

Institution: 10007140 Birmingham City University
Unit of Assessment: 20 Social Work and Social Policy
<p>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</p> <p><u>Context</u></p> <p>The Centre for Applied Criminology (CAC), from December 2019, known as the Crime and Society Research Centre (CSRC), is based in the School of Social Sciences within the Faculty of Business, Law and Social Sciences (BLSS) within Birmingham City University (BCU). Upon its formation in 2014, the new BLSS Faculty identified key thematic research priorities, one of which was "Violence and Society". During the assessment period, the unit has developed a high-quality body of research around this theme, enabling enhanced understandings of and responses to violence in the twenty-first century. The formation of two central research clusters - <i>Crime Culture and Contemporary Media</i> (CCCM) and <i>Security and Extremism</i> (SE) – has provided strategic direction for the research. This has resulted in a significant step change in both scope and quality since the REF2014 submission, from prison-focused research that was internationally recognised to criminology and security studies research, which is internationally excellent and world-leading. Our research is 'needs-led', responding to contemporary crimes and harms and meaningfully engaging with those affected by them. Within this reinvigorated research environment, through a 'grow our own' approach to nurturing research talent, we have created a vibrant and diverse research community that have engaged in innovative enquiry, pushing disciplinary boundaries and delivering impact in non-traditional, trailblazing ways.</p> <p><u>Strategy and successes 2014-2021</u></p> <p>During the assessment period, we have created a thriving research culture, developed responsive, needs-led research, and developed a fresh and dynamic research community. The unit is one of five Units of Assessment (UoA) within BLSS to have benefitted from Faculty support for enabling research excellence and impact, resulting in enhanced research activity and output quality. School level initiatives such as the Voluntary Research Assistantship (VRA) scheme, Student Researcher Scheme, Communities of Practice for Grant Writing and PhD student and mentorship schemes, each focusing upon different elements of the research process, are examples of key initiatives and will be referred to within the relevant sections of this document. Guiding our development at unit-level, our activity during the assessment period has revolved around our three key strategic aims, described below.</p> <p><u>Enhancing Research Quality</u></p> <p>Overall research quality has been enhanced through the formation of the two central research clusters. The cluster structure aimed to facilitate team authorship of articles targeting leading peer-reviewed journals and team bidding for ambitious research grants from prestigious funders. The assessment period has seen the most notable increase in research quality for the unit. It has moved away from a reliance upon legacy research around prisons, carried out by a small number of established academics. It has moved towards research responding to new dimensions of violence in contemporary society, carried out by passionate researchers, published in highly esteemed journals, and informed by their professional relationships with people and organisations affected by violence. The new clusters have enabled researchers to work more closely together to respond to key social and cultural issues. These include racism and discrimination in the aftermath of terrorist incidents and Brexit and the harms initiated by the growth of social media and the normalisation of being 'constantly connected'.</p> <p>SE responded to growing awareness and criminalization of hate crime in the early twenty-first century, and the rise in recorded hate crimes experienced by Muslim communities' post 9/11. SE focused upon Islamophobia, cyberterrorism, surveillance and the effects of international relations policies. In building an understanding of how Islamophobia is experienced on the ground, the cluster formulated a more comprehensive and nuanced definition of this phenomenon, which tackles misunderstandings and misconceptions. The definition has informed Crown Prosecution Service guidelines on hate crime, particularly concerning the sharing of harmful content and has</p>

fed into new guidance for journalists and editors through the Independent Press Standards Organisation. These impacts are testament to SE's commitment to strengthening this area of study's theoretical elements through an immersion within the environments in which Islamophobia is experienced and a collaborative approach to inquiry. Through a better grasp of what Islamophobia *is*, SE has paved the way for more successful anti-Islamophobia interventions. SE researchers have exposed the realities of this hate crime and ensured this is reflected in definitional and conceptual imaginings. This in turn ensures that law and policy are valid, based on reality rather than rhetoric and are responsive to victims and stakeholders' needs.

CCCM emerged in response to the changing nature of the spaces in which crime occurs and in which media representations of crime are produced and shared. The cluster produced new understandings of the crime/media nexus by researching new features of the landscape. For example, the political economy of the true crime podcast – a relatively new media in true crime genre. CCCM also posed novel questions around crime and media in empirical studies of how perpetrators use newer forms of media to carry out their crimes and form their criminal identities. This synthesis of criminological theory, narrative criminology and mediatization theory has led to CCCM research becoming a central reference point within the discipline. For example, our 2016 study on websleuthing, published in *Crime Media Culture*, was one of the first criminological studies of this phenomena and was cited in Powell, Stratton and Cameron's seminal work *Digital Criminology: Crime and justice in digital society*.

