

Institution: Liverpool Hope University
Unit of Assessment: Social Work and Social Policy

1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy

Centred on the University's School of Social Sciences, the staff in this Unit share a commitment to producing research that makes a difference in social policy and practice for marginalised groups and communities. Our research environment has grown considerably since the Unit's previous submission to REF2014. Coinciding with strategic recruitment that has added to and diversified our personnel, investments in research infrastructure have enhanced our opportunities and facilitated research collaborations.

The focus of our research has expanded since 2014 to create four key areas of interest: (i) politics and policy; (ii) culture; (iii) children and families; and (iv) social services and institutions, each of which are discussed below. The overarching design in the choice of these three areas is that they all speak in different ways to our core theme of marginalised groups and communities.

Our research in (i) politics and policy represents a furthering and enhancement of the REF2014 submission's strength in the areas of organisation and management culture, and marketisation and austerity. The three other areas of interest – (ii) culture; (iii) children and families; and (iv) social services and institutions – represent new areas of strength in the Unit.

Achievement of strategic aims for research and impact during the assessment period

Since REF2014, we have followed a strategy of growing and broadening the amount of research undertaken in the Unit (Aim 1)

In REF2014 the Unit consisted of 7 members of staff. The 31 researchers entered into REF2021 represent a more than fourfold increase on that figure. This total includes 3 of the 7 staff submitted to REF2014 (Katz, Lavalette, Mair). The 28 further staff are: Acar, Adnum, Atas, Balorda, Bê Pereira, Bradley, Brennan, Cook, Corbett, Edwards, Ghalib, Hanson, Harrison, Hennell, Jordan, Lucas, Moth, Neary, O'Brien, Okongwu, Palladino, Pedrioli, Redman, Siry, Stypinska, Thompson, Vibla, and Ziniel. The majority of these additional staff are new appointments to the University.

Key areas of interest:

(i) Politics and policy

Topics covered by our research in politics and policy (Atas, Corbett, Jordan, Lavalette, Moth, Pedrioli, Stypinska) include developments in areas such as mental health and welfare (Atas, Jordan, Moth), as well as the themes of social empowerment and social change and participatory democracy (Corbett, Pedrioli, Stypinska). A new development is the attention now given to major thinkers in politics and policy, such as Karl Marx (Lavalette), Peter Sedgwick (Moth, who co-organised a conference on Sedgwick held in the School in 2015 – see also section 4), and Friedrich Hayek (Jordan).

(ii) Culture

Themes covered in our research on culture (Adnum, Bê Pereira, Bradley, Brennan, Edwards, Hennell, Murray, Okongwu, Palladino, Redman, Ziniel) include the processes and practices of people undergoing experiences of illness, late-life ageing, dying and mourning (Palladino, Bê

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Pereira, Brennan) and of people involved in areas of perceived social vice including drinking, substance use and on-street sex work (Adnum, Hennell, Murray, Redman). Our researchers also focus on consumption practices (Edwards, Ziniel) and issues around paid work and its relationships with economic, personal and social change (Bradley, Murray, Okongwu, Ziniel). Methodologically our research in these areas draws variously on a range of approaches and frameworks including practice theory, material culture, social gerontology, migration studies, auto/biographical studies, and actor-network theory.

(iii) Children and families

Our research on children and families includes work on school and child welfare-centred subjects (Edwards, Lavalette, Thompson), with a particular focus on survival in, and recovery from, situations of adversity including domestic abuse and being placed in care (Cook, Edwards, Hanson, Katz, Lucas, O'Brien). The research of Katz (see also ICS) further develops her submission to REF2014, including journal articles on children and coercive control, and the impacts on children of post-separation stalking by domestically-abusive fathers. The research of Cook (see also ICS) also involves direct work with families via her NIHR RfPB (National Institute for Health Research: Research for Patient Benefit) project on family carers for adults with learning disabilities and challenging behaviours.

(iv) Social services and institutions

Our research on social services and institutions (Acar, Cook, Ghalib, Harrison, Lavalette, Mair, Vibla) includes two key dimensions. One of these is criminological and business studies of the future sustainability of institutions including high finance and the courts, the probation service and police force, and the roles they undertake and judgments they make (Ghalib, Mair, Redman, Vibla). The second object of enquiry is the services provided by medical and caring sectors such as midwifery, nursing, and social work, and attitudes held by professionals in those sectors (Acar, Cook, Harrison, Lavalette).

We have developed an outward-facing research culture with our research reaching users/beneficiaries beyond academic circles (Aim 2)

Our research seeks to develop socially-just research approaches and knowledge that illuminates the lives of marginalised and 'silenced' publics. This includes Brennan's conceptualisation of 'social death' as a phenomenon affecting persons such as the homeless and those suffering from Alzheimer's Disease, Vibla's theoretical and practical model for multiple-offence sentencing, and Katz's Five Factor Framework for understanding children's experiences of domestic abuse. Hennell's theorisation of how to understand young people's drinking patterns using practice theory has been used in local public health policy. Dorset Council drew upon the research when drafting alcohol licensing policies. Our approach of embedding research in communities and professional practice helps us to achieve impact in our work with these marginalised and 'silenced' communities.

Hanson's studies and reports on adoption and permanence planning in Scotland have been used by Scottish policymakers at a number of levels, including local authorities, the police and courts, Children's Hearings Scotland and the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (a non-departmental public body affiliated to the Scottish Government). A formal response to Hanson's impact assessment of adoption policy in Scotland has been published by the Scottish Government, leading to several actions including the creation of a new team of practitioners dedicated to adoption and permanence planning, and an ongoing programme of change in Scotland (PACE – Permanence and Care Excellence).

