Institution: Keele University

Unit of Assessment: UoA20 Social Work and Social Policy

1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy

Context and Structure

This Unit of Assessment brings together a dynamic, interdisciplinary team of researchers, working in the areas of Criminology, Education, Media and Cultural Studies, Social Work and Sociology. The group's approach to impactful research activity is **theoretically informed**, **methodologically innovative** and **interdisciplinary**. There are 23.5 FTE staff located in the Schools of Social, Political and Global Studies (SPGS), Humanities (Hum) and Primary, Community and Social Care (PCSC) with collaborative links to the School of Psychology. The Unit continues a long and distinguished history of research excellence in social policy at Keele, and the principles that guide its work have been carried forward and consolidated since 2014 through the following three thematic clusters, discussed further below:

- **Life Course, Ageing and Health**
- **Communities, Identities and Mobilities**
- **Crime, Social Justice and Policing**

The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HumSS), the Keele Institute for Social Inclusion (KISI) and the Schools provide the **organisational structure** to deliver an environment that promotes the integration of interdisciplinary, applied and policy-relevant research and impact. During this REF period, research in Social Sciences and Humanities has been brought together under the umbrella of KISI. It is one of three institution-wide flagship Research Institutes, established in 2018, as the University implemented its strategic aim to deliver international excellence and impact in the focused research areas of social inclusion, global health and sustainability. The University's research institutes, together with the Keele Institute for Liberal Arts and Sciences (ILAS), are driving University-wide interdisciplinary collaborations in response to contemporary challenges. KISI's central aim is to tackle some of society's most pressing challenges relating to social inclusion through research and impact co-created with external partners, and operating at regional, national and international levels. The Institute has replaced the Centre for Social Policy, which provided the home for this Unit in 2014, and offers a more effective hub for cutting-edge interdisciplinary research, collaborative research development, public engagement and broad social impact addressing the ills of all patterns of social exclusion. Social policy impact and research play central roles in KISI. The Schools in the Unit are substantially supported by, and make a significant contribution to, activities in KISI. The Institute is led by the Faculty Dean for Research, Professor **McGhee**, and two of its initial three sub-themes ('Tackling Inequalities' and 'Supporting Communities') were led by senior staff in SPGS (**Lippens** and **Shain**). All UoA researchers are enrolled as members of the Institute.

The strategic operational organisation of research within the Faculty is managed by the HumSS Research Committee, in conjunction with School research committees, and with support from the University's Research and Innovation Support Enhancement (RaISE) team (see section 3).

Keele has appointed an academic lead for research integrity who is also the main contact for the UK Reproducibility Network. This post-holder leads Keele's network of embedded research integrity champions (in each Faculty) and works closely with the Project Assurance Research Integrity team to deliver the University's research integrity and reproducibility strategy. Faculty Research Integrity Champions ensure that there is a methodological and discipline-appropriate approach to research integrity through CPD training for current staff, as well as PhD students. Four Unit members currently staff the HumSS Faculty Research Ethics Committee, whilst **Kearon**, **Martens** and **Weston** served as members of the University's Central Research Ethics Committee during this REF period. Keele is currently establishing a network of Research Integrity Champions

at school level who will help further nurture the culture of research integrity and good research practice at a local level.

The School of SPGS is at the forefront of developing an <u>open research environment</u>. Research outputs are made openly available (this practice began in advance of the current REF policy) and ensures the 100% open access compliance for REF 2021. This School goes beyond the REF policy by also making over 31 book chapters and commentary pieces openly available for others to utilise. The School works with partners to seek external funding for open research and, where this has not been possible, effectively utilises Keele's research repository.

In terms of administrative priorities, recent University strategy has centred on refocusing research management within schools to develop a more rigorous approach to <u>performance monitoring and support</u> for individual research planning. Embedding annual research plans into staff development and appraisal processes is a priority development area for enhancing research culture into the next REF period. The new generation of researchers that are currently emerging in the Unit will benefit from existing expertise and a more rigorous approach to <u>research mentoring and engagement (see section 2).</u>

<u>Research and Impact Strategy</u>

As highlighted in REF2014, Keele's national and international standing in social policy research and excellence has been marked especially by a collaborative ethos and a sustained commitment to **interdisciplinarity, theoretically informed research, methodological diversity, and engagement with policy and practice**. Reflecting the University's strategic commitment to addressing contemporary challenges through interdisciplinary, critically informed and engaged research, these research objectives have continued as core objectives guiding research and impact during this assessment period. Through a focus on the Unit's thematic clusters and its achievements during this REF period, below we evidence how this strategic direction has enabled social policy research and impact achievements by:

   i)   building on the strengths of the REF 2014
   ii)   increasing the external visibility and impact of research
   iii) encouraging new multi and interdisciplinary research initiatives
   iv)   recruiting staff with strong research profiles and promise, whilst enhancing internal capacity building through mentoring and other forms of support
   v)   recruiting and supporting strong PGRs (for iv and v, see section 2)

1. Life Course, Ageing and Health (Bernard, Budds, Edwards, Foden, Head, Huang, Machin, Martens, McGhee, Pascal, Rosenfeld, Shain, Shardlow, Sirriyeh, Spolander, Wells) - Researchers in this cluster have built upon the strengths achieved in the previous REF through sustained research and impact work on the interconnecting themes of life course, ageing and health. All are major areas of social policy relating to: children and youth; ageing; personal relationships; education, care and marketization; food and health; and social work. Expertise crosses disciplinary boundaries **(Bernard, Foden, Martens, Rosenfeld)** as new and evolving collaborations with colleagues from the university's institutes, and from other UK and international universities, is leading to novel national and international collaborative initiatives.

