

<b>Institution: Buckinghamshire New University</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 20 - Social Work and Social Policy</b>
<p><b>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</b></p> <p><b>Achievement of strategic aims for research and impact during the assessment period</b></p> <p>This represents the first submission in this UoA from Buckinghamshire New University (BNU). As a new emerging unit, prior research in this area undertaken by members of this UoA was submitted under Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy in 2014 (Greenfields, Ansbro). The present unit, comprising 5 members equating to 4.6 FTE has built upon and extended our strengths, with additional expertise from early career researchers (ECR) (Clerk, O'Keefe, Rogers). Additional staff aligned to this unit are working towards becoming independent researchers (eg Toscano, DaSilva, Rowe, Black). Details of research conducted during the REF period includes contributions from former staff who have moved to new institutions (Schaub, Arnall, Dagilyte, Ahmed).</p> <p>During the REF period, Ansbro and Rogers have been supported to complete their doctorates and disseminate outcomes; Clerk's developing research has been supported through allocations of core Strategic Priority Funding (SPF) and Global Challenges Research Funding (GCRF). O'Keefe was promoted to Associate Professor, joining Greenfields in the institutional Professoriate forum driving the University strategic agenda.</p> <p>In particular, we have a strong emphasis on engagement with diverse and often marginalised populations. Whilst our social policy, social work and broader social sciences research are clustered under three broad themes, we emphasise collaboration and co-production with communities, statutory sector and non-governmental organisation (NGO) stakeholders, as well as interdisciplinary working within and externally to the University. Thus, our activities are closely aligned to the University's strategy, <i>Impact 2022</i>, to pursue research and innovation that impacts and enhances lives and society, enriches our inclusive learning community, and helps us reach out to the public, our communities, and key strategic partners.</p> <p>Policy and wellbeing-related research activities (see Section 4) engage with physical and health sciences, creative arts and media practitioners, as well as more 'traditional' UoA20 constituent bodies including central and local government agencies, criminal justice and statutory social services providers and voluntary and community groups. In the wider University environment, colleagues are submitting a body of sports policy-related research under UoA24. In addition, we share synergies of interest with, and have provided expertise to, education-focused research and policy development reported in UoA 23. This includes the development of a sector-wide Good Practice Pledge supporting Gypsy, Traveller and Roma (GTR) students into Higher Education (HE) in response to the significant under-representation of these communities in HE.</p> <p>Research in UoA20 has progressed substantially since the last REF under the wider strategic aim of implementing an applied portfolio of research through a partnership approach. There are three key themes incorporated into this developing stream of activity:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Excluded populations (Greenfields, Rogers)</li> <li>2. Probation and criminal justice (Ansbro, O'Keefe, Clerk, Greenfields)</li> <li>3. Social care (Clerk, Greenfields, Rogers and former staff Schaub Arnall, Dagilyte)</li> </ol> <p>As an emerging unit, social work and social policy research staff working with colleagues in other sections of the University demonstrate civic commitment by engaging with community organisations and groups to address their health and social care needs at both local and national level. For example, the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) project (funded by a consortia of health authorities), with input from Clerk, provided a platform for researchers from social work, social science and nursing to develop a partnership with a Northwest London Clinical Commissioning Group Collaborative,</p>

local care homes, GP surgeries and hospitals to understand the challenges they face with the MCA in practice. Impact case studies for this UoA include collaborative projects funded by central and local government and health authorities in partnership with NGOs to deliver newly designed specialist in-reach services to excluded populations, with tangible benefits on quality of life and financial savings through early interventions. Arts and Humanities Research Council funding and in-kind support from religious bodies supported a programme of interdisciplinary interfaith engagement (Case Study 2), which supports the inclusion, mental health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, transgender, genderqueer, queer, intersex, agender, asexual and other queer-identifying community (LGBTQIA+) minority communities.

### **1. Excluded populations (Clerk, Greenfields, Rogers)**

Clerk is strongly engaged in an emerging area of international development/international social policy, with focus on interdisciplinary approaches to tackling the needs of populations experiencing poverty and social exclusion. Funded by Horizon-2020, the WATERSPOUTT project is a collaborative project between natural scientists, designers and social scientists aimed at developing solar technologies for water disinfection/water access in South Africa, Malawi, Uganda and Ethiopia. BNU design engineers led the design of ceramic products for water disinfection for Malawi and Ethiopia (reported in UoA 7), working in collaboration with BNU social scientists who led the design of educational programmes. Supported by BNU's GCRF allocation, Clerk is working with scientists at Southampton University and three African universities (University of Johannesburg, South Africa; University of Nairobi, Kenya; University of Ghana) to set up the Advanced Synchrontron Network for Advanced Energy Materials. Clerk is leading on the social impact evaluation of the project and public engagement with communities to co-produce recommendations for sustainable energy sources to meet the challenges experienced in Africa. See <https://asnaem.org/>

Greenfields undertakes a wide range of international, national and local teaching, research and evaluation activities with excluded populations, such as GTR, LGBTQIA+ people of faith, homeless people, refugees/asylum seekers and migrant workers. The research in this cluster is focused on social inclusion, race equality, health needs consultations with excluded/vulnerable populations; and faith-based social action. Significant areas of work involve external partnerships with government departments, statutory services and civil society agencies, including the Queens Nursing Institute; homelessness agencies who are members of the Faculty of Homeless Health; and specialist GTR NGOs such as the Traveller Movement, as well as UK and international academic partners (see 4).

