthusiasm and ensuring progress is being made. We adhere to the University supervision policy of a minimum of 8 recorded supervisions per annum and have enhanced our supervisory capacity by the development of Research Advisory Committees consisting of a Director of Studies, a supervisory team consisting of subject and methods experts, specialists in areas such as impact and dissemination and a 'trainee' supervisor for whom this provides training in doctoral supervision policies, procedures and practice.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities: Since 2008 we have invested significantly in both senior and junior staff and facilities leading to an increase in grant income. The Mary Seacole Building was opened seven years ago, providing us with excellent research facilities.

Research income. Since 2008 17 staff have been awarded 36 externally funded peer-reviewed grants from 15 different funding sources valued at £4 million which represents a four-fold increase in funding as both principal investigators and collaborators in large multi-centre studies and involvement in research consortia. This was absent in 2008. Half of this grant income is from research councils (ESRC and AHRC) and we have been successful in obtaining 3 large grants to the value of £2 million from the cross-research council New Dynamics of Ageing Programme (ageing in ethnic minority people, Victor; incontinence, Gilhooly and financial elder abuse, Gilhooly); the ESRC secondary data analysis initiative (Victor for a study on loneliness using the

analysis of ELSA data) and the AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society programme (Madge) and the first grants award (Martin and Wainwright). We have secured funding from Europe (Alldred's AHEAD and DAPHNE projects and Harwin's study of parental alcohol abuse) as well as key charities including Nuffield (Harwin), Dunhill Medical Trust (Victor), JRF (Gilhooly), Leverhulme (Victor), Big Lottery and WRVS (Beresford) and government bodies (e.g. DFID-Ansell) as well as more locally based funders (Berkshire PCT and London Borough of Hillingdon). Partnerships with both user groups and universities are also a feature of our funded research as illustrated by Beresford's Standards We Expect project funded by JRF and which included Values Into Action and Centre for Social Action, De Montfort University. Our portfolio includes awards to staff as sole PI (e.g. Alldred) and as part of large research consortia (e.g. Victor's involvement in care homes studies lead by Hertfordshire and Nottingham Universities and funded by HTA and SDO and exercise uptake for older people lead by St Georges and funded by RfPB and HTA). Alldred's 2013 EU project involves 10 partners and 6 associate partners such as the Catalan Government Youth Agency and the London Borough of Lewisham) and her 2009 EU project involved 3 national partners. We are active collaborators in two large research consortia awarded grants of £7 million as part of the ESRC/NIHR dementia research initiative: Gilhooly and Sullivan are part of a group lead by UCL and Victor part of the team lead by Bangor (scheduled to start 2014).

Our strategy for the next 5 years is to consolidate and enhance our policy of seeking funds from a broad range of funders from small charities/foundations, through the larger charities, to research councils and Europe. Three priority areas for funding in the next 5 years are Europe with the Horizon 2020 initiative, ESRC and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). To achieve this we have embedded the following processes in our research activities: (a)**a robust system of internal peer review of grant applications** which requires applicants to seek and respond to a minimum of two reviews by experienced research colleagues in the School before applications can be considered for School approval for submission. At University level we benefit from the creation of the University ESRC Strategy Committee that peer reviews all applications to the ESRC and our successful award of an ESRC secondary data analysis project on loneliness was an early beneficiary of this system; (b) **a formal staff development programme to support and develop grant writing** by our staff via a series of small group workshops led by our professoriate in collaboration with our Research Support and Development Office. The Office maintains a library of successful research grants, across a broad range of funders that are available for review; (c) **inclusion of ECRs and PDRFs** in teams developing grant applications. This provides an opportunity for staff to learn the craft of preparing successful grant applications in terms of both academic quality and rigor and the other supporting elements (e.g. costing, managing, planning, dissemination, ethics and governance and data management). Beneficiaries of these opportunities were those involved in the ESRC seminar series and secondary data analysis applications. We also support ECRs/PDRFs to develop their own funding applications as appropriate (Rajan-Rankin); (d)**our annual School research conference**, organised by staff, both showcases existing research and provides opportunities to identify emerging research themes, areas of collaboration and potential future training needs. Our research centres hold ad hoc 'brainstorming' sessions to bring researchers from different disciplines together in response to specific RCUK initiatives or in preparation for these(e.g. the Youth Hedonism Seminar Series). At a University level, Brunel organises annual "Buzz" events that focus on providing opportunities for Brunel's researchers to network with each other, develop new skills and initiate innovative cross-disciplinary research(e.g. the Brunel Gender and Sexuality Interdisciplinary Research Centre grant development day-Cullen and Alldred)and help researchers identify the policy relevance of their research (e.g. Gender-Sexuality Policy Research day held in October 2013); (e) **pump priming funds are awarded on a competitive basis** to develop potential funding bids. We have been awarded significant research grants following the award of such funds (e.g. Gilhooly's JRF project on risk, rights and responsibilities and Alldred's funding from Hillingdon).