Bernard's state-of-the-art research and impact on arts and ageing, presented as one of the Impact Case studies of the Unit, has been consolidated through continued partnership funding from Arts Council England/Baring Foundation, and with The New Vic Theatre and Age-UK North Staffs, whilst the regionally celebrated Live Age Festival continues as an annual high-profile event in North Staffordshire (https://www.liveagefestival.co.uk/). Through the annual Live Age Festivals and collaborative work with the New Vic Theatre, Bernard's work serves as an excellent example of impact capacity building in the Unit.

Martens heads the UK transdisciplinary research on household food practices on the EU Horizon2020 SafeConsume project, where her team (with **Foden**) is working closely with STEM scientists, social scientists, and European stakeholder partners (ranging from IKEA to Public

Health England), to make a difference by rendering food practices in Europe safer. The research design for understanding food practices is an example of an innovative transdisciplinary methodology that brings sociological research tools together with microbiological risk approaches. The application of theories of practices to domestic food and eating is also set to innovate interventions beyond traditional behaviour change approaches. She is collaborating with a team comprising of various partners designing safer tools for domestic kitchens.

Rosenfeld's pioneering multi-method research exploring the personal and medical histories and circumstances of older people living with HIV (funded under the MRC 'Lifelong Health & Wellbeing' programme) has brought sociological, medical and clinical perspectives together to address this neglected area of policy and practice. Rosenfeld's research on lesbian and gay ageing in relation to HIV has also enjoyed substantial media interest. Research, partnership engagement and impact in this cluster is focused primarily on the KISI theme of Tackling Inequalities.

Members of this cluster work on age-related inequalities (**Edwards**, **Machin**, **Rosenfeld**, **Shain**, **Sirriyeh**); gender (**Bernard**, **Budds**, **Head**); intergenerational and family practices (**Budds**, **Foden**, **Head**, **Huang**, **Martens**); race and ethnicity (**Shain**, **Sirriyeh**); care, health and disability (**McGhee**, **Pascal**, **Rosenfeld**, **Shardlow**, **Spolander, Wells**); sexuality (**Rosenfeld**), with an interest in the impacts of austerity and the manifestations of migration and sustainability in neoliberal market regimes.

2. Communities, Identities and Mobilities (Bernard, Bisht, Devadason, Edwards, Featherstone, Findlow, Gholami, Giraud, Hayes, Holohan, Howlett, Jones, Kailemia, Leach, Machin, Martens, McGhee, Parish, Poole, Sirriyeh, Shain, Xu, Zieleniec) - This cluster is the largest in the submission, bringing together academic staff and postgraduate research students from the disciplines of sociology, education, criminology, and media and cultural studies. Work has built upon the strength of the previous REF especially through a shared interest in developing theoretically engaged, methodologically innovative and policy-relevant approaches to cultural, political, economic and demographic challenges in the formation and dissolution of diverse communities and identities within the contexts of austerity and the movement and migration of people in different global contexts. Sustained, theoretically engaged work is evident especially in the authorships of academic manuscripts: 9 cluster members published single and jointly authored books. Research theoretically reflects upon, and methodologically engages with, psychoanalytic approaches (**Featherstone**); critical discourse analysis (**Holohan**, **Poole**); and with a range of cultural theoretical approaches on environmental crisis (**Bisht**, **Featherstone**, **Findlow**, **Giraud**, **Kailemia**, **Parish**). **Bisht** and **Giraud**, for example, are moving into the next REF with a British Academy GCRF funded project on storytelling for environmental change.

Members of this cluster are also active in research, engagement and impact centring on media and identity, with work that engages with media representations of Muslim, ethnic and race related (**Gholami**, **Giraud**, **Holohan**, **Parish**, **Poole**, **Shain**) and activist identities (**Giraud, Zieleniec**). **Poole** and **Giraud** have commenced a new and substantial AHRC-funded interdisciplinary project examining the dynamics of anti- and pro-Muslim online activism. The work is set to advice social media companies on how to deal with online hate speech, promising excellent future research visibility and impact.

Research within this cluster also converges on identities, migration and the experience of international communities (in contexts that include China, Ghana, Lebanon, Poland, Russia, Syria, and the US), with work that explores challenges for Polish migrants in the UK (**McGhee**); the lived experiences and politics of undocumented livelihoods in Manchester and the US (**Machin**, **Sirriyeh**); the identities of migrant workers (**Devadason**) and the experiences and practices of young Chinese persons who migrate to gain an education (**Xu**).

The relationships between communities, identities and migration in the context of education is a further distinct area of expertise, with colleagues working on citizenship education (**Findlow**, **Gholami**), internationalisation and globalisation (**Hayes, Xu**), and on the education of young people who experience migration (**Hayes**, **McGhee**, **Xu**). With a specific focus on reviving its arts and crafts heritage, bringing this into the present through a range of interdisciplinary initiatives

involving a breadth of local partners **and** stakeholders (B-Arts; New Vic Theatre), together with **Amigoni** and others, **Bernard, Bisht** and **Leach** have explored the meanings and history of pottery, design and local identity, and this work has been made externally visible through exhibitions, festivals and documentary film.

