

## Impact template (REF3a)

<b>Institution:</b> Edge Hill University
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 22 - Social Work and Social Policy
<p><b>a. Context</b></p> <p>Research in this Unit is managed within three groups: (1) the Institute for Public Policy &amp; Professional Practice (<b>I4P</b>), led by <b>Diamond</b>, (2) the Children, Young People &amp; Social Change Research Group (<b>CYPSC</b>), led by Cockburn and <b>Coppock</b>, and (3) the <b>Social Justice, Rights and Social Change</b> Research Group (<b>SJRSC</b>), led by <b>McGovern</b>. The Unit's research groups have distinct user communities, beneficiaries and audiences outside the HE sector, but they are united by a shared set of inclusive social values and commitment both to challenge inequality and to benefit a range of socially excluded constituencies.</p> <p><b>I4P</b> builds on an institutional legacy of research on (1) local governance and equality, and (2) community participation, regeneration and the voluntary sector, both undertaken through close engagement with public and voluntary bodies. The legacy includes work on policy specifically designed to achieve impact through the promotion of equality standards in local government and enhancement of the strategic role of the voluntary sector, working in multi-agency partnerships. The work led to Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) with two local authorities since 2008.</p> <p><b>CYPSC</b>, building on the work of the earlier group it replaced (ASK Youth, 2008-13), has made a distinctive contribution to professional practice, particularly affecting the training and staff development of a wide range of practitioners who engage with issues of mental health and well-being. These multi-agency professions include teachers, social workers, health workers, police officers, residential care staff, parents, carers, foster carers as well as volunteers. Research produced by the group informed local training programmes on Merseyside and was then taken up nationally. It is recognised by the Child and Maternal Health Observatory (ChiMat) as an important tool in mental health promotion and tackling stigma.</p> <p><b>SJRSC</b> has produced research into the dynamics of power and its implications for communities as well as for policy and practice in relation to public authorities, legislators, NGOs and community groups concerned with conflict and post-conflict transition, community relations and representation (particularly of marginalised and under-represented groups), with a particular focus on Northern Ireland. This work has had impact in terms of shaping and informing public and political debate, and public attitudes and values.</p> <p><b>b. Approach to impact</b></p> <p><b>The promotion of impact is a key criterion for allocating staff time/responsibilities</b> within departments (via Department Annual Academic Returns). The forms of impact most relevant to our research are best achieved through close (and often sustained) collaboration between our researchers and partner organisations. Our approach has therefore been <b>centred on supporting and enabling researchers to build and maintain relationships</b> with their research users. This emphasis on collaboration and engagement is directed at the promotion of shared agendas, ensuring practical application of research, raising awareness of our research and facilitating public knowledge and debate. This approach is evidenced in the record of supporting current and former colleagues and in the previous activities and forward plans of recently appointed colleagues (many early career researchers). The <b>key goal of support for impact is to facilitate external collaboration</b> beyond academia and the university sector with a range of relevant voluntary, public and private sector bodies, community groups, activists and NGOs. This has shaped departmental, faculty and institutional research infrastructure central to providing support, coherence and strategic planning for promoting research impact. Support focuses on three areas:</p> <p><b>1) Training and staff development:</b> The University's Research Capacity Building Programme and other training programmes have been shaped by Vitae's Researcher Development Framework. They include a range of sessions addressing its Domain D (Engagement, Influence and Impact), including building network presence, use of social media, contract basics and media training. ECRs and PGR students are, in particular, encouraged to attend. Flexible and person-centred support is available through faculty and departmental staff development resources for the development of key external audience engagement skills. <b>2) Direct financial support for the costs of impact-orientated activity:</b> In the application process for internal research funding staff are required to consider the potential for impact with defined beneficiary groups and to set out a plan to maximise this. Impact plans are funded as a component part of research projects, linked to existing high quality research, or intended to identify research questions through work with users. Direct costs of impact activity such as travel, subsistence, events, teaching replacement</p>

