

<p>Institution: UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM</p> <p>Unit of Assessment: D22 Social Work and Social Policy</p> <p>a. Context</p> <p>Our objective, informing all our research activity, is to undertake applied, relevant, ethical research with methodological and intellectual rigour that contributes to the understanding of areas of major public salience. Implementation of this involves formulating research and using its outputs to focus impact directly on policy makers and organisations delivering services, as well as indirectly on engaging with users and other stakeholders. This has informed the setting up of research units in areas in which we consider we are able to make a real difference: ESRC Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC) established in 2008, the Centre of Household Assets and Savings Management (CHASM) in 2010 and the Institute for Research into Superdiversity (IRiS) in 2012.</p> <p>We have adopted a strategy of focusing impact on policies, practices and public debates within: the organisation and management of health services; social services; social work education; service user involvement; social security policy and financial inclusion; migration; third sector policy and practice; and approaches to counter terrorism and Islamophobia. We are regularly and actively engaged with our key non-academic user groups: policy-makers at a central government level (eg DoH, HM Treasury, DWP, Cabinet Office, DCLG); national and local public services (eg NHS provider Trusts and commissioning bodies, local authorities, police and probation authorities, Social Work Taskforce, Charity Commission); civil society (eg the major umbrella organisations across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, including NCVO, ACEVO, NAVCA, Shelter, National Housing Federation, AgeUK, Equalities and Human Rights Commission); think tanks and lobby groups (NESTA, Alliance for Useful Evidence, The Kings Fund, Personal Finance Education Group, Runnymede Trust, Nuffield Foundation); users of services (adults and children within social care services, new migrants) and the general public (through print, radio, TV and social media as well as public meetings).</p> <p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>We provide direct advice to stakeholders, drawing on our academic expertise and research evidence. For example, Pete Alcock and John Mohan have provided advice to a number of government departments, including the Cabinet Office and the DCLG, and the Centre runs regular 'Policy Circles' with invited audiences of leading policy makers. Russell Mannion's work on hospital cultures and quality of care was given as evidence to the Francis Inquiry looking at standards of care at Mid Staffordshire Foundation Trust. Jon Glasby and others have also given policy advice to the NHS Future Forum (including holding an event for Forum members at HSMC to help their integration workstream in its deliberations), Gordon Brown MP (when Prime Minister) in relation to the White Paper on funding long-term care, and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services on care home closures during the demise of Southern Cross. Basia Spalek has briefed MPs at the House of Commons and senior officers of the Metropolitan Police Service regarding key aspects of her research on Partnership Approaches to Challenging Religiously-Endorsed Violence involving Muslim Groups and Police. Her findings were incorporated into the National Association of Police Authorities strategy on counter-terrorism.</p> <p>Indeed, much of our research is commissioned directly to inform policy or practice developments. Examples include: evaluations of New Labour's Health Reforms and of the Social Enterprise Investment Fund; research into employee-owned organisations, which influenced the manifestos and policies of all three major political parties in the 2010 general election; international research commissioned by the Cabinet Office Social Exclusion Taskforce on Whole Family Approaches to Service Provision; research on maturity and young adults for the Barrow Cadbury Trust and London Probation Service; the evaluation of Shelter Children's Services (England and Scotland); research on anti-social behaviour for West Mercia Police.</p> <p>Throughout these and other impact activities we are also guided by the principle that knowledge exchange is a two-way process, with our research both providing benefits <i>to</i> and deriving benefits <i>from stakeholders</i>. Firstly, this is undertaken through our membership on external policy/practice boards, groups and committees. Among many examples are Sue White's appointment to the Social Work Task Force in 2010, Jenny Phillimore's membership of the Birmingham City Council</p>

Impact template (REF3a)

Social Inclusion review, while Jon Glasby is an NHS Trust Non-Executive Director and from 2003-2009 was the Secretary of State's representative on the Board of the Social Care Institute for Excellence. Secondly, stakeholders are members of the advisory boards of our research centres, shaping projects and examining findings. The TSRC Advisory Board includes senior figures from the Charity Commission, BIS, DCLG and NCVO. Thirdly, we have also played a leading role in the University-funded Birmingham Policy Commissions, which bring together leading figures from the public, private and third sectors to generate new thinking on contemporary issues, including the *Future of Public Services*, *Healthy Aging in the 21st Century* and *The Distribution of Wealth*.

We ensure active **engagement with the public** by making research available via our website and in accessible formats, sending email updates to those wishing to stay informed about our work, engaging in on-line discussions, blogs, meetings and events, and disseminating research, via the media, through events and other organisations. CHASM has a quarterly e-bulletin which highlights its Briefing Papers on topical issues. TSRC maintains an active website with over 100 Working Papers and Briefing Papers on open access, distributes a regular newsletter to over 3,000 subscribers, and uses on-line discussions, twitter and webinars. We contribute regularly to the "Birmingham Brief" the University's weekly web-based commentary on current policy issues. We liaise closely with our press office to send out 'expert alerts' when topics arise for our comment, and to issue press releases on our research, leading to interviews on radio, TV and for print journalists.