Edwards as principal applicant won £5,000 from the AHRC Connected Communities Festival programme for her project on cultural education for children and young people within the care system. This grant covered the cost of a report written for practitioners (*Valuing Participation: The Cultural and Everyday Activities of Young People Growing Up in Care*) and practitioner workshops

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involving stakeholders both locally (local authority children's services) and nationally (Arts Council England). Some school headteachers who have participated in Edwards' workshops report that they now feel more able to embed cultural education into their curriculum and to extend cultural provision to children in care. (One headteacher has since participated in a roundtable discussion hosted by A New Direction (AND) to explore whether AND's Artsmark programme could be used to embed cultural education for children and young people within the care system.) Edwards' report has been shared and used by professionals and practitioners, including by the headteachers of local authority 'virtual schools' for children in care.

Local communities and stakeholders in Palestine have engaged in our student field trips to the Palestinian West Bank (Lavalette, Lucas, Ramsey and Thompson – see section 4 and ICS). Palestinian stakeholders have emphasised the high value they place on the opportunity to explain their experience to 'honest messengers' from the UK, building solidarity and exchanging cultural ideas and knowledge with the visiting students.

Working with Everton in the Community (EitC) in Liverpool, Hanson and Lucas developed a model of EitC's practice in its sport-and-youth-work project with vulnerable young people who have experienced incarceration or are considered at risk. The purpose of developing this model, which was shared with EitC's project team, was to give the EitC team a way of presenting the impact of their work while liaising with existing and future funders and referring agencies.

Acar developed a child protection model for the Turkish Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services, based on in-depth interviews and workshops that he conducted with social work professionals and others including charity workers/representatives. These high-level informants included international and local non-governmental organisations working with Syrian (and other immigrant) children, and other frontline professionals in child protection agencies.

We have supported the achievement of research excellence through the development of research with international dimensions and funded by international funding sources for the growth and support of research activity (Aim 3)

The international and intercultural dimensions of our research link to our overarching aim of producing research that makes a difference in social policy and practice for marginalised groups and communities.

Specific projects with intercultural links to the theme of social marginalisation have developed during the REF period, particularly our work with Palestinian communities in the West Bank (Thompson, Ramsey, Lucas and Lavalette – see section 4 and ICS). Research that makes a difference in this way has been helped by the arrival in the School during the REF period of several researchers with a range of backgrounds and specialist knowledges, representing Lithuania (Atas), Denmark and Bosnia & Herzegovina (Balorda), Portugal (Bê Pereira), India (Ghalib) and Turkey (Acar). Acar, in particular, has conducted an analysis of the development of case management systems in the Turkish child protection system, as well as a comparative study of social work that covered England alongside Brazil, China, India, Italy, Portugal, Russia, Spain, South Africa and Turkey.

Acar's research has been based on \$20,000 UNICEF-funded projects for the Turkish Ministry of Justice, and other researchers in the School have also made successful applications, engaged in project consultancy work and participated in funded projects with colleagues and institutions overseas. This includes the Netherlands and Switzerland (Moth and Lavalette – see section 3), Turkey (Acar – see above), the Republic of Ireland and Germany (Cook – see section 3 and ICS) and Finland (Katz – see section 2).

Internationally-focused PhDs on the theme of marginalised groups and communities have been supported during the REF2021 period in the School, including on tolerance as a 'fundamental British value' and how it has affected a Turkish-British community group in North West England (Kandemir); how the marriage practices of British South Asian communities are impacted by the

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UK Government's forced marriage policy (Kaur); and the experiences of Sri Lankan migrant domestic workers in the Middle East (Abeyratna).

We have generated quality-assured growth in postgraduate research numbers and completions, attracting high-calibre candidates in areas of expertise and integrating the PGR body into the Unit's research culture (Aim 4)

At the time of REF2014 we did not have any PGR completions (we had three students working towards completion), and since then we have augmented our PGR profile (see also section 2) with a focus on social justice issues and marginalised groups and communities. PGR research within the School includes Blackman's completed study of anti-racism music campaigns from the 1950s to today, the studies by Kaur and Abeyratna (see Aim 3), and a study by Jewell on the radical wing of the contemporary British Left.

We have cultivated research excellence through targeted and effective investment of monetary and infrastructural resources and maintenance of high standards of ethics, rigour and integrity in research (Aim 5)

Midway through the REF period, 2017 was a key year for the Unit's research infrastructure, with the creation of the School of Social Sciences, facilitating stronger, social science-rooted practice and research networks, and also with the formation of the Socio-Economic and Applied Research for Change (SEARCH) centre, which feeds especially into the Unit's emerging research on social services and institutions. Established as one of the University's six designated Research Centres, SEARCH has grown to become the driver for several external collaborations and grant applications involving the Unit's staff and external stakeholders. SEARCH's partnership with EitC, involving both the School of Social Sciences and Liverpool Hope University's Business School, has brought £2 million over a four-year period and involved a range of partnership projects. Colleagues have also secured research funds from the EU Horizon 2020 fund (ReInvest), and from the Swiss Scientific Research Institute.

Ethical procedures within the Unit have also strengthened following 2017, with the transition from a general humanities and social sciences ethics board to one specifically dedicated to social science. Proposals by our social science researchers now undergo scrutiny specifically by practicing social scientists. A number of members of the Unit act as School of Social Sciences Ethics Leads (SELs), who scrutinise applications.

2021–26 Research Agenda

During the next five years, we anticipate continuing, and further strengthening, our overarching focus on research that makes a difference for marginalised groups and communities, as well as our four key areas of interest. To raise our game in doing so, we have identified several objectives for the next REF period, relating to (i) research quality, (ii) research impact, (iii) research income, and (iv) the establishment of a new research centre in social policy and politics. To assist the completion of this work, a new Research Committee was established within the Unit in 2020 to proceed on the following aims.