Rogers works closely with Greenfields on a number of these projects, including Case Study 1, a Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) funded project on hate crime experienced by GTR populations and the links to suicide ideation, and research into the bereavement experiences of GTR communities, which have grown from her doctoral research completed at BNU in 2016.

### **2. Probation and criminal justice**

This area of work is developing significantly as a result of close professional partnerships with a range of agencies concerned with the criminal justice system, health, social care and social work partnerships, and has close synergies with our UoA focus on minority and marginalised populations. For example, a pilot study (led by Clerk in partnership with colleagues from nursing) – Criminal Prosecution for Physical Chastisement of Children: Improving the experience of BME Families in a London Borough – was funded by internal strategic priority funding. Ansbrosio's PhD and ongoing research focuses on 'attachment-based concepts' impacting offenders and probation decisions. She is also working in partnership with the University of Leicester examining sex offender registration and young people, focusing on the role of probation officers in child protection cases. Restorative justice is a new and emergent area of activity in which O'Keefe is collaborating with colleagues in the Department of Psychology, specifically regarding psychologically impaired offenders.

EU (Directorate-General Social Justice) funding to design and deliver an international workshop on GTR experiences in the Criminal Justice System (Greenfields et al, 2015), has led to spin-off activities with the Traveller Movement (national policy agency) and consultancy/advisory panel membership in this field – e.g. Greenfields' work with the Metropolitan Police on good practice in relation to GTR communities; and as a methodological consultant for a Ministry of Justice (MoJ) funded study on GTR experiences in the secure estate being undertaken by the Traveller Movement (2020-21). As noted above (and impact case study one) Rogers and Greenfields (2019-2020) explored links between hate crime and self/family reported suicide ideation, co-designed with the NGO, GATEHerts and commissioned by the MHCLG.

### 3. Social work engagement

Our work on social work is at a relatively early stage of development, although Schaub (2014–2017) led work on LGBTQIA+ social worker's training and experiences and Arnall (2011–2015) published extensively around the themes of substance misuse, antisocial behaviour and women offenders, with their contributions supporting the development of social work research. In the previous REF period, Schaub, Arnall and Greenfields undertook commissioned projects for local authorities into the experiences of ethnic minority children in the looked after system, and Greenfields (2017) developed this work with partners from Middlesex University, undertaking a commissioned study on behalf of a London borough social care team. An emergent stream of work exists around the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Deprivation of Liberties, in particular an analysis of implementation of legislation and development of training for the care workforce (Clerk) and families' experiences of deprivation of liberties associated with mental incapacity (O'Keefe). Clark and Ansbro's research into child protection has clear overlaps between the thematic areas of criminal justice and social care given the segue between prosecution processes that may occur following on from child protection interventions and investigations. Tangential research into access to welfare benefits for migrant Roma by Greenfields and Dagilyte (former staff, 2011-2015) explored contact with social work child protection systems for families experiencing destitution as a result of lack of eligibility (or delay in receiving) welfare benefits.

### Future strategic aims and goals for research and impact

Our activities within this UoA have coalesced around the themes identified above which will remain core to our strategic aims in the period of time covered by our institutional strategy up until at least the mid 2020s. In particular, the University research strategy themes emphasise the need to:

- Establish impact centres to provide critical mass, senior research leadership, support for interdisciplinarity, institutional support, and alignment with target communities, and local, national and global priorities
- Increase the volume and quality of our research and impact through support for existing areas of excellence, and incubating nascent UoA submissions
- Develop numbers of and support for research students
- Increase research and enterprise income
- Build public and stakeholder engagement with our research and impact
- Develop the number and significance of external research and enterprise partnerships to maximise access to funding, support knowledge exchange and research

As evidenced by our impact case studies and activities outlined above, members of the UoA contribute significant areas of expertise to support the University's strategic aims, and our work is leveraging increasing levels of public attention, measurable impact on policy and practice design and engagement with external networks. These will be further enhanced by the development of cross-disciplinary University impact centres. Given the focus in the current strategy document (*Impact 2022*) on the synergies between research and teaching rooted in deep community engagement, evidence-based practice and an emphasis on co-production/policy design and practice outputs, we are well placed as a UoA to become a significant impact centre within BNU, enabling us to leverage ringfenced institutional support.

A key future strategic aim is to develop critical mass located around the above themes through recruiting excellent, experienced research staff to further enhance our reputation as well as (see 2 below) attracting high calibre research students to join our UoA. We are members of GuildHE and Greenfields is working with colleagues from across the University (including those submitted under UoA 23) and collaborators from other GuildHE institutions to develop funding applications and pathways, which will provide support to BAME and GTR research students with the intention that one stream of interdisciplinary activity will focus on cross-cutting education policy, and build upon our work on the GTRSB into HE Pledge.