Others are investigating diversities of belonging, identity and experiences of exclusion in the Potteries through a focus on age (**Bernard**), food, austerity and children (**Edwards** and **Shain**), asylum seekers (**Holohan**), and Muslim girls (**Shain**). This work carries significant policy relevance in the broad terrains of regeneration, austerity, racism and migration, and has been actively disseminated through stakeholder seminars, workshops and the organisation of annual Keele Asylum Seekers Awareness weeks.

Much of the work in this cluster engages with the KISI theme Tackling Inequalities, with members of the cluster (**Edwards**, **Featherstone**, **Holohan**, **Martens**, **Shain**) organising and hosting the Tackling Inequalities conference (June 2019), the ESRC Festival of Social Sciences Unwrapping Food event (November 2018), the Cultural Politics of Debt workshop (May 2016) and the Life in the Margins workshop (May 2019).

3. Crime, Justice and Policing (Amietta, Corcoran, Day, Girling, Griffiths, Huang, Kailemia, Kearon, Lippens, Miranda, Naylor, Stott, Wells, Weston, Wilkinson) - Keele has a long and well-established record of producing high quality, innovative and sophisticated research in the fields of criminology, criminal justice policy, social order, community cohesion and resilience. The interdisciplinary team of researchers in this cluster has built upon REF2014 strengths, in particular, by enhancing external visibility and research impact through active development of key stakeholder networks with public sector and third sector agencies at international, national, regional and local levels and knowledge exchange activities in criminal justice. Two of the unit's three impact case studies are from this cluster (**Stott, Wells**), demonstrating excellence in building track records of partnerships with external agencies to produce highly creative and theoretically informed research with real world impact and significance. The cluster has benefited from sustained research income successes, gained from international and national research councils and charities, including EU Horizon2020, ESRC and Leverhulme (**Corcoran, Girling, Stott, Wells**), in addition to funding from a wide range of external partners, including HEFCE, the Home Office, the College of Policing, the National Roads Policing Intelligence Forum and the Road Safety Trust (**Girling, Lippens, Kearon, Wells, Weston**).

Research in criminal justice specialises in criminal investigation and technological innovation (**Miranda, Wells**), courthouse processes (**Amietta**), prisons and prisoners' experiences (**Corcoran, Girling, Henley, Lippens, Weston**), and risk prevention (**Weston**). **Day, Griffiths, Kearon, Naylor, Stott, Wells and Wilkinson** engage actively in the fields of social order, behaviour modification, partnership working and knowledge co-production, specifically applied in contexts such as disadvantaged communities and families, domestic abuse, war veterans, crowd management, and road safety and driver behaviours.

Research further specialises in social inequalities, marginalised populations and risk, and is evidenced by work on place-based exploration of everyday insecurities (**Girling**), immigration and local relationships (**Griffiths**), Brexit and disadvantage (**Kearon**), drug use and recovery (Weston) and road death (**Wells**). Work in this cluster is theoretically sophisticated, as demonstrated by **Lippens's** explorations into the relationship between criminological theory and philosophical debates about control and transgression and **Corcoran's** work in the field of critical criminology, and methodologically original, as demonstrated by **Girling's** ESRC-funded research, which is re-visiting an earlier research site, recasting the research design of the original study into a mixed methods, multi-platform investigation of the place and meanings of security in the social relations of an English town, capturing the embeddedness of the digital in practices and meanings of local security.

This cluster's activities are giving important shape and substance to KISI's Supporting Communities theme, not only through the active ways in which researchers are engaging

partnerships and collaboration, but also by initiating and organising capacity building events that benefit the UoA's broader research community.

Future Initiatives and Priorities

Our future research objectives have been influenced by Keele's strategic investment in three University-wide institutes designed to support multidisciplinary research and partnership development in the areas of social inclusion, global health and sustainability. Although we will draw through and consolidate our established research areas (as presented above) the unit's future research objectives have been designed to respond more effectively to key societal challenges, as presented in the following five challenge areas:

- Migration and diversity;

- Inclusive and sustainable governance;

- Security and policing;

- Inclusive education and skills;

- Lived experience and community innovation.

We believe that the five challenge areas will enable the consolidation of and future development of opportunities for building theoretical and subject-based expertise around migration, diversity, security, governance, education and community engaged research. As such the unit will continue to be well placed to lead on interdisciplinary research and knowledge exchange opportunities into the next REF period. As such these challenge areas coincide with the future trajectories and substantial capacity of the unit in policy and practice relevant research and impact, and by responding to future calls that address societal challenges, it will further enhance the integration of the unit's empirical and interdisciplinary research with impact and engagement on two fronts: international research and local/regional place-based research.

In terms of International research in the next REF period we will build on recent successes. The Unit's theoretical and methodological expertise is currently being applied to new interdisciplinary GCRF collaborations focusing on, for example, inclusive education for Syrian refugee children and young people in the Middle East (**McGhee** and **Hays**); environmental change and governance in India (**Bisht** and **Giraud**) and participatory psychosocial care approaches to mental health in Colombia (**McGhee** with **Cakal)** whilst **Martens** co-leads the newly emerging Keele Centre for Food Security aimed at exploring future funded research opportunities and developing interdisciplinary research and impact capacity.

