

<p>Institution: Birmingham City University</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: UoA 22 – Social Work and Social Policy</p>
<p>a. Overview</p> <p>The Centre for Applied Criminology (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. Our work is strategically underpinned by a commitment to <i>application</i>, ensuring that all the activities of the Centre have relevance for both policy and practice. There is also a commitment to ‘public criminology’ – meaningfully engaging the public in debates about crime and punishment, which brings a vitality and immediacy to our work. CAC’s research has grown around a number of key strands relating to our strategic aims and objectives, which are outlined below in section b. From the outset, we have embraced overlaps and interrelationships within and between these strands, as befits the theoretical roots of Criminology as a rendezvous discipline.</p>
<p>b. Research strategy</p> <p>CAC’s 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 promote a better public understanding of the CJS; improve the operation of the CJS within specific agencies and institutions; and enable offenders to tackle barriers to desistance. Given the complex settings within which our research is used, the achievement of our objectives is characterised by flexibility, interweaving and synthesis within and across our activities. The following subsections detail central achievements relating to our aims and objectives leading up to and throughout the assessment period and identify the ways in which we are developing our strategic drivers to ensure our research continues to be relevant, meaningful and needs-led in the future.</p> <p>1) <i>Promote a better public understanding of the CJS</i> The strand of research relating to this objective focuses on factors shaping public perceptions of the CJS. Given that the mainstream media is often the sole source of information about the CJS for public audiences, much of our research activity has focused upon a critical examination of media portrayals of the CJS. Early research included the innovative Prison Film Project led by Professor Wilson in 2004. Supported by the Esmee Fairbairn Trust, this project investigated the ways in which film and television depictions of prisoners and prisons could contribute to penal reform. More recently during the assessment period, research undertaken by Professor Wilson, Professor Brookes, Dr Yardley and Diane Kemp has highlighted the importance of the prisoner voice through published autobiography and spoken narrative. There has also been long-term, multi-disciplinary inquiry into organised student debate with serving prisoners, particularly the extent to which such activities generate changes in attitudes, awareness and understanding – an especially relevant factor given the future career prospects of many of our students. Looking forwards, we are continuing to promote better understanding of the CJS by maintaining our focus upon the mainstream media and developing new insights into experiences of and attitudes towards the CJS within specific social and cultural groups. Our CAC Research Assistant and Graduate Teaching Assistant (detailed in section d) are investigating public perceptions of murder investigations, which has stemmed from a need to clarify inaccurate media portrayals of criminal investigations. In addition, Imran Awan, a researcher who joined CAC in 2013, is exploring relationships between the police service and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities given the pressing need to promote culturally sensitive policing with Muslim communities and as a continuing response to issues highlighted in the 2011 riots. The latter has clear overlaps with our second objective.</p> <p>2) <i>Improve the operation of the CJS within specific agencies and institutions.</i> This second objective has facilitated some of CAC’s most unique and innovative research. Critical analysis has enabled operational flexibility and adaptation within the CJS, with particular emphasis upon policing and prison policy. This needs-led research has been nurtured within an experiential knowledge base as numerous past and present researchers have been employed within the CJS prior to joining CAC (as detailed in section c). The foundations of this strand of research were built upon Professor Wilson’s experience of working directly with offenders within the English and Welsh prison estate and particularly within the therapeutic communities at HMP Grendon. Leading up to the</p>

assessment period, Professor Wilson developed the notion of the “offending space” of paedophiles and related this to their management within custody and after release. During the assessment period, research into effective ways of working with particular groups of offenders has continued as Professor Wilson has been joined by Visiting Professor Brookes in research identifying and responding to the needs of prisoners from BME backgrounds and Dr Caulfield (2006-2012) in evaluating the effectiveness of arts-based programmes in the rehabilitation of offenders. CAC research has also had an impact upon police investigation through Professor Wilson’s and more recently Dr Yardley’s work in developing understandings of murder, which have been used by a number of police force areas. CAC has hosted training events for new police Senior Investigating Officers (SIOs) who deal with high profile murders. Dr Tonkin’s research is building further insights into the linkage of particular types of crime. In addition, we have developed specialisms at European Union (EU) and international levels, respectively embodied in the work of Professor MacDonald whose work focuses upon promoting prisoner health and that of Dr Johnson, whose research explores international relations, particularly the role of the United Nations. A testament to the quality of work undertaken by CAC was Professor Wilson’s chairing of the Independent Commission on English Prisons Today, which reported in 2009. Looking to the future, CAC is continuing to generate usable research in prisons and police forces through maintaining a two-way dialogue with current partners and initiating links with new partners (see section e). For example, Professor Wilson’s and Dr Yardley’s research into family annihilation will be used in the future training of SIOs within West Midlands Police Service in direct response to an identified operational need to better understand the characteristics of this type of murder and its social context. In addition, Dr Pemberton is exploring the experiences of convicted female offenders post-release.