Similarly, we intend to continue to develop activities with the Social Policy Association (SPA) around inclusivity. We have obtained a SPA opportunity grant, (event postponed from 2020 as a result of the pandemic) which will utilise our close connections with government departments and other stakeholders to facilitate workshops focused on curricula development, mentoring and supporting BAME and GTR students into policy careers, which has close synergies to our interlinked research-teaching-employability emphasis at BNU.

We are increasingly attracting both research opportunities and collaborations with external stakeholders in our areas of knowledge where we have a substantial national, local and international profile, as well as applicants for posts whose doctoral research or professional expertise (e.g. social work lecturers), aligns to our core research areas. A newly emergent cross-cutting approach that will influence our next REF submission consists of combining our focus on research with excluded communities around impactful activities around the themes of 'equity of access and outcomes' 'migration' and 'diaspora' with the foregrounding of issues of social justice and the impacts of 'race' and ethnicity, across all of our activities in this UoA. We anticipate that this focus – which foregrounds the experiences of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) populations, will come to greater prominence in coming years as we increase our networks of influence and engagement with service provider agencies supporting migrant and minority populations.

A core strategic approach thus lies in strengthening our research focus within social work, criminology and the development of social policy interventions, which impact on health, wellbeing and social inclusion, e.g. developing socially relevant policy solutions pertaining to vulnerable migrant workers; refugees and BAME communities experiencing the 'ethnic penalty' in areas such as disproportionate criminalisation, barriers to employment, access to and experience within education and the impacts of the 'hostile environment' on life opportunities.

To this end, our deepening relationships/engagement and collaborations with policy makers in Westminster enables us to proactively and responsively engage with emergent policy areas in our areas of expertise as we are increasingly approached for input and engagement to rapidly developing areas, e.g. Greenfields being requested to provide expertise to the Welsh Government and input to the East of England Local Government Association response to the Covid-19 pandemic and support/feed into MHCLG and Public Health England policy responses on health, wellbeing and social care support for GTR populations impacted by the virus. A PhD student within the university (studies temporarily suspended re Covid impacts), was co-opted to work with the Traveller Movement on a rapid response study of prisoners' experiences of the Covid-19 lockdown in the secure estate.

Future proofing our approach to research and impact is linked inextricably to our staffing strategy and intended growth of research activities. We are building a 'whole university' approach within impact centres to tiered engagement with policy and practice, such as nested activities ranging from community engagement, to inclusive curricula, rooted in best practice, cutting edge, interdisciplinary cosmopolitan/internationalist research; working exceptionally closely with colleagues in the university-wide BAME staff network (launched 2020) and the Professoriate (created 2020).

### Open Research



The University has adopted the Green route to open access as a sustainable approach. Staff are required to upload all outputs including conference presentations, videos and original performance pieces to the repository to enhance public access for their research and improve impact. BNU participated in the JISC open-data pilot project through GuildHE Research and will explore options to enable sustainable open data sharing through this affiliation.

### Research Integrity

The University's Research and Enterprise Committee (REC), a Senate sub-committee, has oversight of all institutional research activity, including research degrees. Greenfields is a long-standing member of this Committee, driving the University strategic research agenda. The Committee has responsibility for ensuring adherence with our Code of Good Research Practice and Research Ethics policies, both revised and updated in 2019. Research Ethics panels meet monthly to review all applications by staff and students in a timely manner. The REC collates data annually for our compliance statement on the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and investigates any reports of research misconduct. The University Research Ethics Panel has a wide membership from across the university, with oversight of school sub-committees which review student research. BNU subscribes to the UK Research Integrity Office and has completed the UKRIO self-assessment exercise during the REF period. Two submitting staff have participated in the University's Research Committees playing an active role in shaping University-wide research policies and activities.

## 2. People.

### Recruitment Policy and Staffing Strategy

Following the institutional transformation process that occurred between 2016/17 and 2018/19, the staffing position has been characterised by flexibility, interdisciplinarity, renewal and growth. The University's transformation programme involved the reorganisation of internal school structures (from more hierarchical faculty structures to flatter School units) that has facilitated new synergies between cognate subjects.

The staffing strategy for this unit reflects the University commitment outlined in the Strategic Plan and People Strategy (2018) and follows three principles: Engage; Enable; Excel

**Engage.** Vigorous attempts are made to ensure that newly recruited staff fit within key REF priority areas; recent appointments have a strong track record in political science with an emphasis on migration, social work practice with a focus on diverse populations, and human rights law with a particular interest in minority and refugee groups, enabling them to be aligned towards this UoA with the intent of developing their research focus and careers. In 2020, a new part-time staff member was appointed who is a member of the Romany Gypsy community; seed-funded by the Strategic Priority Fund and retained by institutional funding.

**Enable.** All staff returned under this unit are on full-time contracts supporting sustainability of the UoA and succession planning. At present there are no post-doctoral students within the UoA but Rogers is an ECR (having completed her doctorate in 2016 whilst a staff member at BNU). ECRs are supported and integrated into the research culture at BNU through access to all training opportunities outlined below, as well as having the opportunity to apply for financial support and time allocations to disseminate research within academic and professional practice fora as well as internally.

