

<p>Institution: University of Liverpool</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 22 - Social Work and Social Policy</p>
<p>a. Context</p> <p>The Department of Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology, part of the School of Law and Social Justice in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, has a long-standing track record of theoretically-informed, empirically-grounded, policy-relevant and engaged research. From the time of Eleanor Rathbone’s pioneering work on housing and health policy in the early 20th century, the Department’s research contribution has been consistently characterised by a determination to impact positively within the social world in general (to improve, enhance, constructively challenge and critique social-structural arrangements, organisational regimes and democratic structures in the UK and world-wide) and the social policy sphere in particular (particularly within the domains of criminal justice, health and welfare and the cultural industries).</p> <p>The positive impact arising from our research brings particular benefits to: international, national and regional civil society organisations; employers, employees and trade unions; criminal justice agencies, penal reform and human rights movements; health providers and health professionals; welfare organisations and a broad and diverse range of cultural industries. We continue to build-upon and extend this approach through: a vibrant spectrum of research projects; our extensive networks (across the academic, policy and practitioner communities) and an ongoing series of conferences, public lectures and seminars that serve to disseminate research and to sustain and develop our engagement with, and impact on, international, national, regional and local agencies.</p>
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>i) Impact is maximised by ensuring that specific research projects and activities are conceived with end-users, research participants and beneficiaries in mind. The design, methodologies, budgets and dissemination plans for all research projects aim to optimise the participation of, and the benefits for, the widest research-user communities. As an example, the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation (RCLCF) approached Robinson to lead research into exploring smoking within the British Army (described by the Director of RCLCF as a “mutually rewarding relationship, which benefits both organisations and makes sure that we act in the best interests of the people we support in conquering lung cancer.” Robinson’s work was described by the Ministry of Defence as vital in shaping smoking cessation services.</p> <p>ii) The University Knowledge Exchange strategy provides a framework for our activities. Guidance on research engagement, dissemination and impact is embedded within our research culture and transmitted through our ‘Impact with Research’ workshop series. Typically comprising three events per year, the workshops aim to bring together national policy-makers and civil servants (e.g. the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have each provided specific insights into the mechanisms for impacting on government policy). These proactive initiatives assist us to develop new and maintain established relationships with key Government departments and related bodies.</p> <p>iii) The work of key researchers within the Department typifies our approach to impact. For example, in 2008 Goldson was commissioned by the Office of the Children’s Commissioner for Wales to prepare a major submission of written evidence to the ‘Independent Review of Restraint in Juvenile Secure Settings’; in 2009, he was appointed to the Expert Advisory Group of the Office of the Children’s Commissioner for England serving, over 2009-11, to advise the inquiry into the emotional well being and mental health of children and young people in the youth justice system (major report published 2011). In 2009, his work on international youth justice was cited in the House of Lords House of Commons Joint Committee on Human Rights report ‘Children’s Rights: Twenty-fifth Report of Session 2008–09’. He has also served on the Children’s Rights Alliance for England Expert Advisory Group on children’s human rights and juvenile justice law and policy (major report published in June 2011), the Pool of European Youth Researchers, an expert panel established to advise the Council of Europe and the European Commission on youth policy and research, and gave invited presentations to the Justice Committee of the Northern Ireland</p>

Impact template (REF3a)

Assembly (on the youth justice international knowledge base and human rights standards). In 2009, **Walklate** was appointed as an expert consultant for the New Zealand Ministry of Justice, advising on the findings arising from their large-scale 'Crime and Safety Survey'. This work tested the efficacy of the survey's proposed policy strategies within the international context and **Walklate's** advice was used for the purposes of developing future policy. **Walklate** has offered similar advice to the UK Ministry of Justice (MOJ; on their policies towards victims) resulting in a presentation to the MOJ on future directions for responding to victims of crime, and to the National Police Improvement Agency and to Victim Support Europe. **Godfrey**, building on a long-standing relationship with the New Zealand Government (supported by two large ESRC awards and a New Zealand Bright Futures PhD scholarship) has evaluated the impact on crime/prison rates of newly introduced '3 strikes' legislation – presenting findings to Cabinet and Government. He also used evidence from an ESRC-funded project to co-produce campaign leaflets for the Howard League for Penal Reform about short-term prison sentences and has worked with the UK Magistrates Association (which part-funded a PhD student on out-of-court disposals).

iv) The Faculty and the University's Business Gateway team support staff in securing Knowledge Exchange Vouchers. In the REF period seven members of the Department secured these to develop relationships with museums (Border Agency Museum) and local authorities (including Knowsley, Lancashire County Council and Wootton Bassett). This work (which directly includes research-users) has deepened relationships over the longer-term. **McGarry** catalogued an extensive documentary archive work with Wootton Bassett that is progressing towards an exhibition in the Imperial War Museum/collaborative ESRC application.

