

Institution: University of Brighton
Unit of Assessment: C22 Social Work and Social Policy
a. Context

The main beneficiaries of our research are: governmental decision makers in the UK and Europe; professionals and service users in the fields of mental health, social care, housing and migration; members of specific communities of interest (LGBT, older people, disadvantaged young people, families); migrants and refugees; and, the broadcast media and press. We engage with seven main user groups:

- national government departments and agencies (eg Department of Health, Home Office, Swedish National Health Service)
- European agencies (eg European Forum for Urban Safety)
- voluntary and community sector bodies (eg Meridian Mature Citizen's Forum (Sussex) and the National LGBTI Health Alliance, Australia)
- training and education providers (eg School of Nursing Massey University, New Zealand, and Sussex Central YMCA)
- local government and health service providers (eg Brighton and Hove City Council, and Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust)
- charity sector agencies (eg Mind, Age UK and RISE, a domestic abuse charity working in Brighton)
- service users (eg young people with learning difficulties and other complex needs).

The range and types of impact include: improved planning and delivery of services responding to unmet needs; enhanced understanding of, and opportunities for, citizen and service-user participation in service development; improved standards, guidelines, methods of practice and training, and; the stimulation of professional/practitioner debate.

b. Approach to impact

Our approach to impact is aligned with our mission to collaborate with users and beneficiaries in the production of socially-relevant knowledge to tackle key challenges in policy and practice. We achieve this through impacts on policy, practice and the lived experiences of service users and citizens. The success of this approach may be evidenced in the use of our research as exemplars of impact by ESRC, the Academy of Social Sciences, and the 2012 Chief Medical Officer's (UK) Annual Report.

The Community University Partnership Programme (CUPP): This unit provides a distinct strategic aspect of our approach, acting as a crucial conduit for supporting and managing the impact of our research. CUPP has a history of shared appointments with SASS, including the Academic Director [HART], providing a unique environment for developing research with social impact. In 2008, CUPP was winner of the Times Higher Education Award for 'outstanding contribution to our local community' and, in 2011, the US MacJannet Prize for Global Citizenship. CUPP is the key means by which social policy researchers are supported and empowered to develop sustainable research partnerships with the community, service users and a range of organisations. This is achieved through four initiatives:

1. **Start-up funding:** This was provided via two HEFCE-funded programmes- the Brighton and Sussex Community Knowledge Exchange programme and the *South East Coastal Communities Programme*. These supported partnership research projects that contribute to three of the impact case studies. All the projects used specific methods and frameworks to structure their participatory research including Knowledge Exchange and Communities of Practice (REF3b). One of the funded projects called 'Growing Older, Being Heard', involved older people as co-researchers and they co-produced a set of six online films and handbook that introduced an ethic of care to educators and practitioners, and empowered older people as researchers. These start-up projects have, collectively, secured additional RCUK funding (£200k) specifically for developing impact based on the research.

Impact template (REF3a)

- 2. Community fellows:** This scheme is to enable community partners to work as researchers in the university with access to the facilities. For example, one fellow worked with academic researchers on an ESRC-funded project *Systems and Complex Systems Approaches in Public Policy and Practice*. The outcome was a toolkit to support the use of complex systems approaches that changed practices in diverse social policy practice environments.
- 3. Social engagement sabbaticals:** These have funded research with the Refugee Forum in Brighton and Hove into Afghans' experiences of migration. It resulted in improved understandings of mental health amongst Afghan migrants and led to the development of local government sports initiatives.
- 4. Collaborative networks:** These are managed by CUPP to strengthen community collaborations and enhance the impact of co-produced research. For example, the impact of an AHRC Connected Communities project *Youth and Community: Connections and Disconnections* was achieved by linking the research to community based groups that could validate or challenge the key findings. The groups also disseminated project findings directly to practitioners working in children's services and youth justice, who adopted some of the recommendations. CUPP's international networks of institutions and agencies that are developing community/university collaborations serve to extend the reach of our influence. For example, in Sweden, the dissemination of the UoB CUPP model is now shaping the ways that community university partnerships are being developed. Further network links to Sweden resulted in Brighton's resilience therapy approach being adopted by Swedish health care organisations to tackle the challenges facing parents of children with complex needs and young people themselves.