The quality of our work in these areas is evidenced by publication in prestigious journals and funding awards from bodies such as the Nuffield Foundation, Joseph Rowntree Educational Foundation and the Economic and Social Research Council. There has been a significant increase in volume and quality of outputs compared to the previous assessment period. We have increased the number of peer-reviewed journal articles being submitted for current staff from 21 to 35, an increase of 67% from REF2014. Whilst our GPA in REF2014 was 2.02, we anticipate a significant improvement in REF2021 given the enhancements to the research environment described in this document. We are entering nine authored books for REF2021, compared to only one in REF2014. The books include monographs published by leading academic presses, such as Palgrave and Policy Press. The assessment period has seen us secure our first publications in leading, high-impact journals including *British Journal of Criminology*, *The Sociological Review*, *European Journal of Criminology* and *Violence Against Women*. Whilst we entered four book chapters for REF2014, none are being submitted for REF2021, demonstrating the robustness of our body of monographs and peer-reviewed journal articles; we are no longer reliant upon outputs considered lower quality within our discipline to 'make up the numbers' for our submission. Whilst 2014 saw the unit submitting nearly every output produced to reach our target, in 2021 we have been able to select from a much larger pool of in excess of 100 outputs, enabling us to showcase work that is internationally excellent or world-leading.

Nurturing research talent

During the assessment period, we have created a sustainable and supportive research culture, in which a group of new, talented researchers have flourished, making rapid and significant progress in their research careers. One of our aims was enhancing researcher confidence in writing for publication and disseminating their research within the international academic community: our sizeable pool of outputs and presence at key conferences evidence our success. A fundamental principle underpinning our success in this area has been to 'grow our own'. We encourage a passion for research amongst our undergraduates (UGs) and postgraduate research students (PGRs), supporting their development as researchers and enabling them to sample elements of a research career during their studies. Over one-third (36%, 5 of 14) of staff being submitted for REF2021 are former or current students of our PGR programmes. Our PGR community has grown during the assessment period, and we have increased our number of doctoral completions from five to seven, an increase of 40% since REF2014. The unit has been wholly rejuvenated since RE2014 and is comprised of a vanguard of pioneering researchers breaking new ground within the discipline. Of the 14 (13.2FTE)

Category A staff being entered for REF2021, 12 were not in post on the REF2014 census date. Only two of the eight researchers submitted to REF2014 are part of the 2021 submission – Elizabeth Yardley (EY) and David Wilson (DW). EY took over from DW as the director of the unit in late 2013 and has spent the assessment period building a more vibrant, diverse and dynamic research culture.

Knowledge Development and Public Criminology – pathways to impact

Our unit is one of the go-to places for journalists and producers responsible for crime reporting and programming. For example, our research has informed programmes made by BBC Science, Sky Crime and CBS Reality, evidenced in our 'Enriching Crime Media' Impact Case Study. Research leaders within the unit are experienced media contributors, who are skilled in presenting complex theoretical and conceptual concepts in manner suitable for a non-specialist audience. As such, we achieve considerable reach, evidenced by the wide range of international media channels in which our researchers have appeared. Our senior researchers, IA, DW and EY, have generated advertising value equivalents of between £1million and £7million each during the assessment period, and their work has a reach of between 3 million and 300 million people each, evidencing the unit's considerable capacity to influence perceptions of crime and criminality across the globe.

Our unit has become a central player on the international stage for the development of knowledge both within and beyond academia. We hosted a prestigious international conference in 2018 (detailed in Section 4) - evidence of our considerable and growing status as a centre for excellence in criminological research. Our researchers are members of established national and international groups, organisations and committees within the criminology and criminal justice fields and their work is highly regarded within and beyond the discipline. For example, Lily Hamourtziadou's (LH) coordination of the Iraqi Body Count Project - the world's largest public database of violent civilian deaths since the 2003 invasion - has twice been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize. This evidences the world-leading nature of the research conducted within the unit and the passionate determination of our researchers to expose the realities of violence in the twenty-first century.

Our research has changed mainstream media representations of crime and those affected by it, enabling more nuanced depictions and challenging stereotypes and 'common sense' myths – making a difference to the way the public understand crime and criminality. Our needs-led approach to research enables impact from the outset in identifying social developments and challenges - like the proliferation of digital communication technology and increases in Islamophobic hate crime - and co-creating research with key stakeholders like All Party Parliamentary Groups, charities, mosques, private sector consultancies and media professionals to ensure that the research addresses issues of importance to these groups.

Future Directions

There are now five new interdisciplinary Research Centres within the School of Social Sciences, which replace the three in place throughout most of the assessment period. The SE cluster has now grown into one of these research centres: The Centre for Security and Extremism (CSE). Led by IA, it continues to build on the research that began within CAC, engaging in empirical enquiry around extremism and hate crime, securitisation strategies and threats to national, regional and human security. The development of CSE as a separate centre of excellence is testament to CAC's success during the assessment period in enhancing research quality, nurturing talent and establishing fruitful pathways to impact. CSRC represents the next phase of the unit's development in adopting an interdisciplinary approach to crime and criminal justice. Following CAC's tradition of responding to social and cultural shifts and challenges, CSRC better facilitates interdisciplinary research, generating more nuanced, multidimensional insights into contemporary social problems and challenges through collaboration between researchers from the social science disciplines of psychology, sociology and criminology. CSRC builds on the strong base developed during the assessment period to encompass often divergent

perspectives. This new interdisciplinary research environment responds to the increasingly complex and international nature of crime and harm.

2. People

Our approach to supporting researchers to reach their potential and achieve their best work is underpinned by the University's 'People Focused' core value. At Faculty level, BLSS have prioritised equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) initiatives to boost equality of opportunity. During the assessment period, the School of Social Sciences has been awarded the Athena Swan Departmental Award, complementing the institutional Athena Swan Bronze Award held by the university.