(i) Research quality

During the next 5 years we will further upskill our early-mid career staff so that a greater number are capable of producing research at the world-leading level. This will be achieved through targeted mentoring, by those who have already produced world-leading research, and enhanced by events including research skills training workshops hosted by successful early and mid-career researchers based internally and externally.

(ii) Research impact

Core to this objective will be to further support staff to engage with the beneficiaries of research, and to deepen those links. Colleagues will be encouraged to develop co-created research, and at the outset of their research projects will be required to complete an impact plan for their research at the same time as they apply internally for ethics approval. They will also receive mentoring from a designated senior colleague and ongoing support from the School to implement their plan. As a part of this ongoing support, the School will provide a lecture series with expert guests speaking on how they embedded impact successfully in their research.

(iii) Research income

Research income has already increased in the current REF period, compared to 2008–2013, largely due to the development of partnerships with other universities. In the next 5 years we will extend our partnerships with other HEIs, increasing our ability to attract external income. We will also support a greater proportion of our staff to apply for external funds, and, for those that have already done so, we will support them to continue to be ambitious in the grants for which they apply.

Through workshops and mentoring, early and mid-career staff will also be supported to extend and develop external links, and will complete action plans to enable advancement of further collaborative projects. Staff who have already achieved success in building external links will be asked to mentor colleagues and take leading organisational roles in these developments. Furthermore, an invited guest lecture series will enable colleagues to hear from early and mid-career researchers who have had success in bid-writing to raise awareness of potential pathways and approaches.

(iv) Establishment of a new research centre in social policy and politics

A new research centre oriented to social policy and politics will be important to provide an infrastructure for our politics-oriented research that parallels what SEARCH has helped to achieve for our social and community research. SEARCH helped to create closer links between social work/social policy and the Business School, and, similarly, the new centre will create synergies with colleagues in disciplines outside of the School such as Education, History and Politics. Even more-so than SEARCH, the new centre will share commonalities with two of the University's other research centres – the Archbishop Desmond Tutu Centre for War and Peace Studies, and the Centre for Education and Policy Analysis – building on research strengths and collaborative synergies within the University as a whole.

2. People

This REF period has seen a growth in the Unit's research capacity. We have developed from a handful of disparate researchers into a community of over two dozen active members with four key shared areas of strength. Within the University's personnel development strategy 'Our People 2020', which encourages distributed leadership, the School of Social Science has its own staffing plan that addresses both local and corporate issues and places ownership of the priorities with those best placed to ensure they are achieved. Within this devolved staffing responsibility, we have achieved growth through a strategy of investing in recruitment, attracting academics who fit within and complement our key theme research areas.

Our investment in recruitment is designed to sustain a research environment that is vibrant and dynamic, and also one where staff feel a sense of security and belonging in the School. The research staff that we employ are generally (i) 'home-grown' as they start their career with us at post-doc or junior Lecturer level; (ii) employed on open-ended (not casualised or fixed-term) contracts once they pass their probationary period; and (iii) supported to develop their research

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profile to Senior Lecturer level and beyond. Corbett, Hanson, Katz and Moth illustrate this progression, rising to Senior Lecturer in recent years.

As an important aspect of our alignment with Our People 2020, we have encouraged staff in the Unit to fully engage with, and contribute actively to, the research community of which they are a part, as well as contributing to the wider community. This commitment is reflected in our use of the University's Consolidated Research Time (CRT) framework, introduced in 2016, which allows academics to devote up to six weeks per academic year to focus on output writing, impact writing and bid work. This input, designed to give our researchers extra means to research with care and depth, has been particularly useful to newer colleagues in the Unit, allowing Edwards, Moth and Stypinska to complete books, and Bê Pereira, Corbett, Katz, Lucas and Thompson to submit academic papers to relevant journals.

This broader commitment to translate research into practice is reflected in our use of participatory forms of research that can create change directly in the lives of people and communities, and also in the integral presence of colleagues (Blundell, Massie, Ramsey) who work as professional tutors within the School. The presence of a youth worker (Ramsey – see our Palestine ICS) and mental health practitioner (Massie) helps to keep us as researchers focused on real-world problems, as well as helping to remove boundaries between the University and the groups and communities that surround it. Besides contributing to our external engagement and the translation of our research into practice, these practitioners are also being supported to complete Doctorates in Education within the School.

At the ECR stage, we support individual researcher development partly through the University's Staff Development Programme of early career workshops on writing successful funding applications, understanding the requirements of the REF, and developing research impact. Researchers within the Unit lead some of those University-level sessions (for example Bê Pereira on 'Developing and maintaining a regular writing practice'), and also run a School-level writing-retreat: Getting Your Journal Article Started and Finished, comprising a set of six 2-hour workshops and two 1-hour writing sessions held on campus. Apart from seeking to inform and inspire ECRs within training contexts, line managers also provide feedback and guidance to ECRs through the line management process. We arrange formal Annual Performance Review meetings where ECRs submit their research plans and discuss their ongoing projects and ideas.

An example of ECR development is Katz, now a Senior Lecturer, who arrived as a professional tutor at the University in 2013 prior to the completion of her doctorate (completed in 2015). Besides progressing within the University, Katz has been supported in rising towards the forefront of her research field of domestic abuse while also developing research impact (see ICS). This enhanced profile has occurred through publications that have achieved Altmetric scores of 300+ (indicating high levels of public, media and policy engagement with the research), as well as interviews on TV and radio, and workshops/training/talks locally, nationally and overseas, including the Danish Government's International Conference on Honour Related Conflicts, held in Copenhagen in 2018 to which Katz gave a keynote address. Katz has engaged in funded international research as a collaborative partner on an Academy of Finland-funded €480,000 project at the University of Lapland, and her research has received international awards, including the Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE)'s Corinna Seith Prize and the Wiley Prize for outstanding contribution to *Child Abuse Review*. In 2018 and 2020 we supported Katz to undertake week-long writing visits to Finland to collaborate in person with Lapland colleagues in generating articles on children's experiences of parental stalking.

