

<b>Institution: University of Bath</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: : C22 Social Work and Social Policy</b>
<p><b>a. Context</b></p> <p>The University of Bath is an internationally-recognised centre for social policy research. This involves academics in the Department of Social and Policy Sciences (<b>DSPS</b>), as well as in the Departments of Economics, Education, Psychology and Health. This research is organised through <b>CASP</b> (Centre for the Analysis of Social Policy), working with <b>CDS</b> (Centre for Development Studies), <b>CDAS</b> (Centre for Death and Society) and <b>TCRG</b> (Tobacco Control Research Group, Department for Health).</p> <p>We have a strong record of research impact with wide reach and significance. This was celebrated in the 2011 <a href="#">Queen's Anniversary Prizes for Higher and Further Education</a>: the <a href="#">Citation</a> recognised that we had "for over thirty years undertaken pioneering and original research in the field of family wellbeing .... This work has influenced national programmes seeking to alleviate poverty in the UK, as well as international activity."</p> <p>To secure research impact with wide reach, we have built long-term linkages with the institutions and organisations where policy and practice are made, in processes of knowledge exchange and development. These are the users, beneficiaries and audiences of our research. They include government institutions; civil society organisations, trades unions and professional bodies; the corporate and business sector, including trade associations and insurance companies; and the news media: all at the local, national and international levels. They also include the wider public, in the UK and in many other countries across the industrial and developing world. Specific examples are given in the next section.</p> <p>Our impact has been significant and well-evidenced in terms, for example, of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influencing national policy on child poverty, under the present and previous UK governments, by providing robust evidence both to policy-makers and to pressure groups (Ridge);</li> <li>• Influencing UK government decisions on support to lone parents, with consequences for their living standards and the risk of their children being in poverty (Millar and Harkness);</li> <li>• Improving public understanding of the social costs of the recession, in terms of the reduction in living standards and the scars suffered by the young unemployed in particular (Gregg);</li> <li>• Re-directing UK government efforts to 'nudge' employees towards later retirement, so that they take more account of employers' behaviour and influence (Weyman);</li> <li>• Challenging conventional government wisdom that the expansion of graduate education and the transition to a 'knowledge economy' will produce a high skill, high wage economy (Lauder);</li> <li>• Changing professional guidelines and quality standards for the treatment of dementia (Gould);</li> <li>• Shifting the direction of government policy and NGO attention in Bangladesh, towards the extreme poor, with direct benefits for large numbers of households (Devine);</li> <li>• Shifting the direction of micro-finance initiatives across the developing world, to the benefit of poorer households in particular (Copestake and Johnson);</li> <li>• Exposing and frustrating the efforts of the tobacco industry to undermine the World Health Organisation's first global health treaty (Gilmore).</li> </ul>
<p><b>b. Approach to impact</b></p> <p>We have a longstanding commitment to ensuring non-academic impact from our research. One sign of our success is that when the <b>Academy for Social Sciences</b> published its June 2013 briefing on <a href="#">The Impact of Social Sciences Research</a> (part of its larger project of <i>Making the Case for the Social Sciences</i>), two of their thirteen case studies (by <b>Weyman</b> and by <b>Copestake &amp; Johnson</b>) were taken from our work.</p> <p>In the 2008 RAE, we highlighted our engagement with 'a wide variety of public, voluntary and private sector partners, in knowledge transfer and development'. Since then we have continued to develop our approach to impact, providing support for staff and using our experience in social policy to contribute to University-wide infrastructures.</p> <p><b><u>Achieving impact</u></b></p> <p>Our approach to impact involves building long-term relationships with a range of research users and making our research available in timely and accessible ways. Colleagues are actively involved</p>

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in research networks, advocacy coalitions, expert advisory positions, consultancies and knowledge transfer partnerships. This approach takes several forms:

1. **Projecting research into the policy realm:** this is broadly consistent with the 'linear' model of how research flows into policy and practice, using familiar model of dissemination:
  - **Research funding** by government allows us to feed research findings directly into policy discussions: examples include DWP (Weyman), DoH (Gilmore, Judge), DfID (Devine, White), Netherlands Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Devine), Equalities and Human Rights Commission (Harkness); European Union (Gilmore).
  - **Advisory work** to government: for example, at the **local/regional** level, Hudson was on the South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) Economists panel (2003-11); **nationally**, Butler was for nine years Advisor to the First Minister for Wales; Harkness was seconded to the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit (2009) and Ridge to the Child Poverty Unit (2010); Gregg has been a major contributor to new thinking on youth unemployment and opportunity on both sides of the political spectrum: as a member of the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, set up by David Cameron and chaired by Alan Milburn; and as a member of the ACEVO Commission on Youth Unemployment (2011-12), chaired by David Miliband; at **European** level, Hart's work on child protection in the Middle East led to changes in EU policy in the region; **internationally**, G Brown contributed to UNESCO's *Global Monitoring Report on Armed Conflict and Education* (2011) and UNRISD's report on *Combatting Poverty and Inequality* (2010).
  - We submit **evidence to Parliamentary Committees:** for example, Judge to the House of Commons Health Committee Inquiry into Health Inequalities (2009); Gilmore to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Smoking and Health inquiries into tobacco control (2010) and the illicit tobacco trade (2012); Miller to the Public Administration Select Committee in 2012, on the 'revolving door' between politics and corporations; Ridge and Millar to the Work and Pensions Select Committee on universal credit (2011). Weyman is a member of the [UK Parliamentary & Scientific Committee](#).
2. **'Co-production' and knowledge exchange:** researchers working with policy makers and practitioners in the joint production of knowledge and policy lessons:
  - One form of co-production involves **systematic reviews** of evidence, undertaken with government agencies. For example, Gould (retired 2012) led a joint NICE-SCIE team to develop clinical guidelines and quality standards) for the treatment of dementia. Weyman has led systematic reviews of evidence for DWP and the NHS, on behaviour change interventions for extending working life. This involves critical engagement with the Government's 'nudge' agenda.
  - Within the Centre for Development Studies, Copestake has (with Johnson) had an ESRC **KT Partnership** with Oxford Policy Management, an international development consultancy; and (with Devine) another with [Triple Line Consulting](#), working with public and private agencies for poverty reduction and environmentally sustainable development.
  - **Consultancies** are another form of knowledge transfer and exchange: staff have held more than 50 consultancy contracts since 2008: with local councils (8), government departments (6), health and social care organisations (14), businesses (4) and international organisations (5).
3. **Critical engagement with policy and the wider public:** using research evidence to enlarge public debate:
  - Our researchers have been regularly involved in **public engagement** work, some in association with University of Bath [Public Engagement Unit](#). They also regularly engage with the local, national and international media. For example, Miller is the director of a civil society venture which runs two websites: [spinwatch.org](#) and [powerbase.info](#). These enhance media engagement, in particular in relation to Miller's work on Islamophobia, lobbying transparency and think tanks.
  - Collaboration with **NGOs and professional associations**, through their publications, conferences and committees, is also a means of enlarging public debate. For example, Gilmore was on the Board of ASH 2002-9, a period of dramatically strengthened tobacco controls, and is also a member of the Royal College of Physician's Tobacco Advisory Group, a key player in policy development. Ridge works with One-Parent Families, Gingerbread and The

Children's Society; Miller with Public Interest Investigations; White with Traidcraft.

**Supporting staff in securing impact**

Impact is now embedded in the **research training** of academic staff, ECRs and PGRs. Impact, knowledge exchange and public engagement are included in workload management, annual staff performance reviews, promotions, and in the selection of new members of academic staff.

Particular staff are assigned to help social policy academics with research impact. These include a Director of Communications and Marketing in DSPS and a research manager for the Department for Health, concerned with public involvement in public health and social care research. Peer review of grant applications includes careful assessment of plans for 'pathways to impact', by senior academic colleagues and the University's Research Development and Support Office.

Recruitment of senior staff has been in part for their strong 'impact' portfolios. For example, **Gregg** advises a wide range of initiatives - local, regional and national - on youth unemployment; and he has been appointed to the Government's new Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission. **Miller** has several ESRC awards for knowledge exchange; while his ESRC Global Uncertainties Fellowship (2013-2015) includes significant knowledge exchange dimensions.

Inspiration and innovation in impact has also come from our research groups and centres. Thus our **Centre for Death and Society** (CDAS) demonstrates how a small research team can have a big impact, by using a wide range of channels: a monthly e-newsletter which goes to over 800 globally, including academics, practitioners and policy makers; co-working with professional bodies concerned with palliative care and bereavement; and public engagement through radio, tv and local projects such as the '[Future Cemetery](#)', funded by AHRC, that uses smartphone apps to take visitors on a multi-media tour of a local working cemetery, linking it to local cultural heritage.

The **Tobacco Control Research Group** developed a [wiki](#) providing up-to-date information on the Tobacco Industry, its allies or those promoting a pro-tobacco agenda. The website reveals how the industry influences and distorts public health debates, using a range of lobbying and public relations tactics. TCRG also developed a new twitter account and blog, each attracting several hundred users in the first month. The Tobacco Tactics website was widely used during European Parliament debates over the Tobacco Products Directive. It was then selected by ESRC to be presented at the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology [Interactive Exhibition: The Science of Health and Wellbeing](#). House of Commons, 4 June 2013.

