

Institution: University of Salford

Unit of assessment: C22 Social Work and Social Policy

A: Context:

The main users of research from this unit are public, private and third sector organisations providing services and support to low income and excluded groups, families and young people accessing social and related services, and the communities they reside in. Impact is achieved through the enhanced organisational delivery of support services. Beneficiaries and specific types of impact include:

- People on low incomes at risk of severe debt who have difficulty in obtaining loans and are often forced to seek them from unlicensed money lenders. Impact is achieved through research leading to the improved viability of independent micro-financial institutions across the UK and the EU and supporting their development and expansion, which in turn allows low income groups to improve their financial security, agency and quality of life.
- Gypsy and Traveller communities and the communities in which they reside. Impact is achieved through community-based research with these groups, leading to improved understanding (among support agencies and local authorities) of their accommodation and associated needs, which informs the statutory plans for meeting those needs.
- Homeless people benefit from involvement in research to understand and adequately assess their support priorities, which improves alignment with their needs among local authorities, housing agencies, social services, voluntary and community organisations.
- Communities in Greater Manchester, and people at particular risk of death and injury from domestic fires, where impact is achieved through research conducted with fire and rescue services to identify the social and behavioural factors that influence the risk of fire and develop targeted prevention strategies.
- Young offenders leaving custody and the communities which receive them. Impact is achieved through research on the resettlement process which is used by youth offending teams/probation services, police services, and local authorities to provide integrated support to juvenile and young adult offenders leaving custody.
- Policy-makers and service-leaders in criminal justice, where impact involves improved understanding of the uses (and misuses) of crime statistics, crime victimisation surveys, and evaluation research methods.

Impact from social work and social policy research is generated by several research groups at Salford, each of which contributes a distinctive disciplinary, theoretical and/or methodological underpinning to the public benefits derived from research. These are: the [Centre for Social Research](#) (CSR) (which includes [Community Finance Solutions](#) (CFS), an award-winning research and development unit, and the [Salford University Centre for Prison Studies](#) (SUCPS), with more than 150 members and policy partners); the [Centre for Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work](#) (CNMSW); the [Salford Housing and Urban Studies Unit](#) (SHUSU); and the [Work, Health and Wellbeing Research Group](#) (WHWRG).

Developing and achieving impact is at the heart of the unit's research agenda. Impactful areas of research in these groups address social exclusion/inclusion, community development and community engagement (including involvement in research projects), crime prevention and criminal justice (including youth justice), citizenship, and knowledge for organisational or professional practice. The majority of individual projects are driven by the need to find solutions to practical and pressing problems, on matters as diverse as sub-prime credit assessment, dementia care in the community, social uses for empty homes, and work-related illness.

b. Approach to impact:

The unit's approach to the development of impact from its research includes:

Working in partnership with the voluntary and public sectors. For example:

- CFS improves the sustainability of micro-financial institutions (MFIs), working with them to improve access to finance for excluded groups, reducing unmanageable debt and improving the quality of life; supporting public authorities in developing financial inclusion policies; and, changing EU policy by developing a model of sustainability and

transparency for MFIs through the [European Code of Conduct](#) for Microcredit providers.
Impact Case Study

- Local authorities have commissioned and used research on Gypsy and Traveller populations including, for example, [Maidstone Borough Council](#) and [North Lincolnshire Council](#). This research provides an evidence base to inform the future development of planning policies through Local Development Frameworks, supporting local authorities in fulfilling their statutory duties regarding the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. *Impact Case Study*
- In [Losing and Finding a Home](#), researchers from SHUSU worked with an advisory group of housing stakeholders to conduct a study of homelessness in Stoke-on-Trent. A key driver of the project was the Making Every Adult Matter four-point manifesto published by a coalition of four national charities in 2009, which identified specific research needs.
- [Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service](#) (GMFRS): This Post-Incident Research Programme is supporting GMFRS to prevent fires, injuries and deaths. The project is being run between GMFRS and the University of Salford, and is just one of a number of projects currently underway as part of a wider Partnership Agreement between the two organisations.
- CSR is working on a project with the [National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders](#) that promotes changes in the ways that policymakers and practitioners approach the resettlement of young offenders.

