

Institution: Swansea University
Unit of Assessment: 22 - Social Work and Social Policy
a. Context

Impact activities are driven by the UoA's two research groups: (1) The Centre for Innovative Ageing (CIA), (2) Social and Health Care. These groups focus on theoretically informed, applied research that stresses co-production with user groups. Our work is interdisciplinary and consequently its reach is substantially beyond social work and social policy and impacts on the environment, health and business. **Beneficiaries and user groups** and **types of impact** include:

1. **Policy makers and governments** including Welsh Government (WG) (DHSS; Minister for Health and Deputy Minister for Children & Social Services with responsibility for Older People), UK (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills; Department of Health (DH)), French and Thai governments, and local authorities (social services; planning). Our research has helped to **shape and underpin government policy**: Individual researchers provide expert evidence on a regular basis (through representation, as with the research member for the National Partnership Forum for Older People, directly feeding into WG and select committees, e.g. on rural affairs). Research has informed "The Strategy for Older People in Wales" in 2008 and 2013 (through expert evidence and through direct work with policy makers) and social care workforce planning (through oral evidence to the WG Health, Wellbeing and Local Government Committee Inquiry). Impact has occurred through membership of advisory groups for the DH, WG and through the International Longevity Centre-UK, which used our research findings to lobby government. Our reach has included citations in an Inter-ministerial Report prepared for France's President. Our work has **influenced planning and management of services**: in the policy domain, the Thai impact case study has influenced policy actors in Thailand and been used in workshops run by international organisations such as Results For Development (USA) in other countries in Asia.

2. **Social work and social care practitioners**. The UoA's research has had impact on **improved public services through professional standards and guidelines for practitioners**. Care home standards have been reviewed by WG in response to research on care-home closure. Our research has resulted in **organisational impact**. Examples of resources management and service delivery change stem from studies in the areas of social work workforce planning, integrated care, and mental health services (e.g. with the development of a workforce template for the Care Council and re-configuration of social work roles following a National Institute for Health Research funded project). Our work has had **impact on health and welfare measures** (the development of a quality-of-life measure, SCOPE, for use in social care and mental health services is used in routine practice assessments in Australia, and a version is being developed for NGOs in Hong Kong). Impact includes the **development of resources to enhance professional practice and changes to training**. Practitioner debate was informed by research findings on Extracare provision with changes made to the commissioning of resources as a result. Commissioned by the National Institute for Social Care & Health Research (NISCHR) a report on the social care workforce led to practice change on Continuing Professional Development and the establishment of the Academic Social Care Research Collaboration (ASCC) where UoA members work with local authority and 3rd sector social work and care practitioners to develop evidence enriched practice.

3. **Businesses**, particularly small and medium-sized technology enterprises that engaged in our Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) 'Care in Business'. The series of seminars demonstrated **economic benefit and impact** by raising awareness of how business can engage with older people. The KTP (400 businesses) has led to small business linking with NGOs. There have been spin out projects as a direct result e.g. £1.2m was secured for the development of an ecommerce website for carers. Members of the UoA have also **developed consultancy roles** e.g. with the Boots Centre for Innovation.

4. **NGOs and voluntary organisations** e.g. Age UK, Carers UK, Stroke Association, mental health NGOs in Hong Kong and quasi-governmental organizations e.g. the Older People Commissioner, who commission research and are co-applicants on a number of research studies, with the authority to implement research findings (see case study 1).

Impact template (REF3a)

5. **Spatial planners** and local authorities with impact on the built environment. The ESRC Older People & Unfamiliar Space study through focus groups with planners and older people led to **improving the design** of Colchester town centre to meet needs of older people.

6. **Older people, people with mental health problems, their carers and representatives** and the **general public**: Service users (through Involving People, Older People and Ageing and Mental Health networks) are involved in varying ways throughout the research process. Our research has direct implications for the public (e.g. through research on cognitive functioning and research on climate change). Our research also **informs public debate** and **increases the public's understanding** of ageing issues e.g. through BBC1's religious programme 'The Big Questions.'

b. Approach to impact

Impact is articulated and monitored at all stages of research projects. Impact is one of the main factors considered in allocating College funds for conference attendance, agreeing study leave (case study 2), and influencing recruitment, promotion and professional development policies, and is recognized in the award winning University Performance Enabling Scheme and Career Pathways model for staff promotion. The University runs workshops for staff on impact and has a number of schemes to pump-prime initiatives that have potential impact (e.g. through EPSRC Bridging the Gaps funding to our UoA and an EPSRC Impact Acceleration Account to celebrate research impact). The research groups within the UoA are also members of the Research Institute for Applied Social Sciences (RIASS) which encourages and supports staff in achieving impact through e.g. reviewing pathways to impact and developing external links.

Communication Enhancement: Knowledge exchange activities are part of our impact infrastructure. The UoA hosts two WG funded All Wales thematic research networks important in developing research impact: the Older People & Ageing Research and Development Network (OPAN) and the Mental Health Research Network Cymru (MHRNC). Both have websites & newsletters (as do the UoA groups) with user friendly publications aimed at practitioners and policy makers, host major international conferences (e.g. European Social Sciences of International Association of Gerontology & Geriatrics) and monthly seminars attended by policy makers, practitioners and the public, where research findings are presented and discussed. Both networks have research development groups which include service users, retired professionals, managers and major NGOs, who are involved throughout the research process, helping shape research projects, pathways to impact and assisting in the exploitation of our research. Both groups in the UoA have a specific impact strategy and research staff to identify and develop knowledge transfer activities and exploit opportunities for impact.