**Using and developing institutional resources:**

The University of Bath provides a supportive environment to facilitate research impact, with substantial external funding from EPSRC (Knowledge Transfer Account, Impact Acceleration Award); HEFCE (Higher Education Investment Fund) and RCUK (Public Engagement Catalyst).

We have helped to develop these institutional resources further. **Millar** leads the University-wide **Engaged 360** project, funded by RCUK: this is one of eight 'Public Engagement with Research Catalysts' in UK universities. We are active in the University Social Media Strategy Group. **Room** has led development of the new **Institute for Policy Research** described below: an initiative which also embraces our science and engineering colleagues and the policy implications of their work.

**c. Strategy and plans**

Our approach to impact during the REF period has had many notable successes. A key objective is to identify the potential for impact from research projects at the earliest possible stage, to scan the horizon for situations where research results may have greatest effect, and to target potential sponsors of future work. We thus aim to integrate impact into the entire research cycle.

During 2012-13 we have taken a further major step. Social policy is leading a programme of strategic investment in Policy Sciences across the University as a whole, with the establishment in February 2013 of the [Institute for Policy Research \(IPR\)](#), as an international centre for policy analysis. This is a major financial and institutional investment by the University, aimed at maximising the potential for impact from our current and future research.

The IPR builds on the three-fold approach to impact already described: projecting research into the policy realm; co-production of research and policy; critical engagement with policy makers and the wider public. It works with academics to combine these approaches in an agile and timely manner, so that they have maximum effect. The IPR also however goes beyond this in several key respects:

- It recognises that policy outcomes are typically shaped by **a wide variety of policy actors**

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(government, civil society, corporate, media); and that these operate at **different levels** (local, national, international). The IPR therefore works with researchers, to take their research evidence to these multiple audiences in a timely way and accessible form: through [policy briefs](#), public engagement events and on-line media. An example of the latter is the aforementioned [wiki](#) and social media, developed by the IPR for the Tobacco Control Research Group (TCRG): and serving, not least, to keep national and EU policy makers informed about tobacco industry efforts to weaken public health regulatory regimes.

- The IPR recognises that policy impact often depends on **narrow windows of opportunity**; but that policy calendars and those of academic research rarely coincide. The IPR therefore undertakes forward-looking ‘opportunity spotting’ for our academics. This it achieves in part through professional monitoring services such as [DODS](#); and by sharing the advance intelligence that our academics acquire from the policy networks in which they are embedded.
- The IPR recognises that policy makers and academics need **time and space to develop shared thinking and a shared language**. It therefore provides mini-sabbaticals to enable such policy exchanges and to incubate shared projects. The IPR has helped one of our early career researchers to win a [Royal Society - Civil Service pairing](#) with a senior government scientist; and we have made links with the new social science section of the [Parliamentary Office and Science and Technology](#).
- Finally, the IPR develops **small-scale ‘demonstration’ projects** (videos, social media, etc) to show what researchers can do to enhance their impact; and it offers [toolkits and guidance](#), so as to build capacity. Not least, these can also be used to train our young researchers and our research students, the policy researchers of the future.

By these means the IPR bridges the worlds of research, policy and professional practice; it expands our capacity to build long-term linkages with the institutions and organisations where policy and practice are made; and it trains colleagues as ‘policy entrepreneurs’.

#### d. Relationship to case studies

Our case studies exemplify the range of impact work at Bath, and our strong engagements with research users beyond the academy. They span the three approaches to impact that were distinguished in section (b); but offer lessons from which we have been able to develop the forward-looking strategy described in section (c).

- Projecting research into the policy realm** [Case studies by (a) Harkness & Millar and (b) Ridge.] These two case studies adopt a broadly ‘linear’ model of how research flows into policy and practice. Even here, however, ‘impact’ is part of an iterative research lifecycle process: as these case studies reveal, impact is always contested, and the research evidence must therefore be championed continuously, by engaging with a range of constituencies.
- Co-production of research and policy** [Case studies by (a) Devine and (b) Copestake & Johnson.] Both case studies involved working with practitioners in the co-production of knowledge, and lessons for policy and practice: NGOs in Bangladesh and microfinance institutions in Africa and the Americas. This illustrates impact embedded throughout the research cycle. In both cases, civil society and ‘pro-poor’ groups, as well as businesses and policy makers, were closely involved in the genesis of the research projects.
- Critical engagement with policy and the wider public:** [Case study by Gilmore.] This case study exposes corporate efforts to weaken EU regulatory regimes and thereby undermine the WHO’s first global health treaty. It is the research evidence that remains centre-stage; but the case study shows how this can, through strategic and targeted engagement with concerned political actors, have major effects on public wellbeing.

These case studies have shaped our overall impact strategy: showing that while direct engagement with policy-makers can sometimes work, other methods are also needed, including the exposure of powerful interests shaping social policies. It is the whole range of these that the Institute for Policy Research is now strategically developing.