3) *To enable offenders in tackling barriers to desistance.* Research relating to this objective addresses “desistance”, which refers to the process of stopping offending and ceasing to be involved in criminal activity. This can in some respects be seen as the culmination of the first two areas of CAC’s research detailed above. For example, evaluating the role of the arts in rehabilitation, championing the use of therapeutic approaches to incarceration and more critically exposing how social divisions play a role in creating criminogenic situations can all be seen as helping offenders (and policy makers) overcome barriers to desistance. However, research during the assessment period has created the groundwork for addressing this priority more directly in the future, leading to the identification and measurement of key outcomes. Examples include Dr Glynn’s completed doctoral research into the desistance experiences of black men, Dr Pornari’s work researching the perpetrators of intimate partner violence and the ongoing research by Professors Wilson and Brookes along with Dr Yardley and Diane Kemp into the “narratives” or stories used by ex-offenders to make sense of their lives beyond prison gates. In addition, our Graduate Teaching Assistant is in the early stages of her doctoral research investigating the role of prisoner befriending in promoting desistance.

c. People, including:

i. Staffing strategy and staff development

This section outlines the strategies and activities of CAC in enabling researchers to maintain their passion for, and commitment to, applied research and describes the ways in which we proactively identify and nurture research talent. We have integrated our descriptions of staff and research student development to reflect the relatively flat and non-hierarchical structure of CAC, which we feel has been conducive to growing an accessible and inclusive research culture.

Research leadership. Up to and during the assessment period, CAC has been led by Professor Wilson. A Deputy Director, Dr Yardley, came to post in 2011 as part of our long-term succession planning strategy. In September 2013, Dr Yardley took over as Director of CAC to oversee the Centre’s development for the next 5 years. Dr Yardley’s experience as a Senior Social Research Consultant, and of having delivered commissioned research for public and voluntary sector organisations, ensures the continuity of applied insights in research leadership. Dr Yardley’s experience in bidding for and securing a wide range of funds in her previous post will be valuable for CAC in implementing the new research income strategy (see section d). A new Deputy Director, Imran Awan, is now in post. Professor Wilson continues to be central to CAC, particularly in the mentoring of new and developing researchers.

Insights through diverse experience. CAC’s strategic aim to generate applied research is supported by ‘on the ground’ insights that our researchers bring to the Centre. Many have had (and

continue to pursue) successful practitioner careers within the CJS. Examples include Professor Wilson, who prior to taking up his academic appointment, was Senior Policy Advisor to the Prison Reform Trust, and between October 1983-April 1997 worked as a Prison Governor. Nick Howe (2009-2012) was a former Police Chief Superintendent with Staffordshire Police and was also seconded to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary charged with inspecting police forces throughout England and Wales. Our Visiting Professor, Michael Brookes brings to CAC his specialist expertise from practice (he is Director of Therapeutic Communities at HMP Grendon). In addition, Dr Mohamed (2009-2013) worked with the Malaysian Police and Hannah Willis (2010-2012) was formerly a senior Forensic Psychologist within the Prison Service. These professional backgrounds contribute towards holistic and comprehensive research of relevance to policy and practice. CAC is multidisciplinary, given that those who experience the CJS have needs and preferences shaped by a complex interplay of issues. Generating insights into the policy and practice frameworks surrounding these individuals involves drawing upon expertise encompassing and transcending Criminology. This applies both within and beyond the Faculty of Education, Law and Social Sciences (ELSS). Whilst most of our researchers are located within ELSS's School of Social Sciences (Criminology, Sociology and Psychology), others come to us from different faculties, for example, Diane Kemp is based within the Faculty of Performance, Media and English. CAC has a direct role in the recruitment of full-time academic staff, with both the Director and Deputy Director serving as members of interview presentation panels and a proactive, applied research background forming one of the desirable criteria for applicants to such posts. In terms of identifying future criminologists, our taught MA Criminology course, attracts a high number of CJS practitioners, and has an increasing role in acting as a platform for research talent to emerge. In the course of the reporting period the CJ charity – The Howard League for Penal Reform - sponsored an MA place, and more recently, exceptional MA graduates have been invited to apply for the PhD programme, financing their study through part-time Visiting Lecturer work. Alongside these 'home grown' researchers are external applications, largely from individuals with CJS practitioner backgrounds. We intend to strengthen our PhD offering through the creation of one annual CAC PhD bursary from 2015 (rising to two per year by 2018-2019) addressing specified research questions which directly enhance our strategic aims.