In terms of place-based local and regional research we will build on our track record of RCUK and UKRI funding. For example, we will build on the RCUK Strategic Support to Expedite Embedding Public Engagement with Research (SEE-PER) project, (PI, **Amigoni**) and the KISI-Led UKRI Enhancing Placed-based Partnerships (EPPE) project, (PI, **McGhee)** to respond to BEIS's roadmap and 'place-based' priorities. We will build on the multidisciplinary and enhanced partnership development enabled by these projects to further enhance our research and knowledge exchange activities around inclusive education and skills development; food security; sustainable governance and the policing of vulnerability and difference in multi-agency contexts.

2. People

Staffing strategy and staff development

UoA20 consists of a multi-disciplinary and proficient staff group, with notable strengths in criminology, education, media and culture, and sociology, and an ambitious and impartial commitment to supporting and developing all researchers, at all stages of their careers. This commitment is commensurate with our stated objectives (listed in section 1). The UoA comprises 3 professors, 1 reader, 12 senior lecturers, 9 lecturers and 3 research fellows. It currently consists of 23.5FTE. Since 2014, when the Unit contained 30.10FTE, there have been significant staffing

changes. In order to strengthen the University's interdisciplinary research capacity in the areas of sustainability and global health, Keele's human geographers (4 in REF2014) have relocated into UoA14, with Keele's health social scientists (3 in REF2014) moving into UoA2. These changes have enabled social policy research and impact capacity to become more focused around the Unit's three research clusters in their relationship to Keele Institute for Social Inclusion (KISI) priorities. Amongst colleagues who have left since 2014, 9 have retired and 6 have moved to other research intensive HEIs (Nottingham, Liverpool, Goldsmiths).

Succession planning has focussed on supporting and developing researchers in the Unit. Since 2014, 14 promising new appointments have been made to significantly expand crucial areas of expertise. The appointment of **McGhee** (Professor of Sociology) as the Faculty Dean for Research and Director of KISI has enhanced strategic senior leadership, refocussing the Unit's expertise on impact, partnership and engagement. Recruiting promising ECR scholars has been especially prominent: 9 appointments have been made and all have completed or are successfully moving through probation, with two (**Giraud**, **Hayes**) already enjoying promotion to senior lectureships.

The research clusters have all benefitted from strategic investment, with Life course, Ageing and Health and Crime, Justice and Policing each gaining three staff members, and Communities, Identities and Mobilities expanding gaining 8 new members linked to targeted KISI priority areas, including austerity, migration, security and sustainability. To ensure consistency across appointments, alignment with strategic priorities and consideration of Keele's EDI policies, the School Research Directors and the Faculty Dean for Research are represented on academic appointment panels. Temporary contracts are avoided and turned into permanent positions wherever possible, and the Unit's associated Schools have pursued explicit policies in relation to this.

The unit's approach to staffing is underpinned by Keele's People Strategy. Career development of all staff is supported through the Annual Performance Review and Enhancement (PRE) process. A formalised research planning process feeds into PRE and annual individual research plans identify REF outputs, detail grant applications and highlight impact activities, whilst simultaneously offering input into mentoring, practical support, monitoring and probation processes. With due allowance for disciplinary differences, personal circumstances and career stage, research norms detailed in the University's academic role expectations - on grant bidding, the development of high-quality outputs, involvement in postgraduate training and supervision, seminar and conference organisation and attendance, and impact and engagement work - are embedded in the PRE process. Achievement in research has been a prominent factor in the promotion of female colleagues during this REF cycle. The unit promotes gender equality by encouraging female colleagues to engage with the relevant development opportunities offered by the University. Female colleagues have taken part in the Springboard programme and Aurora leadership development initiative and have benefited from women-focused promotion workshops and the female-only promotion mentoring scheme. This has proven to be very effective; the following female colleagues have all been promoted durig this REF period: **Martens** and **Poole** have been promoted to personal chairs in Sociology and Media on the grounds of international research leadership. Following research funding successes, **Corcoran** and **Rosenfeld** were promoted to readerships, with senior lectureship promotions going to **Giraud** (cultural theory), **Hayes** (Education), **Holohan** (Sociology), **Wells** and **Weston** (Criminology) for excellence in research, impact and engagement.

Researchers are supported in their research and impact activities by allocated time in workloads, research leave, mentoring, training, feedback, and funding to organise research development activities and to attend conferences. The management of dedicated staff research time is monitored through Keele's workload allocation model (WAM). Heads of School allocate a minimum of 20% WAM time to all staff with significant responsibility for research in their contracts. The Unit recognises and rewards staff for carrying out research and achieving impact by providing additional WAM credit (up to 40%) for those who make significant contributions in these areas.

All research-active staff who meet the threshold of expectations for excellent research

performance are eligible to apply for a semester's research leave on a one-semester-in-eight basis. ECR staff appointed to their first research-related academic post are eligible to apply from no later than the 7th semester after appointment. All leave is subject to approval and the specific programme of activities proposed for the leave is scrutinised by relevant Schools and the Faculty. Mentoring and support may be arranged as a condition of research leave, especially amongst mid-career colleagues whose research and impact work need advancing. All staff must provide a written report within 6 months of their leave and they are invited to report on their leave activities in a seminar to colleagues.

