

Impact template (REF3a)

Institution:

Birmingham City University

Unit of Assessment:

UoA 22 – Social Work and Social Policy

a. Context

This document details the impact of Centre for Applied Criminology (CAC) research upon HM Prison Service (HMPS), Ministry of Justice (MoJ), National Offender Management Service (NOMS), Police Service, voluntary sector, local authorities and the public. Our research has had impact of varying nature and extent upon attitudes, awareness, opportunities, process, practice and understanding of these audiences which is described in greater detail below.

CAC engages in high quality, innovative and rigorous research spanning a range of issues across the Criminal Justice System (CJS), with a particular emphasis on offenders and prisons. Impact is central to the philosophy of CAC and is embodied in our aims and objectives, summarised here and detailed further in REF5. Our overarching aim is to generate applied research that recognises and responds to the needs of stakeholders in and around the CJS. Our objectives are to (1) promote better public understanding of the CJS; (2) improve the operation of the CJS within specific agencies and institutions; and (3) enable offenders to tackle barriers to desistance. As such, we have a range of non-academic user groups, beneficiaries and audiences, upon whom our research has an impact in ways that directly relate to our aims and objectives – as summarised below.

HMPS, MoJ & NOMS. The emphasis upon prisons as a central theme in CAC's work generates impact within a specific institution, HMP Grendon – with whom we have a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) - as well as HMPS, MoJ and NOMS more widely. Our research within HMP Grendon identifying the needs of specific groups of prisoners – those serving sentences for crimes relating to paedophilia and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) prisoners – has enabled an enhanced understanding of need, changes and benefits to prison practice and a subsequent reduction or prevention of harm and negative effects upon staff and prisoners within this institution. The research was presented as evidence during an inspection of HMP Grendon, extending the reach to the MoJ, demonstrating effects on the understanding of civil servants of BME prisoner need. Research which evaluated the prison's Artist in Residence led to the residency being extended by two years – a clear benefit to opportunities available to prisoners, which are also enhanced by the annual HMP Grendon debate between students and prisoners, led by CAC. In addition, CAC research into prison arts programmes is used as evidence by the Arts Alliance to the MoJ and NOMS in demonstrating the value of such programmes in reducing reoffending. Therefore our impact relating to a range of audiences, beneficiaries and user groups within and around the CJS clearly aligns with CAC strategic objectives (2) and (3).

Police Service. CAC's research into violent crime, particularly murder, and the research exploring police-media relations during murder investigations, has been applied by West Midlands Police in the training of their Senior Investigating Officers (SIOs). This research informed a series of training seminars commissioned by West Midlands Police during the assessment period and new research into 'family annihilation' is being used in the training of SIOs around family murder and domestic abuse from October 2013. This impact can be described as effects on, changes and benefits to understanding, practice and policing in the criminal investigations of West Midlands Police. This impact is clearly and directly aligned to objective (2).

Voluntary Sector Organisations. The CJS embodies the 'mixed economy' - voluntary sector organisations have always been and will continue to develop as CJS service providers and advocates for stakeholder groups. CAC research has an impact upon a range of voluntary sector organisations in different ways. Research with the New Bridge befriending organisation investigating the impact of befriending upon desistance has led to effects on the understanding of outcomes for the organisation, enabling them to better evidence the impact of their work in a turbulent and critical funding environment. CAC's insight generation and evaluation research for organisations delivering prison arts programmes has provided robust evidence of the impact of such initiatives on rehabilitation and as such demonstrates impact in terms of benefits to their evidence base. Impact in relation to our work with voluntary sector organisations therefore clearly aligns with all CAC strategic objectives.

Local Authorities. Research commissioned by Wolverhampton City Council in 2011 and 2012 into prevention and early intervention with children and families linked to the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) resulted in changes and benefits to understanding, process and practice in using outcomes measurement in work with children and young people. West Midlands Police are one of several multiagency groups using the CAF in Wolverhampton so this clearly aligns with strategic objective (2).

Impact template (REF3a)

Public. CAC's strategic objective (1) embodies the concept of 'public criminology', meaningfully engaging the public in debates about crime and punishment at local, national and international level. As such, the public are a key audience for CAC's research and our impact upon this audience can be described as effects upon their attitude towards, awareness of and understanding of the CJS. Impact flows through two main channels, firstly, via the local, national and international television, radio and press outlets where we invite critical discussion of our research and secondly through documents in the public domain in which our research features – for example the 2012 Annual Report of the New Bridge organisation and the Research Council UK's 'Big Ideas for the Future' publication (2011). On average, CAC receives around 10 letters and approximately 50 emails every week from members of the public detailing how our research has informed them about contemporary issues in the CJS.

b. Approach to impact

CAC's approach throughout the assessment period has grown from the philosophy of needs-led research that the centre is committed to. CAC's aim is to generate applied research that recognises and responds to the needs of stakeholders in and around the CJS, therefore, impact is a thread interwoven in all of our activity, from project planning to dissemination. We ensured that this was maintained and developed through various means during the assessment period. Firstly, well established contacts built over a number of years between academic researchers with external organisations were – where appropriate - formalised. Examples include the MoU with HMP Grendon (2009), sponsorship of a place on our MA Criminology by the Howard League (2009-2013), the partnership with New Bridge in delivering a CPD course (2013-ongoing) and the commissioning of a series of SIO murder investigation training seminars for West Midlands Police (2011-ongoing). Secondly, members of CAC are encouraged to take on appropriate roles within a number of these external organisations to ensure that CAC researchers remain close to the issues affecting the CJS and the needs that this gives rise to. Dr Caulfield (2010-ongoing), for example, became a formal advisor to the Arts Alliance and a Trustee of Good Vibrations, an arts organisation working with offenders; Professor Wilson is Chair of the Friends of Grendon charity, and Vice Chair of both The Howard League for Penal Reform and New Bridge. Professionals working within these external organisations are also encouraged to become members of CAC and other University structures, Professor Brookes, for example, is Visiting Professor at BCU, as well as Director of Therapeutic Communities at HMP Grendon and two senior managers in Wolverhampton City Council's Children and Young People's division sit on the ELSS Faculty Advisory Committee.