BNU's focus on employment and professions encourages synergies between different disciplinary research areas, enabling an institution-wide approach to support ECRs and cross-fertilisation of conceptualisation of research opportunities. This is epitomised by the collaboration between Clerk and colleagues undertaking work in the field of design and environment for the WATERSPOUTT project (reported on under UoA 7). The centralised Research and Enterprise Directorate (RED) helps to identify interdisciplinary and collaborative partnerships and supports university-wide research development and dissemination events (see infrastructure below).

Staff are supported to engage with academic and professional networks and can use BNU facilities to host events and meetings such as workshops and seminars, e.g. as detailed in Impact Case 2. BNU's partnerships and collaborative relationships with organisations such as GuildHE and National Educational Opportunity Network (NEON) (at UK level), as well as a range of NGO and international academic partnerships, also facilitate participation in collaborative networks and access to funding, e.g. Research England Development Fund; UniConnect networks accessing Office for Students funding; and EU partners.

Development sessions are available to ECRs and other newly appointed staff on obtaining research funding, project management, getting published and becoming an entrepreneurial academic, as well as on advanced topics such as collaborative research activities, software for analysis. These sessions may be led by senior academics from BNU or external guest lecturers, or accessed via collaborative workshops with colleagues in other institutions.

BNU uses the principles of the Career Development of Researchers Concordat (2019) to support experienced, developing and aspiring researchers, and to underpin staff development for all academic staff. Our commitment to staff development with opportunities to engage with research is reflected in our Learning and Development Policy and supported by access to centralised funding for all training and development opportunities, e.g. enabling staff to attend specialist training programmes such as oral history methodologies, participatory action research and (see further below) training for research supervisors.

During the REF period, two staff members aligned to this UoA (Rogers and Burton) received a fee waiver and adjusted workload to enable them to undertake their research degrees. A further staff member who is a current PGR student (Palmer) is similarly in receipt of a fee waiver, and is eligible for a period of time on 'writing up' leave, in addition to having opportunities to undertake training provided to all PGR students (see further below).

All staff are eligible for financial support and time to disseminate research within both academic and professional practice forums. Following the institutional transformation process (2016-2019), the staffing strategy has focused on the Bucks Academic Framework (introduced in 2019), where staff have been able to opt to prioritise research alongside their teaching responsibilities when selecting a 'pathway' (enabling a focus on 'professional practice' for those in practice-based careers such as social work, health, policing). The ability to select a 'pathway' has resulted in staff undertaking or aspiring to develop their research activities and enabled more targeted focus of support and development for those individuals for whom research is a significant element within their role.

Academic staff contracts provide dedicated time to undertake research, scholarly, enterprise or professional practice activity of up to 550 hours per year. The activities undertaken and expected depend on the Bucks Academic Framework career pathway adopted.

At present, two full time staff within this UoA have selected the Research with Education career pathway (Clerk and Greenfields) and another three UoA members (Ansbro, O'Keefe and Rogers) have opted for Research as a secondary pathway to their primary track of Education. Opportunities exist to highlight research training needs during annual appraisal review with opportunities to switch pathways.

**Excel.** Coupled with the implementation of BNU's new strategy '*Impact 2022*', which emphasises research, enterprise and staff development, this streamlined approach has resulted in increased recognition of, and support for, staff undertaking research activities. It enables a greater focus on tailored support and development opportunities, including mentoring from experienced researchers, for those staff where research is a significant focus within their role.

For example, Rogers who completed her doctorate in 2016, has been institutionally supported to present her findings at conferences in Turkey and Romania and publish articles and a book chapter. Teaching buy-out facilitated by funding received from MHCLG in 2019-20 supported her in undertaking research in partnership with Greenfields. She is currently developing independent

funding applications with support from senior research colleagues in the UoA.

All researcher development opportunities available to research students are available to staff regardless of contracted hours and whether or not they are currently on a research prioritised career track; as are research seminars and workshops on writing for publication, developing grant applications, etc. Uniquely, we have in our policy-related work explicitly embedded opportunities for administrative/Professional Services colleagues to participate in sessions on the design, development and methodologies utilised in our research. We offer a wrap-around model of staff development and engagement, including PRINCE2 training for PSE colleagues, or fieldwork activities to enhance understanding of how their role fits with the overall programme of activities.

In 2019, Bucks commenced production of a biannual Research newsletter '*Research Notes*', and a research journal, '*NOVOS*', as a forum to encourage staff and students to publish their research and impact and enhance recognition of opportunities and potential for internal collaborations.

Staff are encouraged and supported to attend and present at national and international conferences. Funded conferences (supported by BNU) include:

- Social Theory Forum, Boston US 2015 (Arnull – former staff member)
- European Society of Criminology Conference 2018 (Ansbro)
- UK Joint Social Work Education and Research Conference 2018 (Ansbro)
- UK National conference – Diversity and inclusion in Bereavement Support 2019 (Rogers)
- American Society of Criminology 2019 (Ansbro)
- Social Policy Association Conference 2016 and 2018 (Greenfields)
- Gypsy Lore Society Conference 2018 (Greenfields)

As a result of these centralised funding arrangements between 2017-2020, five staff aligned to this UoA were supported by BNU to present at academic conferences, accounting for an investment of £4000.