Professional networks in social policy, social work and public administration: UoB researchers have also built collaborations with local authorities and public sector providers via *Making Research Count*, a national network for evidence-based practice in social work and social care. Further links are made with practitioners through the school's professional courses in social work and public administration. For example, links with practitioners in East and West Sussex Social Services departments led to evaluation research in the dementia field. Consequently, academics worked with the same service providers and gained funding for further research, now having impact, including three recent projects for the Alzheimer's Society, worth over £80k. The project findings have led to the development of information and support programmes for dementia carers and subsequently will inform the development of a self-care programme for people with dementia.

User-focused engagement: Our engagements with users are designed to have impact on key policy challenges by stimulating practitioner-researcher debate. We achieve this through workshops and targeted publications. For example, the *Age is not an Illness* project constituted six seminars throughout 2010–11. These disseminated a wide spectrum of our research on older people, age and ageing, to guide the decisions and practices of service delivery managers. Our approach to user-focused targeted publications is based on the Joseph Rowntree model for research dissemination. We make such publications available to users via the research website in PDF format. By way of example, the recommendations in user-focused reports from the LGBT project *Count Me in Too* were adopted by local and national policy bodies in the UK and Australia (REF3b [3]). Other impact case studies provide evidence of how we have addressed key inter-agency agendas in national and local policy through combining evaluation-based research with user-engagement in ways that are mutually reinforcing. REF3b [1] is an exemplar of how our approach works at the European level to impact on policy for CCTV and public safety.

Presentations to government bodies and decision makers: Many examples of this approach being used by SQUIRES can be found in the Gun Crime Impact Case Study (REF3b [1]), which has changed government firearms policy. Evidence about the negative impact of the monetary policy of Quantitative Easing (QE), as evaluated by HAYNES was presented to the UK Parliament *Treasury Select Committee Review of Quantitative Easing* in January 2013. The evidence was subsequently cited in the New Economic Foundation's (NEF's) radical proposals for a more progressive monetary policy intervention, *Strategic Quantitative Easing* in July 2013.

Media involvement from public academics: This approach engages with the media to influence and shape a wider public discourse through which the researcher builds trusted

Impact template (REF3a)

relationships having impact. For example, SQUIRE's 40 media appearances in the census period have enabled the development of relations with key policy bodies so that research evidence can influence policy and government guidance. McGARRY's expertise on Roma discrimination has been sought to inform public debates, for example, through BBC R4 *World at One* in 2010.

c. Strategy and plans

For the period 2014–20, SASS has reaffirmed its core mission to collaborate with service users and providers to tackle key challenges facing practice and service delivery. In addition, we will access university investment schemes designed to strengthen the impact support infrastructure, incorporate impact targets into research planning, and train researchers to recognise and pursue impact opportunities.

Strengthening the impact infrastructure:

- With our Impact Policy Officer we will devise appropriate mechanisms for the collection and analysis of impact evidence and develop robust and measurable KPIs for impact activity. These will be linked to the university's new Strategic Plan from 2015 to become part of the local annual Budget Centre Planning cycle and the development and monitoring of the research in social policy and social work.
- Through the potential offered by an enhanced university research website (2014) to make increased use of social media, we will provide examples of the impact of our research, including end-user testimonials.
- With CUPP we will further embed collaborative working by more systematically exploiting its international networks to extend the international reach of our research with service users.

Training and supporting researchers:

- From 2013, all PGR students and ECRs will receive formal training on the identification of impact, different types of knowledge exchange, and methods of dissemination both through the PGR training programme and in modules offered at *The Future's Bright* ECR Conference.
- All staff will provide an impact plan for internal research investment schemes, including school sabbaticals and the university's *Rising-Stars*, *Innovation Awards* and CUPP being supported to develop these plans through research mentoring.

Recognising impact:

- The school will designate one competitive research sabbatical per year for staff producing impact-focused research in the area of social engagement.
- We will appoint an 'impact champion' in the school to inform and disseminate knowledge about impact initiatives generated by the impact policy officer, working with the University's Economic and Social Engagement (EASE) team.

d. Relationship to case studies

Together, the four Impact Case Studies in this submission embody the research mission and approach to impact outlined in our REF5 and REF3a

- All of the case studies involve collaborations with service providers and co-working with users and potential users from an early stage in the research design, ensuring maximum impact
- Initial research underpinning impact in REF3b [2,3,4] were directly supported by CUPP funds to co-produce socially relevant knowledge making extensive use of user-focussed engagement to create impact on practitioners and lives of service users
- REF3b [1] specifically illustrates how researchers engage with the media to influence and shape wider public discourse by creating trusted public relationships through which the research impacts on policy and practice
- REF3b [1] also involved the regular presentation to policy makers and government organisations in order to ensure research evidence had an impact of government policy and guidelines for firearms control