v) The effectiveness of our deep-seated relationships with practitioner and policy bodies means that we are well-placed to respond quickly in contexts where the socio-political landscape is fast-moving, or the need is acute. For example our research with debt-counselling services in Knowsley has created accepted policy recommendations which will lead to a refined system of local authority delivery in the near future and, following the 2011 riots in England, researchers in the Faculty (led by Frost) worked with local community groups to create a community archive of opinions, memories and experiences. Furthermore, in October 2011 **Goldson** was invited to make a presentation at a seminar - convened by the Youth Justice Board and the Ministry of Justice - aimed at drawing policy lessons from the riots.

vi) We host the **Eleanor Rathbone Social Justice Public Lecture Series** which attracts a broad civic audience to presentations from leading academics. In addition a corresponding **Eleanor Rathbone Social Justice seminar series** provokes and engages significant audiences of over 100 academics, policy-makers, practitioners, and social-justice campaigners on matters of current concern (i.e. Shrewsbury 3; Hillsborough Campaign).

vii) **Interchange**, situated in the Department, places students with third sector organisations to undertake collaborative research projects. The School supports these activities financially and practically, with an events organiser and dedicated administrator, as well as the integration of Interchange projects into undergraduate/taught postgraduate curricula with support from academics (**Whyte**). Also situated in the Department, **Moving on with Life and Learning** is a Liverpool-grown human rights organisation that is dedicated to promoting the social inclusion of people with learning disabilities, mental health conditions and brain injury.

c. Strategy and plans

The engagement and impact agenda is embedded within the **Departmental Strategic Plan** directed by the **School RKE Committee**. Our future strategic plans are designed to ensure that our entire research community has the maximum opportunity to produce theoretically-informed, empirically-grounded and policy-relevant research that makes a positive impact.

i) We have implemented a strategy of reviewing the immediate and long-term impacts of each research-active staff member to see what can be learned including a revamped website that now highlights the impact of our research and the routes by which we collaborate (and might collaborate further) with current/potential research-users.

ii) Where grant bodies do not require an impact statement (for example, The Leverhulme Trust), researchers are, nonetheless, encouraged and supported to develop an impact agenda for their project. In this way all our research incorporates an explicit impact strategy. At the conclusion of major research projects, project leaders discuss plans for longer-term impact with the Director of Research.

iii) We work within University framework to find ways of effectively recording impact. This is an important means of encouraging ECRs and PGRs to see how their work can be impact-focused from the start of their careers. In this way, the University's Knowledge Exchange Strategy dovetails with the Department's Research and KE Strategy to create a culture of high quality research/deep impact across our staff community.

iv) We have successfully implemented and supported long-term secondments to optimise impact (for example, **Wilks-Heeg** to Democratic Audit and Garcia to the Institute of Cultural Capital - a cross-institutional research unit jointly supported by the University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores University to research the short, medium and long-term impact of Liverpool's designation as European City of Culture in 2008). The success of such strategic secondments can be seen in the Impact Case Studies and this practice is now embedded within our future strategic planning.

v) **Business Gateway** acts as a dedicated point of contact to facilitate the enhancement of our external relationships at a national/international level. Our researchers work closely with **Corporate Communications** to disseminate research findings, whether to maximise media coverage or to target findings to particular audiences identified in our research project planning. (**Godfrey's** AHRC-funded project was extensively covered in British/Australian broadcast media, with the Press Office managing these relationships). This works in tandem with our well-developed Department, School, Faculty and University social media activities, for example The Liverpool View; The Conversation; Twitter (our Department features in the Top 10 most-followed Sociology Departments in the UK) and we plan to make our existing media engagement activities even more effective.

d. Relationship to case studies

Our three case studies illustrate different routes to impact. Each of the three chosen case studies owed their origins to insights from research carried out before the period 2008-2013. Their individual research interests framed within research clusters, and supported by externally-funded research awards, drew upon long-standing relationships with statutory and Third Sector organisations. Garcia's impact involves a group of stakeholders in cultural policy which widened from the **City of Liverpool** (and its EU-funder) to a national and European-wide group; **Wilks-Heeg** with **Democratic Audit, Electoral Commission**; **Whyte's** impact developed from well-established relationships with regulatory bodies (**Health and Safety Executive**); political realm (**Scottish Executive**); trade unions (**GMB and Unison**); and policy-active criminologists (**Council of the Centre for Criminal Justice Studies**). Departmental support took the form of secondments (Garcia with the **Institute of Cultural Capital**; **Wilks-Heeg** with **Democratic Audit**); financial and practical support in organising workshops to highlight core activities and engage with research-users and policy-makers (for example, **Whyte's "How Corrupt is Britain?" conference**; **Wilks-Heeg's Eleanor Rathbone lecture**).

The three case studies demonstrate that the process from original research to developing impact that has genuine reach and demonstrable significance unfolds over a number of years. It involves a significant investment of time and energy from individual researchers supported by the Departmental, School and University structures (for example, **Business Gateway**, to make relationships more effective and the **Press Office**, to profile our research). Our case studies, therefore, exemplify the commitment the entire Department has made, and continues to make, towards creating, developing and supporting **theoretically-informed, empirically-grounded, policy-relevant and engaged research**.