Our REF2021 staff return evidences the success of these wider strategies for ensuring fairness, flexibility and support for all researchers. Our REF2014 return did not include any BAME researchers, our REF2021 return is 14% (2/14) BAME. In relation to sex, whilst our REF2021 return includes lower proportions of female researchers (21%, 3/14) than the REF2014 return (50%, 4/8), this reflects structural enhancements to the research environment rather than any diminution in opportunities for women. The two female Professors Morag MacDonald (MM) and Diane Kemp (DK) who were included in our REF2014 return are now part of thriving research communities that have grown during the assessment period in other parts of the institution. MM for example is being returned in the first ever Sociology return for the institution. Furthermore, MM, DK and EY are all members of 'The 32 Profs', a university-wide female professoriate group established during the assessment period to support women's advancement in the institution. The University and Faculty ethos and commitment to EDI has contributed towards an accommodating research environment, which is encouraging of and receptive to the type of research carried out within the unit, for example our research into hate crime, gender-based violence, and Islamophobia.

Staffing Strategy

The unit appoints new members of staff based on their potential to offer a unique contribution to research clusters, diversify these strands of research and identify new areas of enquiry that will enhance the difference that the unit's research makes to people affected by crime. One notable example is Mr Kevin Hoffin (KH), whose research transcends criminology and media studies through his enquiry into metal music cultures. KH's research enriched the CCCM cluster through his focus upon music, which complemented the existing focus upon news, drama and factual genres. In addition, the appointments of Dr Ben Colliver (BC) and Dr Piotr Godzisz (PG) have expanded the unit's research around hate crime, supplementing our existing work on Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate crime with their respective specialisms on transphobia and homophobia. These examples highlight the way in which our staffing strategy responds to the need to broaden both the scope and depth of our research specialisms as our scholarship matures and grows.

The unit has successfully retained high-profile research-active scholars such as EY and IA. During the assessment period, both EY (2017) and IA (2018) were conferred the titles of Research Professors. Both have progressed from the Senior Lecturer posts they held in 2014, through Readerships to Professorships during the assessment period through the institution's Conferment and Academic Progression process, an annual, competitive process open to all academic staff, for promotion to Senior Lecturer / Researcher, Associate Professor, Reader or Professor status. This process dovetails with the annual Individual Performance Review (IPR) process and is supported through advice and information sessions as well as informal mentoring from staff who have previously successfully applied.

The leadership of the unit during the assessment period drew upon the succession plans articulated in the REF2014 Environment Statement. EY took over as CAC Centre Director in late 2013 as DW began preparations for semi-retirement in 2018, supported by IA as Deputy Director. A similar strategy has been adopted in relation to research leadership as we enter the

next period of assessment. CSRC (noted in Section 1) is led by psychologist Dr Laura Hammond, supported by criminologist Dr Adam Lynes (AL). IA is now leading the new Centre for Security and Extremism supported by Dr Damian Breen.

Workload Planning

All staff have an annual Workload Allocation Model (WAM), which includes protected research time. There is a standard allocation of 162 hours for research and scholarly activity. In addition, staff apply for a Research Allocation (RWAM), submitting a Personal Research Planner (PRP) as part of the annual IPR process. The PRP outlines research achievements and identifies goals for the next 12 months concerning publications, bids and research income. Staff specify the research status they wish to apply for: Emerging Researcher (ER) or Significant Responsibility for Research (SRR). PRPs are submitted to the School Research Director and reviewed by Research Centre Directors. The reviewed PRPs are then considered by Line Managers, Research Centre Directors and the School Management Team. ERs are awarded an additional 162 hours for developing their research. As such, their research time accounts for around 25% of their overall workload. Those with SRR are allocated to one of three bands: Band 1 (226 hours – 35%), Band 2 (388 hours – 45%), Band 3 (632 hours – 65%). Course Leaders work in conjunction with Line Managers to ensure that the teaching timetabling is structured to enable all researchers to use their research allocation. This approach ensures all staff are able to balance their commitments across teaching and learning, research and administration.

Supporting Enhanced Research Quality

Following the results of REF2014, in which no unit outputs were rated at 4*, 19% of unit outputs were 3*, 56% 2*, 22% 1* and 4% unclassified with an overall average of 2.02, enhancing the quality of research outputs was a key objective during the assessment period. This linked to our goal to increase researcher confidence around writing for publication. We are confident that we will achieve a significantly improved research quality average in REF2021 given our strategy for improvement.

Our work towards these outcomes has focused on a system of co-writing, in which junior researchers team up with a senior, published researchers to produce outputs. Shona Robinson-Edwards, Morag Kennedy, Craig Pinkney, Mohammed Rahman, Sophie Gregory, Dan Rusu and Laura Riley co-authored between one and four peer-reviewed articles each during their doctoral studies in prestigious journals such as *Crime Media Culture*, *Victims and Offenders*, *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice* and *Therapeutic Communities*. Writing alongside experienced academics has boosted these researchers' confidence, who have gone on to write sole-authored pieces and articles with their peers – for instance Shona Robinson-Edwards and Craig Pinkney have two publications together in the journal *Safer Communities*.