Shaping the Research/Policy/Practice Agenda: The CIA regularly receives invitations from policy makers and has developed a proactive approach to policy impact. A 3 monthly forum where senior civil servants, the Older People's Commissioner and researchers came together to discuss research findings and implementation strategies has developed into an initiative called 'Ageing Well in Wales' which has NGOs, the NHS Wales, Welsh Local Government Association, Age Cymru and other relevant stakeholders, with the aim of having an integrated policy, practice and research strategy across Wales (e.g. the 'age friendly community practice and policy initiative' is common to all organisations and underpinned by our research). This has led to a successful European Innovation Partnership award. The CIA have a funded KTP with the WG (and Technology Strategy Board) which is developing methods to assess the quality and costs of integrated older people's services, to drive national service re-design and realise associated financial and social benefits. The KTP will impact on the way that data are collected to evaluate all integrated care programmes in Wales. Other activities that lead to shaping the agenda include representing WG on the UK Age Research Forum (a strategic partnership between UK government, research councils and charities), and the European group on FutureAge (shaping EU research agenda). Members of the UoA sit on the NISCHR funding committees for Health and Social Care research. Launched at the House of Lords in 2011, an impact brochure (Making a Case for Ageing) was produced by a member of the UoA with the Academy of Social Sciences, Age UK, and the British Society of Gerontology.

Creating structures to link with practice: A new initiative, ASCC, is attempting to develop evidence enriched practice following a 'Making Research Count'-type model. There is a growing strand of work funded through business-related initiatives (Academics for Business and 'Care in

Impact template (REF3a)

Business' KTP). We have developed this area of impact, building on our research on work-life balance issues and raising the implications of an ageing population for business.

c. Strategy and plans

Future strategy will continue to focus on developing impact in individual research activity, as well as concentrating impact capacity where the UoA has strategic focus and a critical mass of staff. The UoA will support early career researchers to maximise the policy and practice impact of their research (e.g. through College funding for international dissemination).

Establishing & extending collaboration and outreach activities: We are expanding efforts to communicate research findings to non-academic users through new social media channels (e.g. @RIASS), adding to well-established mechanisms for communications and marketing (e.g. College External Relations Manager; University Public Relations Office and The Department of Research and Innovation, Knowledge-transfer services) centred on print media (e.g. College Newsletter; University's 'Breakthrough' publication) and the University website. In terms of public awareness of research findings, a series of podcasts are available on the website featuring the work of the ageing research group. A catalogue of impact stories will also be made accessible to the public. We will continue to build relationships with research users.

Building partnerships: The UoA aims to forge research collaborations with similar institutes around the world (e.g. Rhone Alp, Grenoble), whilst serving the local community through engagement with businesses, the public and the voluntary sector. The focus on business, for example, is on Tata steel (in Mumbai and Port Talbot) developing collaborative research with impact on local communities but global reach and significance. The UoA will build on and, secure KTP funding, providing companies with access to academic expertise and service network.

Future developments: The prioritised fields/themes for research impact that will be expanded to include ageing and technology, particularly nanotechnology (3 Swansea University funded PGR scholarships have been awarded to develop this) and climate change (a joint post between Law and Ageing) linked to research on 'Climate Change Wales'. A prioritised field for research impact is to maximise the potential of the work on 'environments of ageing' in collaboration with other areas of research strength within the university. The mental health group plans to take advantage of the new combined research cluster being formed with the College of Medicine. As co-researchers in the new Public Policy Institute for Wales, UoA members will also have direct impact on WG policy.

Capacity Building: The Wales ESRC DTC with students in the social care and social work pathway jointly funded with external agencies will ensure that impact is at the heart of future post-graduate research. Internships in WG and NGOs are being developed and RIASS will facilitate the interdisciplinary aspects of impact, building on the EPSRC Bridging the Gaps programme.

d. Relationship to case studies

The selected case studies sit within ongoing programmes of work in their respective research groups, and exemplify our 'theory-based/policy or practice focused' approach. Case study 1 demonstrates how as a relatively new research group (since 2006) impact has been achieved in an area of strategic priority identified by Government and third sector. The case study exemplifies the UoA's proactive approach engaging non-academic users from the outset through our policy forum (shaping the research agenda) and practitioner initiatives (providing feedback and translating research findings into practice). An initial national conference ensured that the research undertaken was of use to potential beneficiaries, addressed a key problem in relation to current policy and a final conference, with international presentations, was held on the same theme. Case Study 2 dates back to the award of a Leverhulme Trust Study Abroad Fellowship in 2002-3, and has continued most recently with involvement in the Thai government's 10 year evaluation of its reforms. The case study illustrates College support for impact with the provision of study leave and financial backing for Thai fieldwork. It illustrates too our stress on international collaborations, in this case with researchers in Turkey and the EU REFGOV network. The case study also exemplifies how impact may be strengthened when relationships with policy makers and practitioners are built over an extended period.