Core research funding aligned to the Strategic Priorities Fund in 2019-20 for activities relating to policy has supported activities linked either directly to this UoA or where staff overlap occurs, but which are currently located in other schools. A total of £21,000 has been invested through SPF, for projects including:

- The Development of a GTRSB into HE pledge designed in partnership with a range of institutions, NGOs and with input from the All Party Political Group, Gypsy, Traveller and Roma affairs, community collaborators and with steering group membership from the OfS (Greenfields)
- Current attitudes to punishment and rehabilitation of offenders in the UK – involving extensive external partnerships with the Probation service and secure estate (O'Keefe)
- Criminal Prosecution for Physical Chastisement of Children: Improving the experience of BME Families in a London Borough (a joint health, social work and social policy study) (Clerk).
- Current attitudes and provision to homeless people in High Wycombe – involving local NGOs and academic colleagues (Rowe)

We provide additional sector supported development through institutional participation in organisations such as the UK Council for Graduate Education, which provides skills training for research supervisors, whilst BNU's membership of the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) provides additional advice and access to conferences and webinars for staff. Staffordshire University (SU), which validates BNU research degrees, also offers access to their internal supervisory training programmes. Further, institutional membership of Advance HE and NEON

and the presence of a vibrant Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion committee and BAME Staff Network (since 2020) ensures that staff are alert to, and engage with, supervisory training and up-to-date knowledge on issues impacting BAME colleagues and research students' sense of belonging, access to opportunities and engagement, as well as ensuring that methodologies and resources are reflective of globalised policy and practice and take account of our diverse staff and student body.

Opportunities are provided for staff to develop their training further in pertinent areas through the Academic Professional or Senior Leadership Apprenticeship (fully funded/supported by BNU) as well as opportunities for development of more junior academics to progress to doctoral research supervision, under the mentorship of experienced supervisors.

Both experienced and aspiring supervisory staff have access to research supervisor training through SU and Epigeum's suite of online supervisor development modules, ensuring that PGR students are appropriately supported and that staff skills are regularly updated.

### **Training and supervision of PGR students**

We have seen a noticeable increase in PGR student numbers in recent years across the entire University. Since the last REF submission, three doctorates in social policy and social work have occurred in the areas of: GTR well-being and engagement with statutory services; Social Work and Practice Educator developmental change; the Bereavement experiences of Gypsy and Traveller children and families.

In total, nine PG research students aligned to this UoA have been recruited since the last REF period. All are self-funded other than the three staff members who gained/or are currently studying for PhDs.

Doctoral students have been attracted to BNU as a result of all of areas of work highlighted in Part 1, with recent PhD students (2020) focusing on aspects of church communities, business planning and safeguarding policies and practice; the exclusion of GTR students in educational contexts; and the criminal justice experiences of GTR populations. Other doctoral students are undertaking research into causation, identification and successful interventions for suicide prevention amongst former military personnel involving a wide network of stakeholders from policy specialists, tri-service armed forces policy and support agencies; social work and mental health specialists, police, and a broad range of NGOs supporting services personnel and ex-personnel, and the attitudes and experiences of female domestic abuse service users

We ensure that research students are linked closely to practice opportunities and placements through our 'placement plus' scheme. Current and former Masters and PhD students have had the opportunity to undertake research placements with experienced staff: working with local homelessness charities to interrogate service delivery need or undertaking placements with leading NGOs working in their area of study; participating in planning and supporting events at Westminster pertinent to their research; attending shadow meetings and policy events in Government Ministries; or assisting in background research and hands on training where PhD supervisors/researchers are providing expert evidence for parliamentary hearings, tribunal or court cases.

This high level of engagement creates a virtuous circle as we enhance opportunities for students to work with a core group of senior researchers engaged in this UoA, who are able to create linkages between theory and practice and generate opportunities to develop research skills grounded in 'real-world' experience.

In addition to centralised development activities, as outlined in the institutional environment statement, students in this UoA have been supported to undertake the following development activities:

- GuildHE Research Academic writing retreat (Palmer, 2019)



- Veterans' Mental Health Conference (Palmer, 2019; 2020)
- Violence against women and girls conference (Kadri, 2017)
- Second World Congress on Resilience, University of Timisoara, Romania (Rogers, 2014)

Enhancing the research culture for PGR students has been a key focus during the REF period, with increasing numbers of research students attracted to the institution and student satisfaction levels rising, as evidenced in PRES2020: 85% of BNU students are satisfied with their programme, 5% above the benchmark figure.

As noted above PGR supervisors receive regular compulsory hours of research supervision training as well as access to additional opportunities to ensure that supervision follows best practice. Supervision for full-time students must take place approximately once a month, and proportionately for part-time students. All supervision notes are required to be signed off by PGR students as well as supervisors, and a significant level of detail is required by the Research Enterprise Development (RED) office. Annual reviews (and if concerns exist on student progress, bi-annual reviews), are reviewed by the Research and Enterprise Committee and signed off by senior staff including the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), ensuring that effective oversight exists at multiple levels to ensure that students are receiving a high-quality experience.

Students are required to use the Vitae Researcher Development framework planner and are provided with individual support for their researcher development plan. As most BNU students are mature and part-time, they are supported with a range of flexible opportunities, and access to resources provided by our awarding partner, currently Staffordshire University.