Research Support

Multiple mechanisms exist to ensure that staff at all levels within their career are supported in establishing and developing their research. Formal support includes Staff Development Funding. Each year, staff are invited to apply for support to pursue training and development work, which includes Faculty funding of doctoral studies. Nearly two-thirds (64%, n=7) of the 11 PGRs within the unit are full-time members of staff being supported through BLSS Faculty bursaries, consistent with our 'grow our own' philosophy and commitment to the development of in-house research talent. In addition, the BLSS Faculty has introduced Staff Sabbatical and Location Independent Working schemes. Staff can apply for semester-long periods of research leave or home working to prioritise the completion of substantive research outputs like monographs or large grant funding applications. Staff have also been supported to attend prestigious international criminology conferences to share their work with other academics and stakeholders and develop pathways for global collaborations and impacts. In 2016, AL was supported to attend the American Society of Criminology conference in New Orleans, at which he developed links with international scholars. This in turn, laid the foundations for the unit's successful bid to host the 2018 British Society of Criminology Conference (detailed in Section 4). Regular on-site and off-site writing retreats and sessions run by the BLSS Faculty and open to all researchers have enabled unit staff to complete bids, papers and proposals. For example, EY benefitted from

such an opportunity to write her successful bid for Nuffield Foundation Seed Corn funding in 2019. Informally, unit research breakfasts held every Thursday morning in the university cafeteria have stimulated ideas that have led directly to outputs - for example, the 2015 *Crime Media Culture* paper 'Faceless: High profile murders and public recognition', co-authored with PGRs.

Research Students

Growing the number of PGRs was a key objective during the assessment period. Since January 2014, seven PGRs have successfully completed their doctoral studies, increasing from five in the previous assessment period. There are a variety of funding models for PhD study within the unit – self-funding, BLSS Faculty competitive bursaries, and for existing staff, staff development funding. PGR recruitment is based on expanding the scope and depth of our research specialisms, building on the scholarship of unit staff. Avenues for additional research emerging from our projects and outputs are identified and PhD outline projects are formulated. For example, the unit's early research around social media and homicide highlighted the need for additional research in this area. Morag Kennedy, a graduate of our MA Criminology, investigated networked technology in domestic homicide for her PhD, which she completed in 2019. Craig Pinkney commenced his PhD in 2018 to explore social media in the context of gang violence. Liam Brolan's PhD into British citizens murdered further abroad builds on the unit's established track record of homicide research. Loukas Ntanos is building on the unit's focus on the political-economy of violence to research the market for 'muderabilia', artefacts relating to high profile murders. The work of Professor Awan, Dr Whiting and Dr Spiller around Islamophobia and securitisation have led to directly to PhD projects including topics such as migration issues in Birmingham's Somali communities (Mary Rose), the impact of PREVENT (Angeliki Illia) and extremism online and offline (Hollie Sutch).

Supporting and developing PGR students

There are multiple support and development mechanisms for PGR students within the unit, which are coordinated centrally within the Faculty by the BLSS Doctoral Research College (DRC). DRC supports students throughout their PhD journey, from processing applications for doctoral study, overseeing the administrative elements like PhD supervision records, annual progress reviews and applications for financial support to attended conference and events and coordinating arrangements for viva voce examinations.

Each student has a supervisory team of at least two and not normally more than three members of academic staff, comprising the Director of Studies and Second Supervisor – as well as external advisors in some cases where specialist expertise is required. Each supervisory team must have no fewer than two completions across the team. Formal meetings between the student and Supervisory Team take place every two weeks for full time and every four weeks for part time students. Meetings take place face to face unless the student is engaged in fieldwork elsewhere in the UK or abroad, in which case they will take place over MS Teams. During the exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, all supervision has taken place via MS Teams. Students are responsible for completing a record of each supervision session, which includes an action plan, ensuring that this record is signed by all members of the supervisory team and returned to the DRC. In addition to supervisory support, an internal review of student progress takes place every six months, commencing six months after the student's initial registration date. Reviews are carried out by a Faculty panel outside of the student's supervisory team. This encourages students to develop their skills not only in presenting their research ideas, plans and progress but also in communicating this to a non-specialist audience.

PGRs all complete the Postgraduate Certificate in Research Practice qualification. They are taught in cross-faculty cohorts to encourage interdisciplinary exchange of ideas and facilitate collaboration across the university. PGRs are encouraged to share their research internally through participation in our annual institutional research conference, RESCON, and the BLSS Faculty Research Conference, which is open to all staff. These events provide the opportunity for students to build confidence in preparation for engaging in the international conference

circuits in their field. In addition, PGRs can bid for funds to attend national and international conferences and training programmes. During the assessment period we invested £2,311.57 in supporting PGRs to attend such events. For example, in 2016-17 Morag Kennedy and Shona Robinson-Edwards presented on their doctoral research at the international Homicide Research Working Group in Tennessee, which facilitated engagement and collaboration with international scholars in this specialist field. Students are also able to access to physical spaces, equipment and resources to enable and enhance their doctoral studies. In 2017, the Curzon Building was extended and in 2018 a new PGR Hub was opened within this building. This provided dedicated research spaces to support the growing PGR community, with a common room and 60 shared office spaces. To ensure that the student voice informs policy and practice, a PGR student representative sits on the BLSS Faculty Research Degrees and Environment Committee and the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey is carried out annually. PGRs are included in all research initiatives available to staff, including research centre membership, research development workshops and relevant funding calls.