The Unit provides strong and effective mentorship (see below on ECR). Mid-career staff who request it can receive mentoring to support achievement of research excellence and are also able to access coaching. All staff, regardless of career stage, are encouraged and supported to enhance their research expertise through attending training courses both at Keele and externally. Since 2015, SPGS has held school-wide writing workshops focused on REF quality publishing, whilst **Xu** has initiated a successful and sustainable academic writing group for wider university staff. Induction for new academic appointments includes research planning, funding opportunities, and ethical and governance issues. To support staff development and integration into the research culture, all new staff are also invited to formally introduce themselves and their research to other members.

Early career capacity building

Early career colleagues – including post-doctoral researchers – are fully integrated into our research culture and play an active role in clusters and School-wide research events, including presenting their own research and contributing to the planning of cluster activities. Along with fair and transparent role and progression expectations and high-quality development opportunities, this explains how we successfully implement the principles of the VITAE Researcher Development Concordat. All ECR staff are allocated a mentor who provides advice on research. Research mentoring is guided by Human Resources policies in conjunction with the University's Institute for Innovation and Teaching Excellence (KIITE). Research mentoring processes that have been put in place, particularly around research planning, recognise the need to manage career trajectories both in the immediate, medium and long-term future. Through mentoring the careers of early-career researchers, the Faculty maintains a commitment to the sustainability of social policy research at, and beyond, Keele. ECR staff are allocated additional research time under the University's workload allocation model. Support for the career development of research-active temporary staff in Social Policy is also managed in line with the VITAE Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers. All research fellows are supported in developing their careers throughout their time at Keele. Like other ECRs, they receive mentoring and enjoy the same support as other research active staff in the Unit.

Research students

A key strategic aim during this assessment period was to recruit strong postgraduate research students and to successfully support them to completion. Our success in achieving this aim is positively supported by the evidence. A total of 288 PGR students were registered and 71 successful doctoral awards were made, completions increased from 8 to 10 awards per year, evidencing that we have built on the already strong profile demonstrated in 2014. Our completion performance sits 40% above the sector's average (based on 2014 data) and excludes postgraduate research awards made in human geography and health social science (returned in 2014 but not in 2021) and completions from interdisciplinary projects with first supervisors located in other UoAs.

Expansion in student numbers has been achieved strategically through various developments, including Keele's successful bid, in 2016, to join the ESRC North West Social Sciences Doctoral Training Partnership (with Liverpool, Manchester and Lancaster). Keele currently operates 5 of the partnership's 19 pathways, including Criminology, Social Policy and Social Work (CSPSW). Since 2016, Keele has received 7 standard studentships and 5 CASE studentships through this route alone. The Unit has successfully secured 2 CASE studentships within the CSPSW pathway

(**Wells, Weston**) and staff have been named on successful CASE applications made at partner institutions (e.g., **Wells).**

In response to the Unit's key strategic aim of theoretically informed research that engages with policy and practice, SPGS also runs a very successful Professional Doctorate programme which is taught inter-professionally across education, criminology, social work and health. In the first two years, professional doctorate students are on a taught programme within the School. Students' progression to thesis stage at the end of their second year is monitored by two internal examiners and the Research Degrees Committee. Once at thesis stage, professional doctorate students are monitored via interim and annual progress reports and subject to the same Code of Practice on doctoral degrees as PhD students.

There is a strong commitment to fully integrate research students at all levels of practice, to ensure that they benefit from an excellent working environment in which they do not only participate fully in the research cultures of Schools and the wider University but also engage in opportunities for broad-based skills development. The international community of research students attached to this UoA contributes to activities organised by research clusters, by Schools and Research Institutes, and in interdisciplinary research and engagement activities. Research students from SPGS and the Natural Science Faculty, for instance, collaborated with research-active staff in the organisation and delivery of the ESRC Festival of Social Sciences 'Unwrapping Food' event in 2018. Research students also organise their own events and present their research to peers and staff through a range of activities, including the School's work in progress seminars, the annual Social Sciences Graduate Symposium, the Keele Postgraduate Research Forum and the Institute for Liberal Arts and Sciences/Keele Doctoral Academy annual postgraduate conference. Research students also coordinate the journal 'Under Construction' and organise the activities of the Keele Postgraduate Association.

All matters concerning the recruitment, supervision, training and examination of research students are governed by the University's Code of Practice on Postgraduate Research Degrees. The Code is regulated and reviewed by Keele's Research Degrees Committee in conjunction with the Keele Doctoral Academy (established in 2020). Research students have a main and second supervisor, and it is normal practice to encourage career-young staff to act as second supervisors. Career-young staff may also act as main supervisor so long as they have a mentor with extensive supervision experience. All staff are required to undergo training before supervising research students. Training needs are identified at an early stage, agreed jointly by the student and supervisory team, and kept under regular review through the development of a Personal Development and Learning Plan (PDLP) or Training Needs Assessment (for ESRC students), which operates on an hours-based system. All students are required to attend a specially organised induction programme at the start of their degree. Training is organised around the Vitae researcher development framework, delivered through the Masters in Social Research Methods (SPGS), overseen by the Keele Doctoral Academy and through the DTP, and consists of subject-specific, research and generic skills training.

Student progress is monitored via annual progression reviews and 6-monthly interim reviews. The first doctoral progression is held after 10-12 months of study (20-24 for PT students) when the student prepares and presents a 5,000 words project outline to a panel of two colleagues not part of the student's supervisory team. Formal progression interviews are held between the student and the supervisory team at the end of the second and third years, with a report sent for consultation to the Faculty Postgraduate Research Committee. Further support and mentoring are provided by the student's supervisory team. Together these formal and informal arrangements ensure that students progress successfully through their studies and complete on time.

