

<b>Institution: University of Surrey</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: UOA 23 Sociology</b>
<p><b>a. Context</b></p> <p>Achieving impact from research is core to the philosophy of the Sociology Department. Staff focus on applied sociology and have an established and extensive track record in conducting policy-driven sociological research. The notion that social research is itself part of the wider social world that it investigates has shaped the research ambitions of the Department and is reflected in our research work, activities and audiences. Given this, the Department has developed a significant research-impact profile and its members are well-connected to non-academic organisations and policy networks.</p> <p>Our main researcher-user relationships include:</p> <p><b>Central government organisations:</b> e.g. Home Office, Defra, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Justice and the Environment Agency.</p> <p><b>Public sector bodies, particularly at a local and regional level:</b> local government departments and regional police forces. Some of our impact extends beyond UK borders. This is reflected in the 'Global Dynamics of Extortion Racket System' project which has benefitted the European Commission and a range of national stakeholders (<a href="http://www.gloders.eu">www.gloders.eu</a>), as well as in our advisory work with a consortium of US and African policymakers in the RCUK-funded Qualitative Innovations in CAQDAS project.</p> <p><b>Third Sector national organisations</b> including the Runnymede Trust, Age Concern, Victim Support, the National Union of Students and the Howard League for Penal Reform.</p> <p>Impact typically manifests as informing public policy, improving the public understanding of social issues, along with influencing professional standards, guidelines and training.</p> <p>The Department's research impact extends beyond the more traditional social and public policy networks and includes engagements with business and retail organisations. Examples include work with global companies on their cyber security and software development (including BAE/Detica and British Retail Consortium) and with Philips Lighting, which was a partner organisation in the RCUK-funded Somnia project (<a href="http://www.somnia.surrey.ac.uk">www.somnia.surrey.ac.uk</a>).</p>
<p><b>b. Approach to impact</b></p> <p>The user-relevant research outputs and activities of the Department are diverse and innovative. This variety reflects both the Department's broader commitment to engage with a wide non-academic audience and its detailed understanding of the different needs and interests of such groups. The recognition of the complexities of ensuring research impact among non-academic audiences has been translated into the Department's approach. The four core areas of activity are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <b>Partnership building</b> between academic and non-academic users. This can be seen in particular projects working with government departments (e.g. Home Office and Defra) as well as in the research design of projects being led by Department staff. For example, RCUK-funded research projects and FP7-funded projects have specifically incorporated non-academic audiences and research users (e.g. Ministry of Justice, UK Border Agency, College of Policing and NHS) as participant stakeholders within the full research process.</li> <li>2) <b>Expert advice and data provision</b> whereby much of the activity in the Department has been focussed on providing detailed knowledge and empirical evidence to inform a wide range of policy developments. Examples of this form of impact include: involvement with statutory and non-statutory agencies seeking to combat hate crime (including The Sophie Lancaster Foundation and Victim Support network), contributing to policing definitions of the category of</li> </ol>

hate crime (in particular providing a definition of 'alternative subcultures' to be used by Greater Manchester Police and the Sophie Lancaster Foundation), dissemination of sleep and life course research findings from the Somnia project to statutory, private and Third Sector social care, health and well-being networks (Age Concern, Anchor Homes, Health Development Agency) and work with the Welsh Careers Advisory Service (on international student mobility).

- 3) **Policy advising and evaluation** focusing particularly on policy development and practice. Examples of Department policy-advising activities can be seen in our work on cyber crime and involvement in increasing online security in business and policing contexts (e.g. BAE Systems Detica), our interactions with Defra and the Environment Agency (EA) in developing environmental capacity-building in relation to flooding, and work on Muslim identities and social cohesion with the Runnymede Trust. Alongside policy advice, the Department has a track record in the specific evaluation of the success or otherwise of policy implementation. Reviewing Domestic Abuse Programmes (Ministry of Justice) and the analysis of the environment and community impact of dam building in an equatorial African nation for a consortium of US and African policymakers are key examples of this.
- 4) **Training** as part of its well-established activities the Department has delivered and designed research-related training for non-academic user groups. These have been in the form of training packs as well as face-to-face facilitated workshops. Examples include training packs prepared as part of the flood hazard research project for the Environment Agency (EA), Defra and Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) Networking Project for the Home Office and Ministry of Justice. Furthermore, staff have been involved in the successful delivery of training workshops to a diverse range of policy audiences. These include crime survey training for the Home Office, training for HEFCE on widening participation and student finance and knowledge transfer partnership (KTP) work with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets in relation to service delivery practices.