Linked to our successes in staff recruitment noted above, several PGR students have gone on to successfully apply for academic roles in the unit. For example, Mohammed Rahman, Sophie Gregory, Melindy Brown, Laura Riley and Liam Brolan all successfully applied for Lecturer posts. All are graduates of our MA Criminology as well as our PhD programme. The standard of their work is evidenced by all five of them having co-authored peer-reviewed articles in high-ranking journals during their time as PGR students. AL is also a graduate of our MA Criminology. He completed his doctoral study in November 2015 having successfully applied for a Lectureship and later the role of Senior Lecturer. AL is actively mentoring junior academics through team-writing of bids and outputs and has recently secured a publication in the prestigious *British Journal of Criminology* with one of our ERs, Craig Kelly (CK).

These achievements are testament to the success of the 'grow our own' philosophy. We view our MA Criminology and PGR programmes as academic apprenticeships and encourage students to become involved in all elements of academic life through involvement in staff research projects and team-writing. We encourage those who wish to do so to contribute to teaching and learning through work as Visiting Lecturers delivering seminars. 'Growing our own' has created a sustainable research environment, creating talent pipeline through encouraging those with drive, ambition, and an affinity with our student body, to serve as aspirational role models for our UGs.

The Teaching, Learning and Research Nexus

The unit strives to ensure that its innovative, needs-led research is integrated into teaching and learning at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Whilst the unit engages in traditional methods of ensuring learning is underpinned by excellent staff research, for example, aligning module leadership with staff research specialisms, we have also developed novel and unique initiatives. The unit strives to ensure that all students, from UGs to PGRs, are co-creators of research, rather than simply recipients of knowledge generated by staff. An example is the VRA initiative pioneered by the School of Social Sciences. This scheme enables students to become active research team members from their first year of UG study. Staff members submit small research projects that are advertised to students who can apply via a competitive process. The successful students are then assigned to a project and work closely with a member of staff for a five-week period on the research project. Example duties include conducting literature reviews, writing ethics proposals, data collection, analysis, and delivery of research presentations, with staff then using this information for grant applications or to run pilot studies. This develops UG and PGR interest in research, gives them an insight into a research career and enhances their employability skills. In addition, all UG and PGR students can be members of a research assistant pool that allows them to be directly assigned as paid hourly researchers to live funded research projects.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Income

During the REF2014 assessment period, most of our research income came from EU government bodies. During the REF2021 assessment period, we aimed to diversify our income streams. The importance of this diversification took on a new significance following the outcome of the 2016 EU Referendum. We began to target high status, charitable and UK research council funders, increasing our bidding activity in these areas. This approach reflected our broader goals to create a sustainable environment, enhance the quality of our outputs and enhance confidence in our activities to facilitate impact.

We have met our key income goals during the assessment period in relation to decreasing our dependence upon EU sources and significantly increasing the proportion of our income from UK research councils and charities, which now constitutes the bulk (96.8%) of our unit's income. During the assessment period, the majority of our income came from charities (51.9%), followed by Research Councils (44.9%), UK industry, commerce and public corporations (2.0%), UK Government (0.9%) and private companies (0.3%). The total project value of our unit income was over £300,000. The reason for the apparent reduction in overall income from REF2014 is strategic relocation of the Social Research and Evaluation Unit to UoA 21 Sociology in the early part of the REF assessment period to support the institution's first ever REF submission for Sociology. This evidences the ethos of our research community in building on success to develop new hubs of research excellence.

A prominent example of our success with regards to the research council income stream was our successful bid to the Economic and Social Research Council (£142,826) for funding to investigate the how misinformation and miscommunication about Muslims and COVID-19 spreads on social media. This project amalgamates the expertise generated through the CCCM and SE clusters in a programme of enquiry which draws upon our knowledge of social media and Islamophobia respectively. We have also seen considerable success in securing income from charitable sources, notably the Koestler Trust funding to investigate the Arts Gateway Mentoring Programme (£24,923) and the Joseph Rowntree Educational Foundation funding (£35,636) for the *Desecuritisising HE* project. Furthermore, we have seen the unit's first successful bid to the Nuffield Foundation for a Seed Corn Grant (£4,570) to develop research around technology-facilitated domestic abuse (TFDA). The latter is a key example of how external funding enables impact. The seed corn grant funded a stakeholder event with professionals and practitioners from across the public, private and voluntary sector working with those affected by domestic abuse. This evidences our continued success in relation to our aim to develop needs-led research informed by those affected by crime and harm. The aims of the event were to identify what stakeholders needed from research on TFDA to inform the development of an interdisciplinary programme of research. As such, research was needs-led from outset, responding to the issues and challenges around TFDA and creating opportunities for beneficiaries to inform the research. This work has laid the foundation for a series of large grant applications to investigate different elements of TFDA. The first will be a bid in 2021 to the Leverhulme Trust to fund the *Who's Zooming Who?* project (approx. £120,000) - a large-scale online survey investigating values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours in relation to the use and abuse of networked technology in intimate relationships among Generation Z.