Infrastructure and facilities: To support our research we benefit from a range of infrastructure support. At University level the Brunel Computer Centre provides a comprehensive set of high quality networked software and data services to support research. Brunel University library holds approximately 570,000 books and provides a comprehensive collection of academic print (6,604) and electronic (27,878) journals and other resources. Provision for social work is enhanced through a subject liaison librarian.

Research dissemination and impact is central to our mission as since our foundation in 1966

research at Brunel University has been guided by our Royal Charter goal to pursue *"research and enterprise for the benefit of individual and society"*. Dissemination is promoted by the University's Open Access mandate and additional measures relating to the accessibility of research data in line with Research Council requirements to ensure that for articles published in journals that provide this option, they are available to the widest possible readership. The Brunel Research Database (BRAD) facilitates publication management and the Brunel University Research Archive (BURA) showcases our research by making the full text of research publications freely available via the internet (subject to copyright permissions) and complements standard publication. The University also provides central structures to support our research including marketing and promotion, research publications and access to University and School internal research funds and the Knowledge Transfer Leave and Secondment schemes. To facilitate the generation of research income, the University has a centralized Research Support and Development Office (RSDO), which advises and supports social work researchers in the development of national and international funding proposals and supports initiatives at School level and the Business Development Service supports developing collaborations with industry.

Staff have access to appropriate computing resources which were upgraded in 2012/13 and software packages to facilitate the high quality analysis of data. To maximise the potential of the data collected by our staff we are creating a 'research archive' to make data available for re-analysis by colleagues (subject to approval by project funders) who often bring insights to material they have acquired some familiarity with. Including stakeholders is a core value to assure the relevance of our research. We maintain user groups as part of our infrastructure (e.g. the Brunel Older People's Reference Group consisting of over 100 older people and the Living with Psychosis Group) to ensure that our research is grounded within the context and concerns of the 'real' world. Members of these groups act in a range of roles including as co-researchers, research advisory board members, research participants-especially for the development of research instruments and schedules- and provide feedback on research findings via 'challenge workshops' and wider public engagement events. The Centre for Citizen Participation has a service user advisory group.

e. Collaboration or contribution to the discipline or research base: Collaboration with statutory (local authorities and the NHS), voluntary and 3rd sector organisations (AGE UK, Rights of Women, About Young People, local groups in Hillingdon and Oxfordshire; the Campaign to End Loneliness) and other universities both nationally (e.g. Manchester, UCL, Southampton, London Met, Newman College Birmingham and Sheffield) and internationally (University of Toronto, University of Malta, UNITO (Italy), URV (Spain)) underpin the development of our research and the successful dissemination and impact of our research. We have established links with a range of research users who enrich our research environment by facilitating knowledge exchange. This is evidenced by Harwin's keynote address to Association of Directors of Social Work Annual Conference, Edinburgh and her membership of the ESRC funded Project Oracle Expert Panel an on-going project to promote knowledge transfer of evidence based interventions in the field of applied social research. Beresford's work on user involvement in research has been recognised across a range of policies at local, national and international level. Victor's research and collaboration with Swansea and Northumbria and Age UK Oxford was instrumental in the creation of a specific charity (Campaign to End Loneliness).

Participation in collaborative research at both national and international level by our staff has resulted in the development of successful research funding applications, publications and knowledge mobilisation. Of our 36 funded projects, 20 involve national collaborations and 10 international collaborations. Alldred's EU project involves links with Ireland, Italy, Spain, Serbia and Hungary; Harwin and Madge were involved in an 18 country EU wide project focussing upon the impact of parental alcohol abuse on children; Vivat leads a 10 country study, including Europe, Australasia, South America and Japan to develop a measure of spiritual well-being for people receiving palliative care for cancer and Beresford's Power Us study, Developing the Involvement of Service Users in Social Work, involves the Universities of Lund and Lillehammer. Links with Kontos at Toronto resulted in Victor being awarded a Canadian Institutes on Ageing postdoctoral award for Dr James Shaw to spend a year at Brunel. Two recent awards from the ESRC/NIHR dementia initiative involve collaborations with UCL/Thomas Pocklington Trust (Gilhooly and Sullivan) and Bangor/Cardiff/LSE (Victor). We have established research partnerships with a wide range of professional and third sector organisations that have resulted in successful funding of projects (e.g. London Borough of Hillingdon/Action on Elder abuse and University of Bedfordshire Sullivan