Developing researchers. The support that CAC provides for its researchers dovetails with wider ELSS support infrastructure and facilities (detailed in section d). CAC focuses upon identifying and nurturing research talent amongst members of staff and postgraduate students through both formal and informal means. Formal mechanisms such as a system for funding presenter-attendees and delegates at academic and practitioner conferences and formal termly CAC meetings are complemented by more innovative and flexible development opportunities which have emerged organically from the needs of the research community. All are invited to the CAC weekly drop in session held on a Thursday afternoon, at which staff and research students discuss a wide range of topics from ideas for research to the progress of outputs and dissemination activities. In addition, Professor Wilson and Dr Yardley hold weekly 'research breakfasts' in a University café, an accessible, inclusive and friendly forum for discussion. In addition, new researchers are able to draw on the experience of more established researchers in an informal mentoring arrangement. Through an organic process of self-selection, unofficial research 'pairs' or 'threes' are established, in which the more established researcher takes on an enabling role, advising the newer researcher on all elements of the research process from idea formulation to dissemination and providing supportive input throughout the process. There are also opportunities for research students and developing researchers to gain broader research experience, through 'shadowing' -attending project meetings and receiving 'on the job' training in the application of specific data collection and analysis methods using project data.

ii. Research students

Our research students are very much embedded in the research community that has developed around CAC. Aside from the formal support that is provided by official first and second supervisors, research students engage actively in the informal support available to all researchers. This has resulted in some innovative and unique contributions, for example the on-going work into the experiences of BME prisoners, largely informed by the work of recent PhD graduate (2013) Dr Glynn. Glynn is a good example of the applied ethos of the Centre, given that he pursued his PhD

after a career spent as a community activist in Nottingham and Birmingham, where his work as a community leader working especially with young black men has been widely quoted in the local and regional press. Younger PhD students – several recruited as a result of University bursaries – also maintain this applied ethos, either as a result of their former careers, or as a consequence of their research areas. Walker, for example, is a former Prison Officer in the Northern Irish prison service, and Lamb is currently working with West Midlands Police researching the PREVENT strategy.

An important part of growing and developing researchers has been the research-focused events that CAC leads for staff and students across the university. In the academic year 2010-2011, CAC ran a seminar series entitled 'Leaving Prison Behind', in which former prisoners came into the university to hold sessions reflecting upon their experiences of prison. In addition, CAC's Director led a 2011 seminar on the English Riots, featuring several eminent speakers from within and beyond the centre as well as Donal Macintyre, a new Visiting Professor within the Centre. A further seminar on football hooliganism took place in 2012 to coincide with the European Championships. These events are crucial in building an accessible and dynamic research culture which leads to tangible outputs. The REF2 collaborative output by Dr Yardley, Diane Kemp, Professor Wilson and Professor Brookes headed 'Narrative beyond prison gates' emerged from the 'Leaving Prison Behind' seminar series.

CAC will continue to nurture research talent by drawing on a combination of the traditional and innovative methods described above. Recognising and responding to those showing potential as researchers as well as encouraging those already engaged in research using the approaches outlined here will ensure that the needs-led research culture will continue to thrive and adapt to a challenging external environment.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Income. The following sections detail key points relating to internal and external income during the assessment period and outlines plans for future income strategy.