In 2018, the unit's hosting of the British Society of Criminology annual conference (detailed in Section 4) generated an income of £86,305 and a total profit of £48,147.17. The considerable profit generated from the conference is evidence of the entrepreneurial spirit of the unit's ambitious, dynamic and vibrant researchers and we plan to build on our accomplishments in the next assessment period by placing a heavier emphasis upon enterprise activities.

We attribute our success in reaching our income goals to our strategic and targeted approach to securing funding and to the support provided through our research infrastructure and facilities, which we explore in the following section.

Infrastructure

During the REF2021 assessment period, the new BLSS Faculty significantly increased its investment in research infrastructure. Dovetailing with the 'grow our own' philosophy within our unit, the BLSS Faculty has placed a particular emphasis on the development of ERs through a range of initiatives encompassing the themes of funding, professional development, and equality, diversity and inclusion.

BLSS Faculty support was instrumental in enabling the unit to increase PGR numbers during the assessment period and continue to grow our own talent. The Faculty's support for PGR students has seen over 50 completions and the growth of the PGR community to over 160 students. Faculty investment supplemented by the university supported eight fully funded PhD studentships across the BLSS Faculty in 2014/15, with between six and ten studentships per year thereafter. These studentships supported seven PGRs within the unit during the assessment period. All PGRs who were successful in winning these studentships were our former MA Criminology students. In addition, ERs are able to apply for Faculty funded Small Development Grants (SDGs) to pump prime their research. Over 90 SDGs with a total value of £105,000 have been awarded to staff across the Faculty within the assessment period. The SDGs have been used to purchase software, equipment and employ UG and PGR student research assistants. The pilot data and research experiences generated from these small projects have enhanced the quality of external bids and / or outputs, resulting in a five-fold return on investment and providing valuable experience for UG and PGR students.

With regards to professional development, via the IPR and PRP processes, staff have been actively encouraged to move from ER to SRR status through initiatives such as buddy schemes, bid shadowing, mentoring, writing retreats and sabbaticals. Faculty wide, 93 FTE staff are being submitted for REF2021, compared to only 14.7FTE in REF2014, a six-fold increase. The outcomes of Faculty support for professional development are clear to see in our unit, given that 86% (12 of 14) of staff being submitted for REF2021 have been awarded SRR within the assessment period, and were not submitted for REF2014.

Facilities

Research activity within the BLSS Faculty has been supported by high quality physical spaces, technical support, intellectual resources and IT infrastructure. In the summer of 2015, the BLSS Faculty moved from City North Campus to The Curzon Building, a new, purpose-built facility on the Birmingham City Centre Campus. This facilitated an important step-change in our identity and external profile in terms of the type of research activity we were able to undertake. These new facilities were crucial in the unit's successful bid to host the prestigious BSC annual conference 2018 (detailed in Section 4).

The establishment of the Research and Enterprise Support Office (RESO) upon the creation of the new BLSS Faculty in 2014 led to considerable enhancements in governance and support of research activity. Staff in this office supported researchers to identify opportunities, develop new bids and widen income portfolios. This has contributed towards a Faculty wide income of £3.85million during the assessment period. The assistance provided by RESO was instrumental in the unit reaching its goals of diversifying its income streams, helping to identify appropriate funders, and providing support throughout the application process.

As the unit enters the next REF assessment period, we continue to build on the considerable progress made during 2014-2020. The CSRC strategic plan includes a target of £1,630,000 in research income through competitive bids during the first three years 2019/20 – 2021/22. The strategy draws upon the proven successes of this ambitious unit during this assessment period. For example, by focusing on grant-writing mentoring, led by experienced researchers with track records of income generation, and continuing to create opportunities for junior researchers – including PGRs – to shadow the grant application process, we will grow our community of ambitious researchers confident in targeting high-profile funders.

4. Collaboration and contribution to the research base, economy and society

Academic Integration and Esteem

During the assessment period, the research conducted by our reinvigorated unit has gained traction and recognition within the discipline and we have worked collaboratively with colleagues within and beyond criminology, nationally and internationally, to identify and respond to research need. Through these activities, we have enriched the unit's research environment and enhanced our status and eminence as a key player within the academy.

The production of high-quality outputs has considerably enhanced the unit's reputation among our peers in the field. Examples include EY's 2017 book *Social Media Homicide Confessions*. The quality of this output is supported by Wood's (2018) review in the international peer reviewed journal *Crime Media Culture*, which described the book as, "exciting, timely and innovative...a work of digital criminology...a compelling framework for understanding and investigating not only homicide confessions on social media but also the mediatization of all manner of illicit acts on social media" (2018, p. 509). In addition, Fleetwood's review of Glynn's 2019 book *Speaking Data and Telling Stories: Data Verbalization for Researchers* recognizes the trailblazing nature of Glynn's work in positioning the criminologist as a bricoleur, bringing techniques such as ethnodrama to the discipline. Fleetwood (2020) describes the book as "bold and thought-provoking...recognizing academia's tendency to silence and exclude – especially with respect to race...a timely book that sits comfortably alongside criminology's contemporary engagement with creative modes of doing and communicating criminology". This is evidence of the needs-led ethos of our research in responding to contemporary changes and challenges in society and culture, placing us at the vanguard of criminology in the twenty-first century.