There are several former colleagues who have played a major role in enriching the research in the Unit. Aitken, Bui, Hampton, Hart, Humber, Mahoney, Nahaboo and Snow were appointed during the REF2021 period and have now moved on to institutions, including Birmingham City University, Nottingham Trent University, the University of Liverpool, the University of Manchester and Liverpool John Moores University. Additionally, the Unit was enriched by the research of Jamie Murray, who very sadly passed away in 2020, and by Professor Barry Goldson (University of

Liverpool), a Visiting Professor in the School who mentored staff including Bui, Greener, Hart, Mahoney, and Snow, as well as Moth and Vibla.

Research students

PGR provision in the Unit includes a programme of on-going skills training and other development opportunities that underpin the University's commitment to equality and diversity, student satisfaction, management and leadership, dealing with change, commercial awareness and other key development aims. Our PGR skills training programme uses principles derived from the Vitae Researcher Development Framework, and focuses on developing students' generic research capability in tandem with expertise in their doctoral research area. Our students in the first year of study attend sessions including Becoming an Effective Postgraduate Researcher and Postgraduate Research Practices and Procedures. Students beyond the first year attend further courses designed specifically to help them to complete their degree and develop their more general research skills and aid employability.

Our own focus on developing our PGR students includes the same integration of core skills and specialist expertise. This includes encouraging early opportunities to develop skills in writing accessibly for a broad audience within their field. Jewell (supervised by Lavalette alongside staff in Politics) has written a blog for the social research website Discover Society, a site which regularly features contributions from senior UK and overseas scholars. Blackman (supervised by Lavalette alongside staff in Humanities) has written two articles for the monthly magazine *Socialist Review*. We also encourage our students to grow in confidence and presentation skills by submitting their research for competitive awards. In 2019 Abeyratna (supervised by Corbett and Lavalette) was successful in winning the CEPA Policy Brief Prize run by the University's Centre for Education and Policy Analysis.

A targeted investment in high-quality research students has taken place within the Unit during the current REF period. The School of Social Science, in accordance with the University as a whole, has strategically focused its intake on high-quality applicants who enhance our research culture, for example by engaging actively with events such as our Distinguished Lecture series. All of the research students we recruited during the REF2021 period had a Distinction overall at Masters level, or a Merit at Masters level that included a Distinction in their Masters dissertation.

These high-quality students have been further developed with us, engaging in research culture at a specialist level, both internal and external:

- Jewell presented to the University's Politics Network, and had an abstract accepted for the Political Studies Association (PSA) Annual International Conference in Edinburgh.
- Kaur and Abeyratna spoke at the University's annual postgraduate conference, the University's International Women's Day Conference: Women in Peace and Conflict, and the School's 2016 conference Children and Young People in a Changing World: Action, Agency and Participation.
- Kaur was invited to attend the inaugural conference of the University of Wolverhampton's new Centre for Sikh and Panjabi Studies.
- Blackman presented at a 2018 conference held in France on the topic of UK race and racism, hosted by the Université de Picardie Jules Verne in Amiens. This paper appeared in the resulting 2019 edited book (Routledge) edited by Trevor Harris, Professor of British Studies at Université Bordeaux-Montaigne.

These activities reflect how fully we support our doctoral students to venture into the wider scholarly community, building a strong base for their future post-doctoral careers. One of our research students, Kandemir (supervised by Mair and Nahaboo), secured a position at the University of Keele in advance of the completion of her doctorate, having been helped by

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experiences she had accrued while with us, including an internally-funded trip to the US to present at the prestigious International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry at the University of Illinois in 2017.

Besides supporting staff without doctorates to complete doctoral research within the School (as mentioned earlier in this section), we have also invested in a research student, Kaur (supervised by Katz and Hanson), who came through our undergraduate programmes. As the top-performing student in her undergraduate year group in Law and Social Policy, Kaur won two prizes at her graduation and reached doctoral study via an internally-funded Masters studentship at the University.

The School of Social Sciences has actively engaged with the Vice Chancellor's PhD Scholarships programme offered at University level (covering full tuition fees and monthly maintenance for three years' full-time study). Kandemir and Abeyratna – an award-winning entrepreneur who has created a social enterprise project in Sri Lanka based on her research, designed to help those engaged in insecure work – have benefited from these awards.

Equality and diversity

The School of Social Sciences, and researchers within the Unit more generally, have benefited from the University's response to its REF2014 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), with particular regard to communication and training. For example, staff within the Unit have undertaken on-line Equality and Diversity training which is now introduced as a mandatory requirement for all staff. Also, as part of the University's commitment to supporting equality and diversity in REF, staff within the Unit have benefited from safe and supportive structures where they can declare information about any equality-related circumstances that may have affected their ability to research productively during the assessment period (particularly their ability to produce research outputs at the same rate as staff not affected by circumstances). Building on the actions from the EIA, with principles of equality, diversity and inclusion more fully embedded within the University's mission and values, there has been an ongoing commitment within the Unit to creating a community where everyone can reach their potential.

The School of Social Sciences also actively supports the University's commitment to equality and diversity represented by its new 'Dignity at Work Framework'. Within the Framework, researchers within the Unit commit to treat each individual and their contributions with dignity, courtesy and respect, and for problems to be resolved both through informal mediation and through the University's formal Conflict Resolution and Grievance Procedure, with a specific confidential procedure relating to cases of Sexual Misconduct.