The virtuous cycle of staff development illustrated by considerable numbers of staff undertaking research degrees across the institution and this UoA, further supports an active and vibrant exchange relationship between staff and PGRs, as well as ensuring that lines of communication between supervisors, student representatives and SU are fluid and highly responsive to any concerns that students may raise.

All students have access to Postgraduate taught modules, in addition to dedicated IT based workshops (Quirkos, NVivo) and Epigeum's 15 module online research toolkit, which includes entrepreneurship, transferable skills, ethics and integrity. Since 2019, students have had access to the University of East Anglia PGR online programme, covering quantitative and qualitative research methods, academic writing, teaching skills and completing a Doctorate. Monthly news summaries are disseminated by our RED Unit, which collate local and external events and development opportunities.

Students are encouraged to disseminate their research at events and dedicated conferences held internally several times a year, further, PGRs aligned to this UoA have been funded to attend events hosted by partnership institutions such as the Staffordshire PGR student conference; or GuildHE Research Student Summer School, as well as British Library Doctoral open days, Elsevier Researcher academy etc. In addition, supervisors strongly encourage and support students to publish in conference proceedings, journals and in our Research notes newsletter.

GuildHE Research networks provide additional development and networking opportunities, including a 2-day annual summer school (attended by three PGRs from this UoA during the REF period), an 'academic writing month' where specialist workshops and on-conversations occur, and a Virtual Doctoral Training Network.

### **Equality and diversity**

All staff recruitment and appointment of research positions are in line with institutional policies on equality and diversity as indicated in the institutional statement.

The unit aligns fully with BNU's commitment to deliver a vibrant, inclusive learning community free from discrimination and which actively celebrates diversity through initiatives such as GTR History Month; Black History Month; LGBT History Month; Holocaust Remembrance Day; Interfaith Week. BNU is committed to full equality of opportunity for all. To illustrate this: annual action plans are led by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) working group (which includes Category A staff members in this Unit), which in turn reports to a newly created university EDI committee chaired by the Vice Chancellor.

All staff recruitment and selection processes are in accordance with institutional policies on equality and diversity. This includes training in equality and diversity and unconscious bias. Those staff involved in recruitment and selection receive formal management training in policy and best practice (e.g. use of anonymised applications). BNU is committed to further accreditations linked to its EDI work including the 'Disability Confident Employer' (Job Centre Plus) and 'Mindful Employer' charter.

BNU is in the process of applying for the Race Equality Charter mark and a BAME network has been created to promote enhanced awareness and inclusivity within our populations. Staff members within this UoA work closely with the BAME Network and Greenfields was co-opted to the BAME Network as a steering group member (Ally) in respect of the link between UoA activities and experience in diversity research. As noted above, BNU has led on the co-created GTRSB into HE, a sector-wide pledge to support the participation of students from GTR communities devised in partnership with NGOs and underpinned by steering group support from the OfS and NEON.

We have been extremely successful in attracting a diverse range of students and collaborators, (e.g. research assistants from under-represented communities) and staff to BNU to engage with research in this UoA. Given that a considerable number of our streams of activity engage with marginalised populations, we have explicitly encouraged students, staff and community collaborators from under-represented communities to apply for positions within BNU and supported ongoing community collaboration and research engagement with existing networks, as well as providing internal training and support – e.g. through matching inexperienced researchers with senior researchers to encourage the development of new collaborative co-production and engagement within this UoA.

Staffing and student members who are aligned to this UoA include individuals with a number of protected characteristics. e.g. one UoA member Category A staff member on a research dominant pathway identifies as BAME and the other team member on a research pathway self-declares as living with a disability. The age range of the Category A researchers in the UoA varies from individuals in their 30s to late 50s, the gender balance is 3 female to 2 male; and two members are ECRs. PGR students aligned to this UoA (both staff and external applicants) are all mature students with an even female to male balance, age ranging from 30s to 60s, as well as reporting a number of other protected characteristics.

### **3. Income, infrastructure and facilities**

During the latest REF period this UoA has generated £406,000 in policy related research funding from a variety of sources, including UKRI Research Councils, local and central Government departments, NGOs, charities and EU funding

During the REF Period, staff from across BNU were able to apply for competitive, internal seed-funding to kick-start or support research activities and projects. Greenfields in collaboration with Dagilyte (former staff member) accessed the Deputy Vice Chancellor's funding stream (available 2014-16) to support additional field-work on a project on Roma migrant workers' access to welfare benefits (co-funded by a grant from the Socio-Legal Studies Association), which led to

both a report and two publications submitted within this UoA. Funding was also obtained from this internal grant stream (Greenfields) to support additional travel and accommodation costs to enable additional international and UK partners to attend two Council of Europe co-funded policy workshops (2014/15) on GTR health, welfare and criminal justice matters, which led to the development of policy guidance at UK and EU level. For these latter events, BNU was the lead institution in collaboration with colleagues from Plymouth and Greenwich Universities (see Impact case study 1). Internal funding to the sum of £6,000 supported these activities.