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and dissemination are funded: e.g. **McGovern** (£11,000 on travel and subsistence for research on collusion) and Johnson (£20,000 for Johnson to found/edit/disseminate the journal *Democratia*; funding and research time to examine radicalisation among young UK Muslim prisoners leading to a major research project/report funded (£105,000) by the Home Office's Office of Security and Counter-Terrorism, and becoming Senior Research Fellow at the Foreign Policy Centre). **3) Bid, project development and media support** from central and faculty staff: Researchers and their external partners are supported in making applications for external funding and engaging with a wide range of funding partners by the central Research and Enterprise Support Office (RESO). This includes identification of funding sources, bid development support and agreeing contract terms. Business Development staff in the Faculty provide support to develop and deliver a wide range of projects with external partners, often with an emphasis on longer-term programmes. Different partners have access to different funders so we work jointly with partners to identify funding for projects e.g. we worked with local authorities to establish two KTP projects on equalities frameworks. The Corporate Communications department provides active support in generating publicity and profile. **A flexible approach to pricing:** The University maintains a highly facilitative approach to cost recovery rates in work with and for external partners where this aligns with research and impact strategy, maximising the pool of possible funders.

**Recruiting new staff:** Appetite, potential and/or proven track record of engagement with research users is an important criterion in the appointment of new staff, most clearly reflected in the development of the CYPSC Research Centre, where we sought to extend and deepen our collaborative relationships with external bodies involved in social policy for children and young people. Four new appointees demonstrated their ability to engage: **Keating** - work on child abuse in the Republic of Ireland cited in the *Ryan Report: The Report of the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse* and the Amnesty International *In Plain Sight* report on clerical and institutional sexual abuse; **Vathi** - research on migrant children published by the European Commission, *Child Migration Network* and cited by the *World Bank*; **Duffy** - co-authored reports for the *Department of Work and Pensions* and the *European Commission DG 'Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities'*; **Kelly** - funded by the *Australian Research Council* and *Mission Australia* for work on *Capacity Building and Social Enterprise, Good Therapeutic Practice in Primary School Networks* and *Youth Drinking Practices*.

**Creating focal points for external work:** Where expertise is directly aligned with the needs of a core group of research users we bring all work (research, knowledge exchange) under single management and create vehicles for raising its profile and engaging with partners. Now being taken forward via **I4P**, this approach was used successfully by a predecessor group which had the specific aim of developing partnerships with local councils, other statutory bodies and NGOs involved in local government policy. It produced, inter alia, a major report (*Racial Equality Standards, Local Government*) for the Commission for Racial Equality, three guidance documents for local authorities on conducting equality impact assessments and launched the Equality Mark Assessment Scheme (2009), recognised by IDEA as the national assessment scheme for the evaluation of equality improvement work done by public sector organisations. Other examples include **ASK Youth** (2008) and the **CYPSC** (2013). **Opportunities for contact, networking and collaboration** beyond the sector are identified in the **Strategy and plans** (evidenced by our employer networks; hosting of social worker carers' and social sciences employers' fora).

### c. Strategy and plans

Strategy and plans have been developed by research leaders and reflect ongoing engagement and consultation with members of user groups and our researchers in order to understand the needs and harness the ideas of both. Strategy is centred on continued close and sustained engagement and founded on our assessments of current and emerging expertise and the evolving funding landscape. Our strategy for impact has the following key elements:

**Driving development of the recently created I4P** as a hub for interdisciplinary research, knowledge exchange and engagement, including the evaluation and appraisal of public sector policy and practices in education, health, social care and other key functions. Founded in 2013, and led by **Diamond**, it will be a focal point for collaborative and commissioned work and a key vehicle for fostering work with partner organisations engaged in policy-relevant impact activities. Generating impact-orientated research income was a key driver for the creation of I4P as a cross-institutional framework and focal point for collaborations, drawing together research user group networks to facilitate multi-disciplinary impact activities and income generation. The University