Institutional support has been central to the achievement of impact during the assessment period and several key resources can be identified as having played a significant role. The creation of the Business Development Office in the Faculty of Education, Law and Social Sciences in 2011 created two new Business Development Officer posts. These officers have enabled us to expand the impact of our research through innovative and entrepreneurial means – for example by providing administrative support in bidding for Higher Education Innovation Fund monies to develop research findings into Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses and assisting with the operational set up of these courses. Research, Innovation and Enterprise have also provided valuable marketing and strategic input into CPD development. In addition, the university Media Champions initiative launched in 2013-2013 has been central to extending the reach of our research, this half-day programme provides academics with bespoke training in effective and appropriate use of the media as a tool to disseminate and prompt critical discussion of their research – to date 6 CAC researchers have undergone the training.

c. Strategy and plans

Looking forwards, CAC will facilitate the maximisation of impact by building on successful mechanisms described above and continuing to adapt our approach in order to respond to changing need within the CJS, therefore both continuity and change underpin our impact strategy for the next 5 years.

In terms of continuity, we will continue to formalise (where appropriate) our relationships with CJS organisations. By 2014-2015, we aim to have a formal on-going relationship with West Midlands Police as we feel that we need to further strengthen our links to this area of the CJS to ensure that we have a continuous channel of access to identify need. The precise nature of the relationship is currently under consideration but we are likely to draw upon the university Professional Associates initiative launched in 2012-2013 to facilitate and enable professionals and practitioners to become part of the University's academic community. Similarly, we will continue to foster relationships with the CJS through CAC researchers taking on appropriate roles within organisations. A recent key example are the activities of our new Deputy Director Imran Awan, who is on the advisory board for the TellMAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Hate Attacks) Group funded by the Department for Local Government and Communities. He also presented evidence to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Islamophobia about online anti-Muslim hate in September 2013. We will also continue to draw upon the extensive

Impact template (REF3a)

institutional support available to us in facilitating and enabling impact. We will promote and support Media Champions training for all researchers who wish to engage with this initiative. In addition, we will embed the learning from the BCU Impact Programme. This workshop series ran from January to May 2013 and formed part of the forward-looking institutional approach to impact by bringing together researchers from across the university - workshops fostered innovation, adaptability and flexibility in identifying how different disciplines can learn from each other's experiences of impact.

Relating to change, as the CJS moves closer to an outcomes-focused way of working (evident in the Payment by Results agenda) we have revisited and revised our own approach to evidencing outcomes. Drawing upon Dr Yardley's expertise in outcomes measurement, we will begin to embed a formal but unthreatening system of outcomes measurement. All research projects will go through an internal CAC process of outcome evaluation – embedded from the beginning of a research project at the bidding stage. Impact has always been integral to CAC but beyond the assessment period, we will operate an 'Impact Capture' initiative, which will be pilot tested in 2013-2014 and operational by early 2014-15.

This will include the use of a one-page pro-forma containing questions and actions including, 'What is this project addressing?', 'Who will benefit?', 'By how much or to what extent is it predicted to change?', 'What indicators will you use to capture this?', 'How will you capture impact 6 / 12 / 24 months after project completion?' and 'What support do you need to help measure project outcomes?'.

d. Relationship to case studies

Our two REF3b case studies, entitled 'Generating applied insights into criminal justice through HMP Grendon' ('the Grendon case study') and 'The role of the arts in improving offender outcomes' ('the arts case study') have been shaped by and indeed have themselves influenced our needs-led approach to impact. Impact has been embedded from the outset in the Grendon case study because CAC has developed and maintained a two way dialogue with the prison over several years both formally and informally through the links discussed in section 3 – notably the MoU, Visiting Professor Michael Brookes and Professor Wilson's roles within HMP Grendon and its linked organisations - facilitating a closeness and responsiveness to the research needs of this institution. The Grendon case study therefore exemplifies the applicability of CAC's research, the built-in nature of impact and the operational achievement of objective (2). The arts case study is also characterised by CAC's approach insofar as impact was incremental, built upon the foundations set by the 2004 Prison Film Project, CAC researchers became integral to the organisations after the research to ensure on-going closeness to need through developing relationships and the research directly related to both objective (2) and (3). The outcome evaluation theme within the arts case study also provides a strong link to CAC strategy for the next five years. The skills and expertise developed in CAC as a result of the evaluation work undertaken has highlighted the importance of capturing outcomes in the CJS and as such, has been the catalyst for the 'Impact Capture' initiative detailed in section 4. As the CJS moves closer to outcome-driven services, we will be well placed to meet the need to evidence these outcomes as a result of the work we have done around evidencing outcomes in arts interventions with offenders. Indeed, as a result of this research, we are able to reflect upon and effectively document the outcomes that we as a research centre achieve through our work with the CJS and its stakeholders.