Research students can apply for the funding of individual research expenses, including specialist training courses outside of Keele and conference attendance, and for research development activities. Research students have access to shared office space and hot-desking facilities. The Claus Moser Research Centre provides a social and intellectual hub for postgraduate research students in the Faculty by hosting weekly social events and drop-in sessions.

UoA 20	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Total
PhDs	7	3	7	6	7	9	5	44
Prof Docs	4	4	5	2	3	5	4	27
Keele total	**11**	**7**	**12**	**8**	**10**	**14**	**9**	**71**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

As stated earlier, the Unit has an ambitious and impartial commitment to supporting and developing all researchers, at all stages of their careers, regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances. The Unit is fully compliant with University protocols for advancing women's and BAME careers, and for attending to work/life balance issues. The current demographic profile of the Unit reflects this commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in recruitment, career development and research support: 75% of the Unit's staff are female and 60% of new appointments made during this REF were BAME and non-UK citizens. Two colleagues identify as LBGT, including **McGhee** (Faculty Dean for Research. Director of KISI) who is a LGBTi role model. **Shain**, who is one of a few UK female BAME professors. Shain's academic career was shaped whilst working at Keele, where she was promoted to Professor in 2013.

The unit's championing of diversity is evidenced in our explicit messaging in job adverts, and colleagues involved in staff and PGR recruitment undertake mandatory EDI training. EDI training (including 'bullying and harassment' procedures supported by awareness raising and training) in part of our induction processes for new staff and PGR supervisors. Senior colleagues receive additional training, including unconscious bias training (now being rolled out to all). Our commitment to EDI is also embedded in our structures: the School has an EDI Committee (with an EDI Lead), which considers the EDI implications of decisions and procedures. The University has received a Bronze Race Equality Charter Award in 2019 and is working towards its Race Equality Action Plan. The University is recognised as a Level 2 Disability Confident Employer.

The university holds a Bronze Athena Swan Award. Evidence of our commitment to gender equality is the fact that two of the three professors in the Unit are women who have been internally promoted. There also exists an excellent gender balance in other academic positions. As discussed above, we have an excellent record of managing internal promotions consistently and fairly, and the university appraisal process ensures that candidates with the right profile are encouraged to apply. Whether staff are on full or part time contracts makes no difference. Female staff have been very successful in gaining research funding: all recently prestigious funded projects (see section 3) are led by female staff. In addition, two of the Unit's impact case studies have been developed by female staff.

The Unit has worked actively to achieve a positive work/life balance for staff and to be attentive to the needs of parents and carers. Examples include success with the University Academic Returners Fund, support for fractional appointments and replacement staffing when colleagues go on maternity leave. During the REF period, the Unit has supported four periods of maternity leave and two staff have enjoyed periods of paternity leave. In support of work/life balance for staff and PGRs, meetings and seminars are typically scheduled between 10am and 4pm, with acknowledgement that departures by 3pm may be necessary to meet the needs of colleagues with primary-school-age children.

All Schools in the Unit have EDI committees which report to their respective School Executive Groups, and the Faculty HumSS committee meets 4 times each year. All policies relating to research management are subject to equality impact assessment. Members of appointing committees, staff who carry out appraisals or are involved in working with staff in other ways, have been trained in equality and diversity issues, with periodic updates on legislative change.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

During this REF period, Social Policy successfully secured £2.15M in competitive research income. Ongoing and strong grant capture performance is evident in all areas, and the success rate of submitted grant applications in the Unit is above 30%. Significant successes include consortia funding received through EU Horizon2020 as part of EU research and innovation investment in SafeConsume (2017-2022) and MOCHA (2014-2018) (**Martens, Wells**). **Girling** gained substantial ESRC funding for a three-year project on crime and insecurity in everyday life, whilst **Poole** and **Giraud** have commenced an AHRC-funded study into anti- and pro-Muslim online activism (2020-2023).

Working closely with relevant stakeholders, the Unit demonstrates a strong trajectory of research funding leading to high quality outputs and impacts. Noteworthy here are **Bernard**'s consortia funding from the Arts Council England/Baring Foundation for Meet Me@Live Age and **Stott**'s ESRC funded research. Both have resulted in important impact achievements that are captured in the Unit's impact case studies. HEFCE, Home Office and College of Policing funding for The Police Knowledge Fund's 'Action Learning Plus' was received by **Kearon** and colleagues (2015-2017), and as evidenced in her Impact Case Study, **Wells** has received ongoing research and impact funding from a range of practice-based organisations over the duration of the REF period.

We are proud of the grant capture successes of the Unit's ECR cohort, demonstrating the effectiveness of our research mentoring strategy and internal financial support opportunities (discussed below). For example, **Xu** is co-investigator on a National Social Science Fund of China funded project (2018-2022), whilst **Hays** and **Xu** have been actively involved in a QR GCRF project on the education of refugee children in Lebanon. **Sirriyeh** received Leverhulme Research Fellowship funding for a project on undocumented youth and Foden has commenced a Leverhulme Early Career Research Fellowship. Finally, **Bisht** and **Giraud** are moving into the next REF with a two-year project funded under the BA Humanities and Social Sciences Tackling Global Challenges Programme entitled Storytelling for Environmental Change.