In many cases, effective links with users have led to a sequence of projects, from initial sites to additional locations, or from design to implementation. For example, the Work, Health and Wellbeing Research Group worked with the Salford Primary Care Trust on a project to assess the health needs of staff, which led to a second phase of the project, funded by the Department of Health, to provide training for Salford's Health and Wellbeing Board. Follow-through from design to assess implementation and impact has been developed through additional research projects. For example, CFS published research on '[Proof of Concept](#)' in 2011, which evidenced the achievements of Community Land Trusts (modelled on CFS proposals in 2001) in acquiring land and building homes. This report also identified topics to be addressed in the future development and monitoring of land trusts.

Knowledge Exchange:

- Policy Advisory Bodies: Researchers are members of advisory bodies, for example, the UK Public Health Association, the Youth Justice Resettlement Programme Board, and have submitted advisory opinions to national government. For example, Hope contributed evidence to the *National Statistician's Review of Crime Statistics for England and Wales* (June, 2011).
- Targeted Publications and Briefing Papers are designed to make research accessible to policy makers and practitioners. For example: Coffey's paper with Coufopoulos and Dugdill (UoA3) on 'Working as a Community Food Worker' was selected by the Royal Society for Public Health as a resource for continuing professional development.
- Organising Events to Bring Together Researchers and Practitioners: For example, the Centre for Prison Studies one-day conference for researchers and practitioners on [Mothers and Babies in Prison](#) (September 28, 2010); and the Salford one-day conference on 'Resettlement: Transforming the Process from Custody to Community' (October 16, 2012), in conjunction with the Youth Justice Board and Ministry of Justice.
- Attending Events to Present and Discuss Research with Practitioners: for example, the Annual Public Health Forum, Youth Justice Board Conventions, and annual political Party Conferences.

Engaging people with research through a range of news and social media:

- Research centres, and individual researchers use social media to share their research, including the Centre for Social Research: @CSRSalford, Salford Institute for Public Policy (SIPP): SIPP@SalfordUni, Sociology, Criminology and Security

Studies: @SalfordSCSS. Several staff within the unit were regular contributors to local and national news media.

Staff within the unit were specifically supported in achieving impact from their research through the following initiatives:

- Developing Knowledge Transfer Partnerships. (Two projects: KTP with East Lancashire Moneyline, 2008-11; KTP with Tameside Borough Council, 2012)
- Workload allocation, allowing dedicated time to pursue impactful research.
- The application of discretionary funding to enable staff to capitalise on opportunities to generate or enhance impact, to precipitate additional impact or evaluate research for impact.

The unit made use of institutional facilities, expertise or resources in undertaking these activities through:

- Promotion and development of impact through the [Salford Impact Initiative](#), involving:
 - Salford Impact Advisory Group with cross–university representation to build momentum and develop excellence in evidencing impact;
 - An Impact Fund to support researchers in generating impact;
 - Celebrating impact in the Vice Chancellor’s Research Excellence Awards;
- Embedding impact in funding bids;
- Early Career Researcher training in impact.

c. Strategy and plans:

The Unit developed a specific focus on achieving impact from research during the period 2008-13. This momentum will carry research impact forward during the next five years, with growth expected in the number of ongoing external partner agencies and externally driven research projects. A central support organisation for further development of impact will be the University of Salford Institute for Public Policy (SIPP) (jointly led by Dayson and Hazel from CSR). An extension of the [Policy Solutions initiative](#), the SIPP, will work with agencies and individuals to produce research that is both informed by, and matters to our communities, focused on supporting them in addressing their challenges and achieving their objectives. In order to enhance impact, the following activities are planned, with results being fed in to future research activity:

- With established and prospective partners in the sector, individual consultations and conferences on strengthening the impact of research in social work and social policy, focusing on:
 - Improving impact: conceptualising, planning and developing impacts from basic research;
 - Improving quality: identifying and developing conceptual frameworks for ‘applied’ projects.

d. Relationship to case studies:

Case Study 1: [Improving the Sustainability of Microfinancial Institutions](#) features research by Dayson and colleagues in CFS. It exemplifies the development of ongoing relationships with external organisations, who are the primary users of the research, benefitting the financial security, agency and quality of life of people living in excluded communities.

Case Study 2: [Using Community-Based Research to Support Policies for Migrant and Nomadic Communities](#) involves research by Scullion and colleagues in SHUSU. This research addresses a broad range of social needs affecting various migrant communities, reducing exclusion, improving cohesion and improving life chances through the development of ongoing relationships with external organisations, networks of knowledge exchange (particularly with local authorities), the involvement of beneficiaries in the research process, and the implementation of research results.