Since the last REF period, research funding achieved across BNU through commissioned or competitive application, or where supported internally through QR funding has predominantly been linked to individual researcher interests, connections and networks of practice rather than related to strategic priorities. Accordingly, growth of income and outputs in this UoA has overwhelmingly relied on staff operationalising their personal reputation in their field, or leveraging opportunities arising through engagement with colleagues in other institutions and via networks (see 4). In the forthcoming REF period there will be greater emphasis on developing a strategic approach to accessing funding achieved through locating all research activities into 'clusters' under broad headings (currently under development). It is anticipated that UoA20 activities will fall under two separate headings towards the next REF period, which will enable the growth of a sustainable mass of research and scaling up of research support as collaborations are developed with health and education focused professionals within BNU, and opportunities for enhancing internal and external networking grow.

### **Organisational infrastructure**

At the organisational level, BNU supplements QR (c. £225k pa during the REF period) with its own resources to fund the RED, staff research activity, and development and dissemination initiatives. The unit comprises the Director or Research and Enterprise, administrators, and a dedicated PGR registrar, together with a Head of Business Engagement. RED has responsibility for the institutional repository, ethical review processes, project management, funding bid support, reporting, governance, REF and KEF. BNU has appointed a Knowledge Transfer Manager to establish KTPs across the organisation.

In 2020, BNU created a Professoriate to provide a leading role in the intellectual life of BNU and to develop further public and community engagement. This forum will influence and contribute to the advancement of University Policies and Strategies in the areas of Research and Scholarship, Learning and Teaching, Enterprise, Research Governance and Staff Development, as well as the development of a sabbatical policy to further support staff development and publications throughout the next REF period. University career break policies are in place for staff to manage personal circumstances or to focus on dedicated scholarly activity (e.g. if an external period of funding or a Fellowship is awarded). A key aim of the Professoriate is to enhance collaboration and communication between staff with common interests, e.g. linking social policy and social work research to colleagues in different disciplines including health; law; education etc and established or developing researchers based in other academic schools.

During the REF period, we have enabled impact by support for dissemination activities and staff development, e.g. a series of Fast Track Impact workshops during 2019.

BNU has rigorous ethical approval processes and adheres to a Code of Good Research Practice. Ethics review processes require sign off by senior experienced staff, are routinely monitored by mandatory reporting at Research and Enterprise Committee meetings and senior research staff also provide a peer-review role in both developing research protocols and sign off of funding applications, to ensure they adhere to standards of good practice and rigorous methodological and ethical standards. A requirement has existed since 2017 for review and sign-off of processes before initiation of all projects (competitive applications or commissioned research), which includes a robust quality review.

**Equality and Diversity issues**

As noted (2 above) we have a highly diverse staff and student body in this UoA and members of the Unit are closely engaged with the BAME Staff Network. Through our membership of the Network we have commenced a stream of activity aimed at supporting and developing BAME researchers (and aspiring researchers) within the university to engage more closely with research opportunities through initiating a mentoring and buddying scheme. This initiative is at a pilot stage at present, but will become more embedded across both the Unit and BNU more broadly in the coming REF period.

Our provision of flexible development resources widens access for part-time staff and staff who cannot always be on-site, e.g. as a result of caring responsibilities or 'shielding' during the Covid-19 period. Accessing of such resources has increased during the pandemic in 2020-21. We also aim to make reasonable adjustments and supply additional support for staff whose circumstances may impact their research productivity. In preparing for REF, staff were asked confidentially to submit details of any such equality-related circumstances during the REF period; staff absent from work received this request via letter from HR. No equality-related circumstances requiring consideration were declared.

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

The majority of work undertaken within this UoA has involved collaborations with research partners who are already personally known to the academic team members, or where one partner in a newly emergent consortia has collaborated with UoA members in the past.

Often colleagues have worked with their networks and partners (e.g. HEIs /NGOs and statutory services such as Prison or Probation services) over a period of some years, or in the case of colleagues who are following an Education or Professional Practice with Research career pathway (see 2 above), such collaborations may be closely linked to practice placements and teaching roles. Academic partnerships listed below are overwhelming very long established and involve effective working patterns. Moving towards the next REF period, as the new strategic focused outlined at 3 above becomes more established, it is intended that greater formalisation will occur in relation to establishment of consortia and networks, aligned to the development of research clusters and the growing influence of the Professoriate.

**Relationships with Collaborators and Beneficiaries**

The focus on policy and practice-based research, with an emphasis on enhancing social welfare within this Unit, means that a wider contribution to society and policy mechanisms is inherent in our research direction. Typically there is a close relationship between researchers, end-user organisations/beneficiaries (such as policy specialists, or commissioners of research) and specialists, such as social workers engaged in safeguarding; probation officers; health commissioners working with 'hard to reach' groups such as LGBTQIA+ people of faith (see case study 2). Similarly, Parliamentarians and members of the policy community frequently reach out to UoA members to request advice, support in drafting Parliamentary Questions for debate in Westminster, or to feed into briefings for use by service providers.