Furthermore, in line with the University's support for the Aurora Women's Leadership Programme, and promotion of 50%+ of the women who have completed it, eligible female staff within the Unit have been encouraged to attend the Programme, with the programme fees and travel costs fully-paid. Both of the researchers in the Unit who have attended (Hanson and Katz) have achieved promotion from Lecturer to Senior Lecturer.

Finally, staff across the Unit (as across the University) are mandated to challenge all discriminatory behaviour and attitudes. This includes, for example, gossip and rumour which can contribute to discriminatory attitudes and behaviours. In cases of harassment, discrimination, bullying or victimisation, the School supports the recommendation that staff speak to someone they can trust – a colleague, line manager, trade union representative, family member or friend – and thereafter that they can bring matters to the attention of their line manager or senior management.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

The facilities and physical infrastructure of the Unit provide a close-knit, well-equipped, productive space for research and postgraduate study. Most of the Unit's researchers work in the newly-refurbished School of Social Sciences Building, adjacent to the Liverpool Hope Business School which houses the SEARCH Centre. While all full-time researchers in the Unit have their own office space, the culture of working in close proximity in our own building matches the recruitment strategy of 'growing' our own researchers from a junior level upwards. When new staff arrive, they find themselves in an environment that lends itself to collaboration, collegiality and regular conversation. For example, there is a daily period each morning in the common room for School staff to come together (over tea and coffee), and many do. Staff in the Unit also benefit from the subject-specialist librarians and upgraded Onesearch bibliographic search system provided by the University's Information Technology and Library Services, which also contains a Computer Assisted Technology (CAT) suite and remote online access to a wide range of software for qualitative and quantitative analysis and academic ebooks and journals.

Electronically, staff also have access to the suite of systems that the University has developed in its intranet to support research and enable the reporting of research activity. Staff in the Unit use the Academic Profile System (APS) to record their research expertise and activity, and to search for colleagues that have the same research interests in different parts of the University, assisting inter/multidisciplinary approaches to research. Information on the APS is also available to researchers outside the University, facilitating inter-institutional collaboration. The University's institutional research repository also enables staff in the Unit to share their research in an 'open access' form based on the FAIR principles of making data Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable.

Researchers in the Unit have access to the University's MyResearch System which includes REFlect, a software package through which staff store information on their research impact, including publications, activities and evidence. The facility provides technological support in helping us to identify and develop engagement and impact, and includes an AI element that provides guidance to staff on how their impact can be extended further.

We have a targeted strategy for generating external research income, based around our shared focus on social justice research that makes a difference for marginalised groups and communities, both in the UK and internationally. We actively encourage bidding for (i) international, multi-agency programmes with academic and non-academic partners and (ii) locally-based projects that will benefit marginalised groups and communities in Merseyside and the surrounding districts.

Internally, our focus on progressive social research has been central to the funding distributed within the Unit via the EitC project, which has disseminated £75,000 overall and is now led by Lavalette as the University's Everton Chair of Social and Community Engagement. Our EitC research projects have produced an array of findings, all of which have been directed to assist Everton FC and EitC in fine-tuning its connection with the needs of its surrounding locality, which is one of the most deprived areas in Europe.

One element of our contribution here is through Bradley and Ziniel's 'Greening Markets' Research Group based in the Business School, which has developed information for Everton FC on its 'sustainability league table' position relative to other Premier League Football Clubs, and is now in consultation with the constructors of the Club's forthcoming new stadium on sustainability options and approaches.

Other branches of our research with EitC focus directly on its work with marginalised people. Hanson and Lucas developed a model for EitC's Breathing Space/Safe Hands Youth Projects with vulnerable young people who have experienced incarceration or are considered at risk (see section 1), basing this model on findings showing that such young people particularly value the programme's mentoring relationships and family ethos. Ramsey has developed a dual participatory action research/monitoring and evaluation project with/for EitC involving a football team for young

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women with additional needs; and Corbett and Neary evaluated EitC's Everton Free School, producing a report which recommended that the school appoint a social worker to its support team, and further develop mechanisms for tracking students' progress post-secondary education.

International, multi-partner programmes

There are a number of projects conducted by our researchers during the REF period which have involved international collaboration. Two examples include O'Brien's work on a successful €280,000 Erasmus+ bid for the project Marginalisation and Co-created Education (MaCE), a collaborative project on unemployed young people in the EU led by the University of Southern Norway and VIA University College in Denmark; and also Moth and Lavalette's two-year partnership with the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW) to develop an Anglo-Swiss comparative study of professionalisation and de-professionalisation in the field of social work, funded by €28,000 from the Swiss Scientific Research Institute.

Some of these projects have resulted in dissemination to public institutions. For instance, Cook has worked as an international collaborator, advisor and trainer on the Irish Government's €348,909 two-year (2018–20) project on Patient and Public Involvement (IGNITE). The findings, which specified several ways to integrate community knowledges into the curricula of health professionals, were fed directly to the Irish Government's Health Research Board. As a result, these findings have allowed clinical and community stakeholders in Ireland to build research and policy 'with' rather than just 'for' those whose work/lives are affected by health problems.

Another example of public dissemination is Moth and Lavalette's collaboration with KU Leuven's HIVA Research Institute for Work and Society on a £68,000 4-year (2015–19) project to investigate the impact of the EU Social Investment package across 12 European countries since the financial crash of 2007/8. Moth and Lavalette furthered the investigation (part of the EU's Horizon 2020 research initiative) by providing an analysis of social investment trends in England. Contributing to the project's central thesis, which argued for a more integrated economic and social policy at EU level structured around the 'capabilities approach', Moth and Lavalette's ideas have been disseminated internationally, for example to the World Social Work, Education and Social Development Conference, and also to the EU Commission and Parliament.