Internally, during the assessment period, CAC has benefitted from an annual £10,000 grant from the central University Research Development Fund and has used this to pay for essential research needs including conference attendance, research materials and occasional buy-out of teaching time to enable research activities. ELSS has funded a 0.4FTE Research Assistant in 2013-2014 to provide administrative support specifically for CAC, and one competitive Graduate Teaching Assistant PhD studentship post, won by Sophie Rowe, whose research is noted in section **b**. In addition to this, CAC researchers have been able to bid for ELSS funds for pilot projects (£5,000 each) and mini-sabbaticals (teaching buy-out). Pilot project funding was introduced in 2012/13 and has been central to developing our new researchers, two of whom have embarked upon pilot projects having successfully bid for the funding. Mini-sabbaticals were introduced in 2011/12 to enable researchers to take a dedicated block of time away from teaching commitments to work on research outputs. Mini-sabbaticals have been an important factor in highlighting the value of research as an academic activity within a university that had traditionally been associated mainly with teaching. Dr Yardley is an example of a member of staff who successfully used a mini-sabbatical to work towards the outputs detailed in REF2. ELSS has also funded CAC researchers to attend an external one-day bid-writing training course run every six months, which has provided both new and experienced researchers with essential insights into procurement and competitive tendering. Looking forwards, CAC will continue to promote ELSS and University funding opportunities to its researchers, as they have been sufficiently flexible to enable researchers at all levels to enhance and further their research. However, a key objective for the future is to enable the development of CAC-specific competitive development funds. This includes an academic term sabbatical, initially one per year from 2014-2015, which we plan to increase to four per academic year in 2018-2019. Clearly, this requires a significant acceleration in levels of external income, which we detail below.

CAC has a well-established history of drawing upon a range of external income sources. During the assessment period, we have successfully bid for funds and commissioned research projects from local authorities, third sector organisations, and the EU. These are detailed elsewhere in our submission. Our income generation strategy has been concurrent with our needs-led culture. We have drawn upon the knowledge and expertise of our researchers who are embedded within the CJS to identify both opportunities for funding and identify areas where there is an identified lack of

academic research. A key example is the funds relating to our REF3b case study 'The role of the Arts in improving offender outcomes'. We will continue to identify such opportunities going forwards so as to ensure that the new ELSS policy of research-related targets for all staff is implemented in CAC by encouraging a higher volume of bidding activity in staff with the necessary skillset and in providing training and 'bid shadowing' opportunities for those who are new to this activity. However, in the current funding environment, we recognise the pressing need to diversify as well as intensify our external income generation activities. We realise that the external environment is one in which we will need to be innovative, flexible and entrepreneurial if we are to sustain our contribution to the discipline and the university. As such, we will aim to develop at least two commercial CPD courses per year up to 2015-2016, increasing to three per year by 2018-2019, where we have identified a need for training or development amongst CJS practitioners and where our knowledge and expertise can be used to meet this need. We are currently launching one such course, developed in partnership with the voluntary sector organisation New Bridge. This new 2-day training course has been designed for individuals wanting to develop skills in working with offenders. In addition, a second such course is currently in development, 'A Beginners Guide to Outcomes Measurement', which will provide CJS practitioners with a basic overview of the concept and application of outcomes measurement.

Infrastructure and Facilities. CAC proactively feeds into the development of Faculty research infrastructure in several ways. In terms of research governance, Dr Yardley is a member of the Faculty Research Degrees Committee and the Faculty Academic Ethics Committee. This ensures two-way policy development and enables a direct line of feedback from CAC to the Faculty relating to receptivity towards and success of Faculty policies. CAC researchers are able to network with other researchers from across the Faculty at the monthly Research Café, where internal and external researchers deliver presentations relating to their findings or experiences as researchers. The Research Café provides an accessible and non-threatening environment in which to gain informal feedback on research and helps researchers make sense of conceptual or ethical issues they may be grappling with as a complement to the formal structures.

ELSS has established a research base on campus for research students. They are co-located with the full time Research Degrees Co-ordinator to ensure that their research and administrative needs are addressed quickly and efficiently. Staff researchers are located in traditional offices across two floors of a main campus building. However, this is not the extent of the research space occupied by CAC; much research activity takes place 'on the ground' in prisons, policy forums and local communities. As such, remote working facilities are available to staff and students in the form of loaned laptops, recording equipment and other items necessary for research within the discipline. Here too, much of our research also takes place at HMP Grendon and other CJS organisations. Adaptability and dynamism characterise our approach to the future in terms of infrastructure and facilities. CAC will continue to both support and develop research infrastructure drawing upon our need-led value set as we embrace the new University Research Strategy, an outward looking and entrepreneurial plan that is very much in keeping with our applied ethos. This will take place against the backdrop of a significant environmental change – the move to the City Centre Campus in September 2015.