Alcohol abuse). Victor is part of a consortium of SMEs and commercial market research companies awarded a £4M 8-year contract to evaluate up to 30 Lottery funded loneliness interventions across England. **Participation in leadership roles** such as journal editorship, seminar series and conferences are seen as important staff development opportunities across the academic career. Our staff contribute to these activities at the level appropriate to their career stage (e.g. Alldred joining the International Editorial Board of Sex Education in 2012;Rajan-Rankin an ECR Associate Editor of *Community Work and Family;* Victor Editor in Chief *Ageing and Society;* Cullen Editorial Board member *Gender and Education*; Sullivan Editorial Board member *Ageing and Society);* edited special issues(e.g. *Sociological Research Online*(Cullen, Bradford and Alldred in 2012)*Journal of Sex* Education(Alldred2012) and *International Journal of Social Work* (Sullivan 2012)); peer review for a wide range of national and international publications (e.g. Community Work and Family Journal; Applied Psychology, the Gerontologist). Editorial roles enable us to develop our ECR/PDRFs by involving them in peer review activities and providing experience of journal editing which are important career development skills. Two PDRFs have been appointed as editors of a special issue of Ageing and Society on ethnicity. Our staff have given invited keynote papers at national (Victor, BSG 2011;Alldred MMU, 2011; Ansell Plymouth; Harwin, Stirling, Lancaster) and international conferences (Alldred, Spain 2012; Victor Moscow, 2013; Harwin, Dublin and Ansell, Addis Ababa).The vitality of our research culture is illustrated by the large number of international contributions to its seminar series and conferences, organized by our research centres and groups (e.g. by Martin at the GSA in 2013; Rajan-Rankin and Alldred at Gender work organisation in 2012).Since 2008 BIAS has organised50+ events and hosted the 2009 British Society of Gerontology Annual Conference and supports the Annual World Social Work day lecture, and CYWS hosted 2 one-day conferences and a half-day equalities training event for youth work practitioners. Staff are also actively involved in a range of national bodies concerned with the development of research funding and development in the UK (Victor-ESRC/HTA; Cullen and Alldred co-convene a national network of sexuality researchers via BERA and run a strand of the annual national conference) and internationally (Ireland-Gilhooly; Sweden–Victor; Montreal-Martin); Beresford is a member of the Minister for Social Care's Leadership Forum.**Staff are actively encouraged to contribute to the development of their professional associations and disciplines** as a means of identifying emerging research areas, developing new collaborations and generating networking/career development opportunities for emerging researchers as well as contributing to the development of practice. We are very supportive of PDRFs' involvement with professional/disciplinary organisations as a means of building their networks, developing their professional skills and enhancing their employability. PDRFs associated with BIAS (Cairns, Ahmet, Zubair, Pitkohva and Masey) are active within the British Society of Gerontology running the ERA grouping and have been involved in organising national conferences (e.g. British Society of Gerontology conference at Brunel in 2009; BSA Youth Studies and BERA Sexuality Studies conference in 2011).Sullivan is Secretary elect of the British Society of Gerontology (BSG) and edits Generations Review (the BSG newsletter) whilst Gilhooly and Martin are past President and secretary respectively. Martin co-chairs the Ageing Body section of the British Sociological Association. Harwin is linked with the British Association for the Study and Prevention of Abuse and Neglect to Children (BASPCAN) and is organising the 2013 conference. **We have also contributed to the development of practice.** Alldred's DAPHNE Gap project is developing innovative training on gender violence for professionals working with children and young people. Harwin evaluated the feasibility and effectiveness of using the American model of the 'Family Drug and Alcohol Court' (FDAC).Sullivan and colleagues have worked with Al'Balqaand Pennsylvania Universities in Jordan to review the development of social work in Jordan and the challenge of an ageing population (funded by the British Council and British Academy respectively). This resulted in the creation of professional standards of practice and the creation of the Jordanian Association of Social Workers and 3 peer reviewed papers written with Jordanian colleagues. Sullivan leads the G8 Gerontological Social Work initiative supported by BIAS This involves collaboration with Bristol, Swansea, Keele, Birmingham, Kent and Oxford Brookes to develop the profile of social work with older people in Britain based on the Hartford Gerontological Social Work Initiative in the USA. This initiative has produced 3 published papers; presentations at the European Social Work Research conference and a report on developing gerontological social work for The College of Social Work that complements their report making business case for adult social work practice.