Changes in government policy have resulted from some of this international research. Cook (see also ICS) has worked with the German Government's Federal Ministry of Education and Research as a methodology and impact expert on its two three-year PartKommPlus projects (2015–18: €978,348; 2018–21: €894,444), 'Healthy municipalities through integrated, participatory strategies for health promotion'. Cook's consultative work from 2015 to completion in 2021 was described as 'instrumental [...] in guiding our projects' by PartKommPlus's lead investigator Professor M.T. Wright. These projects have impacted on policy and business, as PartKommPlus has worked in close collaboration with the health insurance companies who fund much of Germany's health provision, as well as with local governments. PartKommPlus's findings, guided by Cook, have therefore played a major role in enhancing public health policies and health services in Germany, especially for those most socially-marginalised and those with the greatest health needs. These findings have led to the inclusion of participatory research (previously not used in Germany) as a requirement by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research in many official calls for new research proposals.

UK-based monitoring and evaluation projects

Researchers in the School have won a number of grants for monitoring and evaluation projects that have contributed towards helping professionals to work with marginalised and excluded groups in Merseyside and other areas of Northern England. Three particular case studies are detailed below.

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- £7,000 over 2 years (2017–19) from the Big Lottery for an evaluation of the Voluntary Outreach Support Service run by Positive Futures in Liverpool (Ramsey). The evaluation of VOSS (a partnership of four separate voluntary sector organisations coming together to provide support for young people) found that, as different partners learnt from each other as collaborators rather than competitors, there were increased benefits for staff training and development, and problem-solving.
- £2,500 over 6 months in 2020 from Merseyside Police’s ‘Merseyside Violence Reduction Unit’ for an evaluation of its Positive Vibes knife-crime intervention programme in Knowsley (Hennell, Adnum and Hough). The evaluation of the Positive vibes programme (the first part of a broader scheme planned by Merseyside Police’s Violence Reduction Unit) was used to reconfigure the programme ready for its resumption after the pandemic.
- £10,000 over 2 years (2019–20) from the Lawnmowers Independent Theatre Company for a participatory evaluation of its Creative Health Awareness Training programme with student nurses (Cook – see also ICS) . The evaluation resulted in the Company amending elements of the programme itself as well as the ways in which the programme was implemented. In particular, the evaluation established the centrality of immersive theatrical learning as a change mechanism for professionals, helping them to interrogate their own assumptions/practices in working with people with learning difficulties.

Other funded monitoring and evaluation projects have included the ‘Survivors to Thrivers’ programme at The First Step in Knowsley (Hanson and Katz: £17,200 during 2016–19, from The Big Lottery), the Children’s Society’s youth inclusion project (Ramsey: £3,000 during 2014–16, from The Big Lottery), West Yorkshire Police’s Sex Work Liaison Officer role (Redman: £25,000 during 2018–19, from the N8 Policing Research Partnership), and Person Shaped Services (PSS) (Thompson: £5,000 during 2017–18, from PSS for an evaluation of their substance misuse project Family Impact).

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

The Unit’s researchers collectively reach across several academic fields and disciplines, and pursue collaborative enterprises within wider research cultures that reflect our mission to make a difference for marginalised groups and communities.

(i) Overseas collaborations, networks and partnerships

The activities and effects reported in the Palestine ICS emerged through our staff and students’ biannual field trips to the West Bank in collaboration with the Palestinian National Authority. Engagement with Palestinian families (being both research participants and host families for the trips) has provided the basis for the ICS, which examines both how the trips have impacted on those Palestinian families and communities as well as students’ ethical development. The ICS also includes public exhibitions of artwork produced via the project that enhance professional and public understanding of life in Palestine, and increase public awareness of issues facing Palestinians.

Another focus of staff/student activity involving overseas collaboration is the international social work summer school led by Acar each year in the Turkish province of Muğla, which the School of Social Sciences co-organises with the Muğla Metropolitan Municipality and the Muğla Branch of Turkish Association of Social Workers. The summer school enables social work/social science students from different countries to discuss global social problems. Each year the school has a particular theme; these have included, for example, asylum seekers (2018) and domestic violence (2019).

We have worked with other overseas governmental/national bodies in funding and disseminating our research. These include the Swiss Scientific Research Institute and the European Union’s

Unit-level environment template (REF5b)

Horizon 2020 research programme (Lavalette and Moth – see section 3), the European Union's Regional Development Fund (Cook), the Irish and German governments (Cook – see section 3 and ICS), the Danish government (Katz – see section 2), and the Turkish government (Acar – see section 1).

(ii) UK collaborations, networks and partnerships

Researchers in the Unit have engaged with governmental/national bodies within the UK. Katz and Jordan are both part of working groups at a national political level: Katz is one of only two academics in a group representing the children's sector and domestic abuse sector in discussions with HM Government on the new Domestic Abuse Bill; and Jordan is a member of a group involving academics, journalists and institutions (including representatives of Google, the BBC and Facebook) to address far-right pseudo-science online. Researchers in our Unit also engage with hospice and bereavement care providers such as Claire House and Child Bereavement UK (Brennan), the UK-wide In Defence of Youth Work campaign (Ramsey), and local government bodies such as Islington London Borough Council, for whom we have provided one-on-one case support consultancy on motivational interviewing for social workers and team leaders involved in the child protection process (Thompson).