In addition, the 2014-2020 period has been characterised by the unit's significant contributions to theory through the development of new frameworks and concepts. Examples include Hall and Wilson's multi-level framework for the analysis of homicide and serial homicide in their *European Journal of Criminology* article, and Yardley's conceptual framework of omnipresence in TFDA in her paper in the journal *Violence Against Women*. We have stimulated the aetiological debate essential to the vitality and relevance of our discipline. That our work has been critically acclaimed by peers in published reviews of our work in prominent journals within the discipline demonstrates the high regard within which our research is held.

The significant strides made in relation to integration within the discipline are the result of successful collaborative work with other scholars, nationally and internationally. Through supporting researchers to attend international conferences like the American Society of Criminology, European Society of Criminology and British Society of Criminology, we have established and maintained links which have been a crucial to collaboration. The edited collections led by our researchers during the assessment period evidence the unit's successful coordination and production of collective bodies of work, which tackle contemporary social issues and enable interdisciplinary scholarship. Examples include Awan's 2020 edited collection *Islamophobia in Cyberspace: Hate Crimes Go Viral*. This Routledge collection includes contributions from the disciplines of law, policing and forensic psychology alongside other authorities such as leaders of NGOs such as the Online Hate Prevention Institute. In addition the Emerald 2020 collection, *Video Games, Crime and Next-Gen Deviance: Reorienting the Debate*, was jointly edited by unit researchers CK, AL and KH, further evidencing our commitment to developing ERs through co-creation with senior researchers like AL. Lastly, AL's editorship of the 2019 Policy Press book *50 Facts Everyone Should Know About Crime and Punishment: The truth behind the myths* brought together chapters from UK criminologists from multiple universities in challenging 'common-sense' myths around crime and criminality.

Our integration within the discipline is also evidenced by the collaborative bids we have led and contributed towards with peers at other institutions during the assessment period. Examples of collaborative projects we have secured include IA's project *The Impacts of Online and Offline Muslim Abuse*, in partnership with the University of Leicester's Department of Criminology. The unit's hosting of the 2018 British Society of Criminology annual conference provides additional evidence of our standing within the discipline. The conference theme, *Transforming Criminology*:

Rethinking Crime in a Changing World, was inspired by the trailblazing research taking place within the unit, which has responded to key social problems and challenges noted above in Section 1. This flagship international conference took place over 3 days, 3rd – 6th July, at our City Centre campus and was attended by 323 delegates from the discipline's international research community. The success of this event demonstrates our ambition and competence in hosting prestigious, international events.

Other ways in which our researchers contribute to the vitality and sustainability of the discipline's research is via their involvement in the peer review process for academic books and journal articles. Our researchers are long-serving peer reviewers for prestigious, international, world-leading journals within and beyond the field of criminology - such as *Homicide Studies*, *Violence Against Women*, *Crime Media Culture*, *Victims and Offenders*, *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offender Profiling*, *Millennium*, *Critical Terrorism Studies* and *Journal of Homosexuality*. Researchers have also guest edited special editions of journals in the discipline – for example Dr Keith Spiller's (KS) editorship of the September 2019 edition of *Surveillance and Society* focusing on visibilities and new models of policing, and KH's editorship of the special edition of *Safer Communities*, exploring video games, crime and next generation media. Unit researchers also act as reviewers of book manuscripts for key publishers in the field such as Palgrave, Routledge and Policy Press.

The recognition of the unit research within the discipline of criminology and associated fields of social science are also evidenced through invited keynotes at key scholarly conferences and events, particularly in relation to our work with stigmatized and marginalised groups. Examples include PG's keynote lecture at the 2020 international conference *Hate Crimes in the Baltic Region* and BC's keynote on *The Role of Visibility in Transphobic Hate Crime* at the British Society of Criminology South West Regional Seminar in December 2019.

Stakeholder Relationships and Outcomes

Throughout the assessment period, we have engaged meaningfully with beneficiaries and audiences for research. An illustrative sample of the local, national and international stakeholder organisations we have developed relationships with between 2014 and 2020 are illustrated in Figure 1 below. These relationships are multifaceted and include provision of research-led guidance and advice, invited keynotes and presentations, unit researcher membership of organisations and joint memberships of formal boards and committees.

Our aspirations to enhance public understanding of crime and those affected by it have been achieved through continuing to disseminate research to non-academic audiences via mainstream media. Throughout the assessment period, unit researchers have contributed to national and international news media and true crime programme development for Sky Crime, Netflix and CBS Reality (as detailed in our 'Enriching Crime Media' Impact Case Study). The extent of our media engagement has secured considerable reach for unit's research in relation to the general public, with senior researchers securing a combined Advertising Value Equivalent figure of over £10million during the assessment period. The number of people DW, EY and IA's research has potentially reached during that time is estimated to be around 533 million, based on the circulation of publications, website visits and television viewing figures.