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will support the development of I4P through new post creation (including statisticians and research assistants); investing in our capacity to work securely with administrative datasets; the provision of dedicated administrative, marketing and business development staff; adapting marketing, training and staff development budgets to address its needs (e.g. training on engaging with policy makers); and support for public and practitioner orientated events. The University's new consultancy policy will allow for the majority of net fee income earned through I4P consultancy to be channelled back into local research budgets. Under the I4P umbrella we will work more closely with researchers in the University faculties of Education and of Health and Social Care and across our own Faculty of Arts and Sciences to examine public policy and practices and their outcomes (focusing in particular on questions of equity, equality and justice). We will also work closely with our research users in order to identify applied research programmes that we can fund jointly with them and work together to obtain external funding. Success will be marked by the emergence of shared agendas, aligned budgets, co-funding of research assistants and other posts and of projects.

**Highly active dissemination to reach the maximum number of users and stakeholders:** we will encourage, support and enable researchers to: **1)** Set the agenda for engagement and debate with research users through programmes of events. Recent examples include the *Jesse Jackson Public Lecture Series* and the *Future of the Public Realm Public Lecture Series* organised by **Diamond** and the *Insecurity, Surveillance and the State Series* by **McGovern**, bringing commentators with national and international profile to the campus. **2)** Ensure that there are compelling, targeted press releases on new research within the various components of the UoA (but especially **I4P**) which will result in significant coverage in the national and international media, and to actively disseminate work through social media and other networks. **3)** Offer expert media commentary on topical issues in which they can introduce their own research as relevant topic background and to discuss their own research findings. Members of the UoA have offered expert commentary on RTE, as well as local BBC stations. A recent success was an extended interview with **Coppock** on New York Radio's syndicated show *The Dr Peter Breggin Hour*. **4)** Present their research at national and international conferences (including practitioner-focused events) and extend their presence in national and international networks of practitioners, stakeholders and communities of concern/interest. **5)** Produce versions of their findings aimed at key beneficiary or user groups written in accessible language and addressing policy or practice issues. Where possible we will do this in conjunction with stakeholders, taking advantage of their networks and communication channels to reach the target audience. In all of the above we will ensure that ECRs are invited by senior staff within their research group to contribute and be supported by senior staff to build and maintain their profiles within networks of research user and beneficiary groups.

#### d. Relationship to case studies

Exemplifying our approach to the development and maintenance of longer term collaborative relationships, all case studies are based on a sustained relationship between the researchers (**Coppock, Diamond, McGovern**) and their fields of study and initiatives/locally based agencies. Their continued work in the University, over a significant period of time (**Coppock** 1991-present, **Diamond** 1990-present, **McGovern** 1993-present) has afforded opportunities to develop long term relationships involving shared/joint initiatives with projects and programmes, reflected in their outputs. **Coppock's** work on young people and mental health dates from the mid-1990s, **Diamond's** with the voluntary sector in Manchester from the mid-1980s and **McGovern's** on truth recovery in Northern Ireland) from the late 1990s. In each case the University has provided time and resources at all levels to develop impact activities. Case studies based on the work of **Coppock** and **Diamond** exemplify our use of user-engaged centres to create focal points and vehicles for engagement. The research of **McGovern** on truth recovery and post-conflict transition evidences a tradition of research on social justice and human rights issues, reflected in the creation of the **SJRSC** in 2011 and a range of dissemination activities/public events supported over many years by the University (for example, Public Lecture Series organised by **McGovern** and supported by the University on *Ethics, Torture and the War on Terror* and *(In) Security, Surveillance and the State*). **Coppock, Diamond** and **McGovern** continue to be highly active in a range of relevant networks, research collaborations and impact-relevant contributions to the discipline and non-academic constituencies, with University support.