Overall, we have received research funds from a diverse range of sources, including: EU Horizon 2020; the UK Research Councils (ESRC, AHRC, MRC and the British Academy); various public bodies (e.g. HEFCE for England, now Research England); charitable foundations (Leverhulme); Local Government and Police Associations (Stoke City Council, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioners); Third Sector Organisations (RAC Trust); learned societies (Sociological Review Foundation; British Sociological Association; Association for the Study of Primary Education); and Central Government (Home Office).

These successes are embedded in, and outcomes of, a lively research and engagement culture stimulated and supported by a broad range of research and impact events, organised at Institutional, Faculty and Unit levels (see sections 1 and 4 for examples). In addition to our work to build capacity in research and impact, the strategic development of a dynamic and sustainable research culture in Social Policy is supported through the allocation of a range of internal support funds and activities, managed centrally and by the Faculty in conjunction with School research directors. During this REF, seed corn funding was made available centrally, targeting the key institutional development priorities of interdisciplinary research and GCRF network building, research development and impact generation. These priorities are further supported by Faculty champions and capacity building programmes. An additional Research Strategy Fund has operated at Faculty level to offer support for the organisation of seminars and workshops, research networks, pilot projects and pump priming activities, and impact development work, whilst colleagues have also benefitted from the project research fund operated by the Keele Institute for Social Inclusion (KISI) that has been more closely aligned to KISI and University strategic priorities. Sustainability in support is evident for instance in KISI's support in the development of an interdisciplinary research network on food security in 2018 and 2019, which is currently being consolidated in a University-wide Centre for Food Security. Finally, a budget stream supporting attendance at conferences and seminars has benefitted UoA staff. Staff have enjoyed in the region of £900 per FTE per year of internal funds offering support across the range of research and impact activities listed.

The strategic operational organisation of research is managed via the Faculty Research Committee, in conjunction with School research committees, with support from the University's Research and Innovation Support Enhancement (RaISE) team. In addition, Keele's PVC of Research and Enterprise chairs a Research Leaders' Network that operates as a communication forum for research and impact across the university, and the Keele Peer Review College, which offers support and feedback on research applications. The Peer Review College ensures that established procedures for managing grant applications and the submission of high-quality grant applications are in place within the Faculty, for instance, by encouraging good ethical review practice such that any potential issues are raised prior to funding applications being submitted. Together, this organisational infrastructure ensures that University and Faculty strategic research and impact targets are met, for instance, through monitoring defined key performance indicators (KPIs), staff performance (section 2) and research integrity (section 1). In this way, resources that build research and impact capacity and support the activities of staff and research students are deployed effectively and impartiality.

The Research and Innovation Support Enhancement (RaISE) team was established in 2017 and draws together professional services staff with expertise in research development, governance, integrity, ethics, contracts, public engagement, commercialisation and impact. The team provides support for the development of research and innovation projects involving Keele University and its external partners, and it takes a proactive role in ensuring that staff are kept informed of relevant funding calls, assisting in identifying the most appropriate funding streams for research ideas. Establishment of the RaISE team has enabled a joined-up approach to support for research, innovation and impact, helping us to improve the quality and effectiveness of our research proposals, implementation and impact.

A key research and shared resource at Keele the *Foundations of British Sociology: The Sociological Review Archive*. The archive contains materials, dating from the 1880s to the 1950s, written and created by key activists, opinion shapers and researchers associated with a range of early sociological societies and associations, including the Sociological Society, the Institute of Sociology and the LePlay House Press. The archive was of significant interest during this REF period, and was visited by equal numbers of scholars, from the UK and internationally (incl. US, Australia, Sweden, Hungary), working across the social sciences. It was also visited by the Guild of St George. In all, 14 publications – including two books and a PhD thesis – were published based on research of these materials.

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

Research collaborations, networks and partnerships

The establishment and maintenance of research collaborations, networks and partnerships at Keele is supported by the various internal funding streams discussed in section 3, enabling colleagues to build networks and partnerships by attending international conferences, organising seminars and project development workshops, and inviting visiting scholars. There is evidence of a wealth of international research collaborations ranging from funded research through to academic publications with international partners and reach. We have collaborated with universities from across the world, including Australia (incl. Brisbane, Griffiths, **Wells**, RMIT and La Trobe (Griffiths, **Martens, Pascal, Wells**), Asia (**Boylan, Hayes, Huang, McGhee, Shardlow, Spolander, Xu**) and the Middle East (**Hayes, McGhee, Rosenfeld, Shain, Xu**), Africa and Brazil (**Spolande**r).

Notable examples of our international activities include work by **Wells**, who launched and leads the *Roads Policing Academic Network* (RPAN), which is an interdisciplinary and international network of academics interested in roads policing research. It has 98 members from 50 institutions across 38 countries, with approximately 60 projects and collaborations generated thus far. Wells was invited to the launch of an Australasian branch of the network at Griffiths University, Australia, in July 2020, which was postponed due to Covid-19. Through her work on internationalisation,

global education developments and epistemic equality in higher education, **Hayes** also engages in extensive and ongoing international collaborative work across countries in the Middle East and Europe. She is executive editor of the international journal Teaching in Higher Education (IF 1.715) and was invited to deliver the opening plenary address of the Annual Conference on Inclusion in Higher Education, University of Pécs, Hungary, in 2020. Hayes is currently working in partnership with McGhee, the American University Beirut, the Notre Dame University of Louaize, and NGO partners (MACAM, MAPS) in Lebanon on how the non-formal education sector can support young refugees and their learning. **McGhee** has been Visiting Professor at Shanghai University of Politics and Law (2019-2021) in China, where he has delivered two keynote addresses at the Shanghai Womens' Federation Biennial International Conference.