In addition, public engagement with our research has been further encouraged by public events at the university via the *City Talks* series, for example the 2016 'Future of Murder' event. Unit researchers also regularly contribute to our university blog site, which is promoted through researcher and individual social media accounts. In 2017, Professor Yardley produced a criminology podcast series, *Crime Bites*. Each episode included analysis of a current case in the news, an interview with a criminologist about a recent piece of research and a review of a media representation of crime. Episodes of the podcast were downloaded 134,000 times by listeners across the world. Drawing on the podcast format's success, the unit also produced a series of short podcasts showcasing the work of individual researchers. The investments that the Faculty and School have made in our researchers during this time (see Section 2), through enhancing

confidence and talking about academic research in an accessible way, have been vital to our success in this area.

In addition to continuing to engage with public stakeholders, during the assessment period we have broadened our reach to other groups of stakeholders – notably voluntary and public sector organisations who work with people affected by crime. Unit researchers have taken on roles within organisations, networks and parliamentary groups, further enabling impact for the unit's research. Examples of such roles include IA's advisory role to the All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, EY's membership of the National Stalking Consortium and the West Midlands Domestic Abuse Strategic Board, LH's coordination of the Iraqi Body Count Project - the world's largest public database of violent civilian deaths since the 2003 invasion which has twice been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize, Dr Martin Glynn's (MG) role as Writer in Residence at the National Justice Museum and AL's advisory work with Cats Protection in relation to air gun law in Scotland.

Figure 1. Illustrative list of stakeholders 2014-2020

- African and Caribbean Working Group (Mental Health Act Review, Department of Health and Ministry of Justice)
- Alice Ruggles Trust
- All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims
- Aston Villa Football Club
- BBC Science
- Black Country Women's Aid
- British Society of Criminology
- Cats Protection
- CBS Reality
- Charlton Athletic Community Trust
- Cheshire Police
- Digital Culture, Media, and Sport Parliamentary Select Committee
- HMP Hewell
- HMP Highpoint
- HMP Oakwood
- HMP Warren Hill
- Home Affairs Select Committee
- Labour Party
- Muslim Council of Britain
- National Association of Data Protection Officers
- National Justice Museum
- National Stalking Consortium
- New Bridge Foundation
- Royal Shakespeare Company
- Runnymede Trust
- Sifa Fireside
- Sky Crime
- South Yorkshire Police
- St Basils
- Suzy Lamplugh Trust
- The Haven Wolverhampton
- Walsall Borough Council
- Welsh Joint Education Committee
- West Midlands Domestic Abuse Strategic Board
- West Midlands Police
- West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit
- Woodcut Media
- Workers Educational Association

Local and
National



- American Society of Criminology
- Benach Collopy LLP (US Law Practice)
- CEJI - Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe
- Centre for Peace, Non-Violence and Human Rights (Croatia)
- Estonian Human Rights Centre
- European Asylum Support Office
- European Society of Criminology
- Graphic Justice Research Alliance
- International Network for Hate crime Studies
- International Society of Metal Music Studies
- Iraq Association
- Netflix
- Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
- Punk Scholars Network
- Surveillance Studies Network
- University of the West Indies

International



Our links also extend to stakeholders in the Further Education sector. We have an established relationship with Solihull Sixth Form College where we deliver sessions within their programme. As such, our research enriches the curriculum of the Level 3 Criminology Diploma. Feedback from the Head of Social Sciences at the college captures the impact that this work has had, “We had a full inspection just before lock-down...the inspector for the deep dive into Criminology said what we are doing was outstanding, and was particularly impressed by the link with you. It looks like our outcomes for the first cohort completing the course will be very strong...These outcomes are significantly down to you, encouraging our students to be aspirational and to have the desire and confidence to take the subject beyond the specification and class-room”. In addition, we have recently established a link with the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC), the examination board responsible for the Level 3 Criminology qualification. In October 2020, EY delivered training to 40 FE teachers across the UK, drawing on unit research into domestic abuse and stalking in better integrating these topics into curricula. Furthermore, our ‘Inside Out’ prison programme, in which unit researchers train staff and deliver learning to students is the first such programme in the West Midlands region.

The benefits of our collaborations, contributions and stakeholder relationships will transcend the current assessment period. To ensure that the important work we have done in the past six years will endure and continue to respond to the needs of people affected by crime, CSRC’s strategic plan includes specific targets in relation to these areas of activity. For example, the prominence of interdisciplinarity in the new centre’s ethos will lead to formalised collaboration with other Faculties within the university, particularly in STEM subjects, mindful of the fact that the complexity of the contemporary social problems requires research solutions drawing on a range of diverse subject expertise. CSRC has already developed additional collaborations with police and law enforcement agencies both nationally and internationally, with prison and probation services across the UK, and with local schools, community stakeholders and charity organisations. Between 2014 and 2020, the unit focused upon establishing a strong base of local and national stakeholder relationships. From 2020, CSRC will build upon this to develop more international collaborations and partnerships, a crucial priority given the increasing importance of the global dimensions of our research areas, which have come into sharp focus during the COVID-19 pandemic. Progress on the development of the unit’s collaborations and stakeholder links will be monitored via an annual network analysis exercise, documenting the evolution of new and existing relationships to better enable opportunities for needs-led research and pathways for impact.