Thus, Greenfields' and Rogers' explorations of social exclusion impacts on health and wellbeing of GTR populations (see impact case study 1) has provided expert evidence to the Department of Health Inclusion team; Women and Equalities Select Committee Inquiry (2019) local authority commissioners, and the delivery of training to health professionals, as well as providing expert evidence at EU level, input to World Health Organization policy development and provided the basis of a House of Lords debate on accommodation and health for marginalised communities. BNU, supported by QR Strategic Priority Funding, has further leveraged the networks of NGOs and community partners to create a UK-wide Pledge for HE institutions (cross-referenced to UoA 23 submission) to work with GTR communities, which in turn has led to working with OfS as they



develop guidance on working with members of the GTR populations. In turn, elements of this project support the embedding of inclusive curricula, which feeds into professional training for social workers, health professionals and educationalists (creating a virtuous circle), whilst attracting and supporting greater numbers of GTR students into HE. Similarly, Clerk's focus on African policy and practice developments impacting marginalised populations' access to water, and the training needs of physical scientists in a range of African countries, engages with global priorities, which have synergies with UK (ODI) and international Government priorities.

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The vast majority of work undertaken in this UoA pertains to diverse and often marginalised populations in challenging settings, including the secure estate (HMPPS); in developing countries; with street homeless or excluded BAME communities (e.g Refugee and Asylum seeking women); or sexual minorities who are potentially at risk (see Case Study 2).

Participants in the UoA engage with the public through media appearances in both broadcast and print, enhancing public engagement with our research outputs, and also attracting PhD students to BNU/the UoA (O'Keefe, Greenfields, Rogers) as well as opening up requests for our participation in funding applications, advisory boards, conference and workshops.

### **Networks**

Members of the UoA are closely aligned to the following networks which support research, collaborative community engagement and policy development:

EU level: European Academic Network Romani Studies (elected member - founding Fellow); Romani Studies Network (Greenfields and Rogers)

Specialist GRT NGOs: Traveller Movement; FFT, Roma Support Group; Leeds GATE; GATE Herts (see Case Study 1)

Other NGOs/Professional Practice networks (UK): Law for Life; Rosmini Centre; JAMI (Jewish Mental Health charity); Rene Cassin (Jewish Human Rights organisation); Wycombe Homeless Link; Queens Nursing Institute; Religious Groups/organisations: Churches Network for Gypsies and Travellers; Faculty of Homeless Health; Liberal Judaism (see Case Study 2) ; Oxford Centre for Mission Studies.

### **Research and Practice Collaborations**

Greenfields and Rogers (see Case Study 1) have individually and collectively undertaken research commissioned by the MHCLG and Department of Health, and have worked closely with the All Party Political Group, Gypsy, Traveller and Roma affairs; and East of England Local Government Association as well as Bath and North East Somerset and Wiltshire Public Health Commissioners; Buckinghamshire County Council; GATE Herts; ACERT; National Educational Opportunities Network; NERUPI (University of Bath); Independent Academic Research Studies International Institute (NGO) and the Child Bereavement Trust across a range activities focused on the social and policy inclusion of marginalised minority ethnic populations. In addition, Greenfields has undertaken research for the Equalities and Human Rights Commission and worked closely with the College of Policing, Home Office and MoJ/HMPPS in relation to policy

and practice input impacting engagement with minority communities as well as the APPG GRT affairs.

Established networks of national and international collaborations including the University of Bristol; Sheffield University, De Montfort University, Anglia Ruskin University, Coventry University, University of Leicester (Ansbro); Northumbria University, Middlesex University, Portsmouth University (Greenfields) and the University of Southampton (Clerk). PhD students (Palmer) and (Nweke) are also closely aligned to specialist networks in their field of research such as Hounds for Heroes (Palmer) and the Network of Religious Legitimizing Organisations (Nweke).

### **International Partnerships**

Since the last REF submission, UoA members have undertaken collaborations with partners at Corvenius University, Hungary; University of Seville; Charles University Prague; UNISA (Pretoria) and the University of Zagreb and Sondertorn University, Sweden (Greenfields) as well as the University of Johannesburg, South Africa; University of Nairobi, Kenya; University of Ghana (Clerk).

In this most recent REF period, Greenfields has been a Visiting Fellow at the University of Pecs, Hungary; University of Foggia, Italy and was awarded a competitive 4-month Lady Davis Fellowship as Visiting Professor at the Hebrew University, Israel as the first UK Professorial Fellow for several years. In 2021, Greenfields was invited to act as a specialist advisory board member to LSE on a longitudinal programme on young people from GTR communities, as a follow up to her advisory board participation in a programme of work undertaken by LSE in 2015-16 on life chances of young people from these populations.

### **Hosting Studentships/International Colleagues**

The UoA has over the REF period, hosted visiting Fellows and Lecturers from the University of Foggia; Tel Aviv University; Università Cattolica del Sacro-Cuore, Milan, Italy; Department of Social Studies, Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II; the University of Pecs and a PhD student on a Turkish National Scholarship (TUBITAK) based at the Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University

### **Journal Reviews**

UoA members regularly review for the following journals, indicative of markers of esteem/recognition of expertise (selected/exemplar titles): Journal of Social Policy, Community Development Journal; Cambridge Journal of Education; Youth Voice; Romani Studies; European Journal of Public Health, and also funding reviews for agencies including the European Science Foundation (School of Social Science); ESRC; National Lottery Community Fund; National Institute of Health Research; and Department of Health.