(ii) Local public, private and voluntary sector organisations

In addition to the monitoring and evaluation projects listed at the end of section 3, researchers in our Unit have partnered a number of public and voluntary sector organisations in Liverpool and the North West. A cluster of these are in the arts, including FACT (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology) in Liverpool, The Old Courts (an arts centre in Wigan), and the Bluecoat, Liverpool's centre for contemporary arts. Other partnerships are with EitC (see sections 1 and 3); North West Ambulance Service; the Clocktower Local Society, which works with vulnerable adults in North Wales; Youth Focus North West in St Helens; and the Foxtan Centre, an organisation in Preston helping rough sleepers, street sex workers, young people and people with alcohol abuse issues.

(iii) Academic networks

Some of the Unit's more high-profile scholars occupy leadership positions in international academic and educational networks. Cook serves as an executive committee member of the International Collaboration for Participatory Health Research (ICPHR), a collaboration based at Berlin's Catholic University of Applied Social Sciences that includes significant academics in the field worldwide. Cook's executive committee role within the ICPHR has led to events and initiatives such as the landmark Action Research Network of the Americas International Conference and an associated Global Assembly in Colombia in 2017.

Bradley serves as a Senior Fellow of Trans4m (Geneva) and as a Learning Consultant for their subsidiary group Trans4m Communiversity Associates (London and Johannesburg). In this role, he leads 'Communiversity' projects with social enterprises in the UK, Southern Africa and Pakistan where he has been a British Council Social Enterprise ambassador.

There are several key examples of our researchers making high-quality collaborative links in the UK:

- Cook runs the UK Participatory Research Network, which includes members from universities, the NHS and community-based organisations across the UK.
- Edwards' involvement in the Understanding Everyday Participation project connects her with senior academics at the universities of Manchester, Loughborough, Leicester and Exeter. Resulting collaborative outputs include a forthcoming article on ageing and participation with Professor Andrew Miles (University of Manchester), and a project on loneliness, new parents and participation with Dr Susan Oman (University of Sheffield).

- The Palestinian engagement has also helped us to initiate a Palestine University Network, facilitating more UK students to visit Palestine

Contribution to the research base, economy and society

Many of the Unit's researchers focus on policy changes that can improve the life-experiences of marginalised groups and communities. This includes people with learning disabilities and their families (Cook – see also ICS), child and adult survivors of coercive control/domestic abuse (Katz – see also ICS) and care-experienced children and young people (Hanson, Edwards). This purpose informs, for example, our research on the social consequences of Brexit (Corbett), the Hillsborough inquests (Brennan), and contemporary welfare reforms (Atas, Jordan, Lavalette and Moth). It also informs our wider activities. For example, Lavalette represents the SEARCH Centre at the Merseyside Poverty and Life Chances Standing Group, attended by local MPs and representatives of the six Merseyside local authorities.

Within this public-facing environment, we have raised our profiles as researchers via coverage in cultural and media spheres. Palladino's publicly-released documentary film *Age Is Just a Bingo Number*, which features a community of ageing Italian migrants living in Newcastle, has received several awards and a nomination for Best Documentary at the 2019 Cannes Mediterranean Film Festival. Edwards' research has appeared in the *Wales in Venice* exhibition at the Venice Biennale, and has also appeared in a play broadcast on BBC Radio 4. Brennan's research has received international media coverage in France (TV5 Monde, AFP France), Canada (*Metro*), China (*Shanghai Daily*) and in Malaysia and Uganda as well as in the US magazine *Fortune*. Our research has featured in the most popular mainstream media news outlets in the UK (Edwards in the *Sunday Times*, Brennan on BBC TV Breakfast and BBC Radio 4), and also in local BBC radio (Brennan and Katz) and local ITV news (Katz). Internationally, Atas and Palladino have been interviewed and received broadcast (television/newspaper) coverage of their research in, respectively, Lithuania and Italy, and Katz has featured in Australian print and online media (*The Saturday Paper*, *Guardian Australia*).

We also contribute to the research base of our fields of study through: (i) research leadership roles in academic associations and journals, (ii) examinerships and other roles at external institutions, (iii) invited seminar presentations and conference keynotes, and (iv) practitioner-facing events.

(i) Research leadership roles in academic associations and journals

Collectively, the Unit's researchers are active in wider UK and international research cultures. Several belong to research groups at other institutions, including at University College London (Edwards), the University of Edinburgh (Katz), and Lancaster University (Stypinska). Atas, Brennan, Corbett and Ghalib are members of national and international associations in their fields; Ghalib is also a member of the British Academy of Management and Bradley is a member of the Institute of Enterprise and Entrepreneurship (currently seeking Distinguished Fellow status) and of the Chartered Management Institute. During the REF period the Unit's researchers have served as journal editors (Cook and Lavalette) and on journal editorial boards (Acar, Bradley, Brennan, Bê Pereira, Corbett and Moth), and as editors of journal special issues (Bê Pereira, Cook, Corbett and Stypinska).

Social work is a particular field where the School of Social Science has a strong presence. The school itself is a member of both the International Association of Schools of Social Work and the European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW). Acar was on the EASSW executive committee (2015–19), and is also an executive member of Turkish Association of Schools of Social Work. Lavalette is the coordinator of SWAN (UK) and on the steering committee of SWAN (International), and was also on the committee reviewing Social Work subject benchmarks.

(ii) Examinerships and other roles at external institutions

Researchers who have examined UK-based PhDs during the REF period include Lavalette (Birmingham, Keele, Western Scotland, Teesside, Huddersfield and Central Lancashire), Katz (Bristol; City, University of London), Ghalib (Bolton; Leeds Beckett), Brennan (Central Lancashire; Brunel) and Cook (Newcastle; South Wales). Overseas examinerships include the University of Madras (Ghalib), Université Paris-Saclay (Bradley), the universities of Melbourne, Sydney and New South Wales (Lavalette), and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (Cook on three occasions).