e. Collaboration and contribution to the discipline or research base

As noted throughout this document, CAC embodies a holistic and interdisciplinary approach to research, true to the theoretical foundations of Criminology, encompassing staff from a wide range of academic and professional backgrounds. A key theme running through any social policy or social work discipline is the 'mixed economy', and Criminology is no exception to this rule. The CJS is a multi-sector landscape, involving a range of partners from private, state, voluntary and informal sectors. CAC has an established culture of collaboration with all key stakeholders and its research is particularly well embedded within organisations from the state and voluntary sectors. Notable among these are local bodies such as West Midlands Police and Wolverhampton City Council, HMP Grendon, the national Arts Alliance, The Howard League for Penal Reform, New Bridge and the Motesiczky Charitable Trust.

An on-going research collaboration, which both pre-dates and post-dates the assessment period is between CAC and HMP Grendon, formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding in 2009. Professor Brookes is Director of Therapeutic Communities at HMP Grendon and this relationship has enabled interdisciplinary research which draws upon both criminology and psychology, and

which has seen unique and innovative research outputs related to desistance more generally and BME prisoners specifically.

Our various seminar series over the assessment period (noted earlier in section **c**) have stimulated debate about diverse subjects – from football hooliganism to the causes of the English Riots, and bespoke seminars have been arranged for practitioners, such as SIOs (noted in section **b**). These activities have led to a number of academic outputs related to, for example, how SIOs handle murder investigations – work which has in turn quickly been taken up by a number of police force areas, most recently Dr Yardley’s work with West Midlands Police in relation to developing their training related to domestic violence and “family annihilation”. CAC was the first centre in the country to develop a typology of male family annihilators. So too CAC continues to foster innovative links in its desire to promote CPD, and our recent partnership with the CJ charity New Bridge is but one such example (noted in section **d**).

Key CAC researchers are members of professional and learned societies, such as The Howard League for Penal Reform – Professor Wilson is Vice Chair of this organisation, the oldest penal reform charity in the World, which has EU and UN consultative status. Here it should be noted that Professor Wilson Chaired the Howard League’s Commission on English Prisons Today, which was widely reported upon and recently acknowledged as contributing to, for example, the promotion of “justice re-investment” specifically and more generally the Coalition Government’s thinking about prisons. All of those being returned in our submission are members of the British Society of Criminology.

More generally at a national level CAC uses the various links that it has created through, for example, staff’s membership of Editorial Boards of peer review journals to foster academic networks, as well as those networks created by staff who have trained at or with CAC but have taken up posts elsewhere. These links can often be international. For example, Dr Hughes a former PhD student of the Centre is now Assistant Professor at the University of California. Here it should be noted that Professors Wilson and MacDonald are Editors of The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice and the International Journal of Prisoner Health respectively – both high-ranking, peer review journals relevant to pushing forward the discipline of Criminology. Dr Yardley is a member of the Editorial Advisory Group of the Howard Journal.

CAC’s plans for the next 5 years are to maintain - and adapt as necessary in response to need - our existing contributions to the discipline but also to build upon this in two ways. Firstly, expanding international networks with a view to more fully embracing comparative criminology. This will focus upon identifying and meeting research needs of criminal justice systems within the EU. The work of Professor MacDonald has clearly laid the foundation upon which to build this activity, including, ‘Making Sense of Murder’, a new project currently in the development stage. This project aims to investigate the impact of high-profile murders upon local communities within the EU. The project will foster collaboration with criminologists in other EU countries, target EU funds in 2014-2015 and have desired outcomes of an ESRC seminar series in 2016-2017 and an appropriate special issue of a relevant journal in 2017-2018. Secondly, CAC is proactively fostering the development of collaborative networks with US academics in fields where the US plays a leading or prominent role. This includes our research into serial murder and terrorism, which are currently being further developed by new researchers such as Lynes. We are targeting the American Society of Criminology Annual Meetings from 2013 alongside more specialist events as key pillars around which to build networks with a view to bidding to host two US Visiting Professors, for a 3-6 month period in 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 to further develop the skills of CAC researchers.