Our activities also include specific **round-table events and workshops** to bring together academics and policy-makers/practitioners, both to disseminate research results and to facilitate development of our research agenda. TSRC hosts regular workshops with invited practitioners and policy makers. In 2009, Chris Allen facilitated a symposium at the University on Islamophobia & Religious Discrimination which included: Mark Pritchard MP (member of the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission); Maqsood Ahmed (Senior Adviser on Muslim Communities, DCLG); Rev Dr John Hall (Chair of West Midlands Faiths Forum); and Robin Richardson (Director INSTEAD and former director of the Runnymede Trust). DEMHOW's end of project workshop was held in Brussels in the European Commission's Berlaymont building in 2010, and attended by MEPs, Commission and member state policy makers, financial institutions and civil society organisations. In March 2012, CHASM joined with the National Employment Savings Trust, to organise its first 'thought leadership' event; speakers included the Minister of State for Pensions, Steve Webb MP, Tim Jones, the CEO of NEST, Simeon Brown, CEO of HSBC Investments and Otto Thoresen, CEO of the Association of British Insurers IRiS has run three conferences on EU migration, multi-lingualism and superdiversity that have attracted academics from across the world including MEPs, Chief Constables, Ambassadors, CEOs of social housing and other organisations and faith leaders.

Our research underpins our **CPD** provision, e.g. our leadership development programmes for aspiring NHS Chief Executives, the NHS General Management Training Scheme. Through our Social Work Academy we provide evidence-based education to social work agencies.

All these approaches to achieving impact are encouraged and supported by School arrangements. Our **School Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee** has a sub group dealing with our impact strategy. This draws on ESRC guidance and advises staff on identifying stakeholders and the best way to engage with them. This has involved regular workshops, and support to staff in achieving impact, e.g. maintaining lists of local, regional and national contacts for advisory committees, event panels and audiences. Staff are provided with information about how to achieve impact and are encouraged to cost impact activities in proposals for research funding. We train Doctoral Researchers in impact activity, including an annual 3 day 'Getting Research into Policy' Summer School.

Our **annual research reviews with staff include discussion of impact-related activity** and we provide focused mentoring on improving impact potential. Colleagues may receive financial support to carry out impact-related activities eg attendance at key meetings with stakeholders, holding round-table events, carrying out specific impact-related research and producing summaries

Impact template (REF3a)

of key recommendations from research. Impact-related activity is taken into account within people's teaching and administration workload.

Alongside supporting our research staff to deliver impact, we also bring in specialist '**impact fellows**', '**knowledge brokers**' and **Senior Fellows** on a regular basis. For example, TSRC has employed a dedicated Knowledge Exchange Team and has recruited Associate Fellows from policy and practice. One of CHASM's AHRC research projects employs an Impact Fellow. HSMC employ a range of Senior Fellows (often from health service policy or management) as organisational development specialists to work alongside local organisations to implement research findings in practice. IRiS is hosting the head of community engagement of one of the UK's top ten housing and care organisations as a Practitioner Fellow.

c. Strategy and plans

Our overall strategy is to strengthen our research and impact capacity:

(i) Our future plans for impact start from a continued commitment to make a difference, and to achieve that both generally but also primarily through **strengthening our research units**. Whereas HSMC has been long active, TSRC, CHASM and IRiS are more recently established, and we see each as providing the potential for the impact of their research to grow as a key part of their respective missions. Consequently we place a major priority on ensuring the strength and succession of leadership of the research units through key appointments and through securing funding for long-term support, this including, for example, an ESRC research centre bid (re TSRC). In addition, we intend to extend the substantive areas covered by research units and in this respect have a current ESRC research centre bid for the creation of the Centre for Research on Social Security (CROSS) which will be linked to CHASM.

(ii) We will **expand our impact activity**. At a local level this will involve greater involvement with the University's Public Service Academy which provides a vehicle for impact through structured access to local authorities as part of the University's civic engagement agenda. It will also involve further development of an international orientation, building on our own contacts as well as the University's relationships with universities overseas, for instance through Universitas 21.

(iii) We will continue to **build upon our tried and tested methods** and provide further support for our engagement with key stakeholders. Because it will help us to provide further 'best practice' guidance to colleagues to improve our impact activities, we will progress our evaluation of impact activities in order to discover which are most successful, for example through tracking media coverage and surveys with key stakeholders, as developed in TSRC.

(iv) We will also **progress the capacity of research staff** in the School to pursue and implement effective impact strategies within their own work. This will involve ensuring that Impact is an integral part of each research project from its inception, and that the most appropriate Impact design is built into our funding applications. It will also involve extending the availability of training, for example in media and social media, for our research active staff.

d. Relationship to case studies

Our case studies have been selected to illustrate our approach to impact and demonstrate the range and depth of our research themes and we support and enable impact across all areas of our research activity. The case studies exemplify the School's commitment to creating sustainable impact through carrying out research that is rigorous and relevant to public discourse, public service, civil society and policy makers. For example, Littlechild and Tanner's research, funded by the NHS, involved an advisory group of representatives of voluntary and statutory agencies, and Glasby's research on closing care homes developed from a Birmingham-specific investigation to having a national impact. Whilst the selected case studies evidence our co-ordinated approach as a School to supporting and facilitating impact, they also demonstrate that we use a range of impact mechanisms for our different areas of research that are specifically tailored towards the most effective vehicle for engagement, dissemination and impact generation. In the case of Phillimore and Goodson's research impact has been achieved through both dissemination and training and involving policymakers at the EU level down to community groups and practitioners. Allen's work has had a direct input into national policy making through his involvement with the all Party Parliamentary Group on Islamophobia and with the DCLG Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group.