Some of the Unit's researchers have also served in other positions and roles within external institutions. Cook has been a visiting academic at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and Katholische Hochschule für Sozialwesen, Berlin. Bê Pereira, Cook and Katz have served as reviewers for scholarships, grant applications, other research funding and career progression boards, including for the ESRC and the British Council. Hanson chairs the research ethics committee for the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, and Bradley is Senior Fellow of Trans4m, where he acts as a Learning Consultant.

(iii) Invited seminar presentations and conference keynotes

A number of our researchers, including those at a relatively early career stage (Atas, Edwards, Katz, Palladino) have developed research through invited seminar presentations at other UK universities. Overseas, our researchers have spoken at universities in Australia and Norway (O'Brien), Finland (Katz), Lithuania (Atas), the Czech Republic and Sweden (Lavalette). Our more senior researchers (Brennan, Cook, Lavalette) and also some of our early-career researchers (Acar, Katz) have given keynote conference presentations, many internationally. Cook has given 15 since 2014, including in the UK at the University of Oxford and Durham University and, internationally, at institutions in Ireland, the Netherlands, Canada and Germany. Keynotes have been delivered at academic association conferences (Acar and Lavalette), and at events overseas including the International Conference on Honour Related Conflicts, Copenhagen and the Association of Women's Shelters in Frankfurt (Katz) and at the Death, Grief and Bereavement conference at University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (Brennan).

(iv) Practitioner-facing events

A cornerstone of our practitioner-facing events has been three annual School of Social Sciences Distinguished Lecture series (in social policy, social work, and social sciences) held since 2017. Each lecture had more than a hundred delegates, and the social work series was published by Lavalette as *What is the Future of Social Work?* (Policy Press, 2019). Speakers were university professors (from institutions such as Liverpool, York, Lancaster and LSE) with public-facing/activist profiles, such as Kate Pickett (*The Spirit Level*) and Mark Drakeford, who spoke to us as the serving Welsh government First Minister, and who previously was a social policy scholar at Cardiff University.

The School also responded to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic with a series of webinars held in April and May 2020, coordinated by Lavalette in conjunction with the UK branch of the Social Work Action Network (SWAN) and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW). The webinars have been viewed 25,000+ times on the SWAN and IFSW websites and published by Lavalette as *Social Work and the COVID-19 Pandemic: International Insights* (Policy Press, 2020).

Meanwhile, the conferences we have organised during the REF period have fitted closely into our four key areas of interest in children and families, culture, politics and policy, and social services and institutions.

Culture / Children and families

The School's 2016 conference on the relationship between contemporary culture and children and families, *Childhood and Youth in a Changing World*, took place on an international scale, with keynotes by Mary Jane Kehily (Professor of Gender and Education, Open University), Jens Qvortrup (Professor of Sociology, Norwegian University of Science and Technology), and Hasina Ebrahim (Professor of Early Childhood Education, University of South Africa).

We also held two practitioner-facing conferences on young people in 2018, the *Youth Participation Conference* (in partnership with Youth Focus North West) and the *Be The Change Young People's Conference* (in partnership with Liverpool City Council's Targeted Services for Young People).

In 2019, over 250 international delegates attended our *Care Experienced Conference*, co-organised by Edwards in collaboration with a large group including those with care experience and practitioners. A Summary Report of the conference's findings was submitted to Andy Burnham, Mayor of Manchester, and to local authority leaders across the UK, which contained messages from Care Experienced people about what could be improved in the current system, based on their collective lived experiences. The report contained a list of 10 pledges that local authorities were requested to endorse, and which have now been endorsed by Andy Burnham as well as by heads of children's services in the UK. A further output from the conference was a YouTube video produced by Anne Longfield, Children's Commissioner for England, calling for central and local government to recognise the importance of the messages emerging from the conference.

Politics and policy / social services and institutions

Connections between politics and policy and social services and institutions have shaped several conferences organised within the Unit during the REF period, notably the SEARCH conference *Making an Impact: Valuing the Social and Economic Worth of the Voluntary and Community Sector* (2018) which featured a keynote by Steve Rotherham, Metro Mayor Liverpool City Region.

These connections featured in a criminological context in the conferences *Low-level Sanctions – the Business of Court and Criminology?* (2017) and *Theorizing Sites of Discipline in Society* (2018), two conferences both part-funded by the British Society of Criminology, and in a health and wellbeing area in *Psychopolitics in the Twenty First Century: Peter Sedgwick and Radical Movements in Mental Health* in 2015 (which led to a journal special issue to which Moth contributed), and *Mental Health and Welfare Reform: Resisting Cuts and Sanctions, Building Alliances* in 2016.

The theme of radical political praxis in the context of mental health and marginalisation partly underpinned our conference on the Franco-Caribbean psychiatrist and political philosopher Franz Fanon, *The Legacy of Fanon – Contemporary Challenges to Racism and Oppression*, held in 2018, which featured keynotes by Erica Burman (Professor of Education, University of Manchester) and Lewis Gordon (Professor of Philosophy and Africana Studies, University of Connecticut) and also led to a journal special issue.

Concluding statement

Our contribution to the wider economy and society, both locally and further afield, reflects our overall commitment that shapes our research environment, to produce research that makes a difference in social policy and practice for marginalised groups and communities. As our research environment has grown and solidified over the past seven years – organising, developing and investing in research activity around our four key areas of interest – we have added to and diversified the ways we meet this aim. Gearing our efforts in these areas around making a difference to those around us, the research culture we have built since REF2014 is one that values outward-facing engagement with research users/beneficiaries, while also building towards higher levels of academic excellence.