**Departmental Support:** The Department has sought to maximise its use of wider institutional resources and staff. As part of its commitment to engage and interact with non-academic audiences, the Department has established a strong relationship with the University's Media and Publicity Office and staff have had extensive contact with media environments.

**University Support:** The Department is supported in its approach to impact by the University's Research and Enterprise Support (RES) team. As well as providing KTP expertise and support for Consultancy, RES provides project management for the key partnerships and requisite commercial, legal and IP expertise to help enable the creation of impact. Consultancy work for the Government Office for London and the Ministry of Justice were secured with support from RES.

### c. Strategy and plans

Much of the Department's research is planned with impact and application in mind from the outset; highlights are included in section (b). The successes in the period, particularly our longstanding tradition of close and sustained relationships with third parties, have informed the Department's strategy for achieving impact in the future.

Goals and plans to maximise impact:

- **Strengthen long-term interactions with policy communities** and non-academic networks and user groups. This goal is reflected in the priority currently given to training and methods awareness. The Department is expanding its Day Course Programme - offering research-based training to non-academic research-users. Alongside a wide range of in-house courses, the Programme has run training for the Department for Work and Pensions and a mental health charity. The Department intends to maintain and build on longstanding relationships through periodic updates with our key policy community members, aiming to understand their needs

and outline our research plans to end users at an early stage.

- **Target recruitment of new staff** with an applied profile and/or track record which fits with the theoretically informed and policy relevant sociology that is the Department's 'signature'. Examples in the 2008-13 period are Brooks (with expertise in education policy and youth policy), Garland (hate crime and hate crime prevention), King (local policy networks and service delivery), McGuire (online security and cyber crime), Neal (diversity and community policy-making) and Redclift (migration and citizenship). The Department's future staffing strategy will 'intensify' its existing research strengths and seek to strengthen the Department's existing and planned research centres.
- **Generate revenue streams that will support applied research** and consolidate the Department's reputation with potential end-users. This will build on the Department's success in securing RCUK income where award holders have identified and effectively devised pathways to impact strategies. These successes include projects with formal arrangements with policy partner organisations (European Commission, Environment Agency and Defra) as well as those with more informal policy networks such as Runnymede Trust.

Future strategic plans include a commitment to increase exposure and dissemination of impact activities within the Department through the creation of an 'Impact Champion' role. The postholder will be well networked in non-academic policy environments and use this expertise to facilitate research-policy initiatives and partnerships within the Department. S/he will report to the Sociology Departmental Research Committee.

#### d. Relationship to case studies

The three case studies exemplify the approaches to realising impact outlined in section (b). Furthermore, the case studies have contributed to the successful organisation of the Department's research environment and generated related, impact-focussed research projects.

Case Study 1: Social inequality and vulnerability: informing strategies and policies on flooding: The research work and relationships detailed in the flood hazard case study can be seen as continuing to resonate and inform environmentally-focussed research in the Department. For example, the successful relationships that the case study established have been sustained through a current Defra-EA project, and in the Defra, ESRC, Scottish Government-funded Sustainable Lifestyles project.

Case Study 2: Improving the quality of life for citizens in the UK through shaping the organization and practice of policing: A good example of the long-standing nature of our relationships is demonstrated in this case study. Research conducted at Surrey, adopted by Surrey Police, has fed into the Department's current research and also contributed to the Independent Review of Policing chaired by Lord Stevens (former Metropolitan Police Commissioner 2000-2005) on intelligence modelling and future police strategies. Similarly, there are close relationships between other members of staff and regional police forces and organisations within the criminal justice system.

Case Study 3: Simulating Knowledge in Innovation Networks: This case study draws on a long-standing and innovative research programme in computer based modelling and social simulation. It is deeply embedded in a continuing set of relationships with private sector organisations (such as Nua) as well as agencies of the European Commission (such as DG Connect), actively influencing policy development. These relationships and a series of other partnerships are central to the further development of work within the Department's highly productive Centre for Research in Social Simulation. The three case studies exemplify the approaches to realising impact outlined in section (b). Furthermore, the case studies have contributed to the successful organisation of the Department's research environment and generated related, impact-focussed research projects.