We have also been active in collaborations and partnerships with HEIs and stakeholders across Europe, including the Nordic countries, Latvia, Germany, Luxembourg, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, France and Ireland (**Hayes, Martens, McGhee, Miranda, Poole, Shardlow, Spolander** and **Weston**). **Martens** has advised on the international research project of Diaz-Méndez (2013-2015) on Eating Out in Spain, is a member of the European Science Foundation College of Expert Reviewers and served as a member of the International Scientific Committee of the International Child & Teen Consumption Conferences in 2018, 2016 and 2014.

Interdisciplinary collaborations responding to societal challenges

Interdisciplinarity is a key ongoing strategic priority of the Unit, guiding our research and engagement, signalling our shared commitment to addressing societal challenges. Interdisciplinary ways of working are supported and encouraged at Keele, and the Schools represented in this UoA all bring distinct disciplines together. The University's Research Institutes actively support activities focused on the key societal challenges of social inclusion, health and sustainability. Keele Institute for Social Inclusion (KISI) funding, as discussed in section 3, is designed to facilitate interdisciplinary projects and collaborations with non-academic partners.

Much of our inter- and transdisciplinary activities engage with the societal challenges of social inclusion, where colleagues participate in research collaborations with HEIs and non-academic partners focussing on tensions and cohesion in communities, especially in relation to Brexit, poverty, ethnicity, migration and asylum. Media scholars in the School of Humanities (**Poole** and **Giraud)** are working on an AHRC-funded project on media representations of Muslims with **De Quincy** from Computing. **McGhee** is Co-I of the ESRC Centre for Population Change (CPC I, II and Transition funding) where, working on a range of projects, he co-led the migration strand (2009-2021). This work included an ESRC CPC-Compass (with Oxford University) Cross-Investment award and an ESRC *UK in a Changing Europe* project. **Featherstone** and **Giraud** have published key outputs that respond to social inclusion and environmental challenges, with interdisciplinary collaborations from law, film and cultural studies, philosophy, psychoanalysis, geography, sociology and bioethics. **Kearon** and colleagues in Criminology have collaborated with Keele social psychologists (**Stott**) on the development of improved mechanisms for knowledge exchange, knowledge co-production and research informed practice involving academics working in collaboration with the police and policing related partners. **Corcoran'**s work on the voluntary sector in criminal justice has resulted in a series of projects (ESRC seminar series, ESRC CASE studentship and a Leverhulme project) with collaborations across criminology, community development, civil society and social policy disciplines. The intersections between social inclusion and health are explored through interdisciplinary projects funded by AHRC and ESRC, with **Bernard** (social gerontology) collaborating with **Amigoni** (Humanities) on an RCUK-funded public engagement project and with **Ray** (social work) on a Leverhulme-funded project on experiences of ageing of the gerontology academic community. **Bernard**'s impact case study highlights the contributions to economy and society made through research and impact activities spanning several decades. **Rosenfeld** (sociology) has published research on HIV and Later Life, funded under the *Lifelong Health and Wellbeing* Cross-Council Program, with health scientists from the University of Westminster, the Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and Public Health England. And following successful development of transdisciplinary research tools investigating food safety practices, Foden and **Martens** have publishing several outputs with

European microbiologists and food scientists, whilst non-HEI partner IKEA is currently working on several product innovations associated with this work.

Other contributions to economy and society

Unit staff have interacted, engaged, and developed relationships with key research users, beneficiaries and audiences, developing impact from their research by establishing networks and organising workshops; by collaborating with non-HEI partners in outcome-focused research; by responding to invitations to present plenaries and public lectures; by serving as advisors; by hosting CPC activities; and by participation in media engagement activities. On a national level, and in addition to the examples provided in section 1 and the impact case studies, we have conducted funded research projects with The Food Standards Agency (**Martens**), Versus Arthritis (**Holohan**), Opportunity Area Stoke-on-Trent (**Hayes**), Stoke-on-Trent City Council (**Holohan, McGhee, Shain**), Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire (**Weston**) and we have provided advise to The Vegan Society (**Giraud**), the Higher Education Commission (**Hayes**), the Muslim Council of Britain, the Religion Media Centre and the Islamic Human Rights Commission (**Poole**), the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (**Wells**).

We have engaged with diverse communities and publics through the organisation of workshops and events, the creation of documentaries, films and exhibitions (**Bernard, Bisht, Leach, Rosenfeld, Zieleniec)** and by advising and writing for a range of news broadcasters, national newspapers and online discussion forums, including The Guardian, Times Higher Education, Discover Society, The Conversation, BBC Radio; Channel Four News, and Sky News. The Keele sociology and criminology blog featured 90 posts during the REF period and 11 articles have appeared in The Conversation.

Contributions to the discipline

Contributions to Professional Associations (HE): **McGhee** is a Trustee of the Sociological Review Foundation, whilst **Poole** serves as an elected member of MeCCSA Executive Board. **Budds** sits on two committees within the British Psychological Society and Head is co-founder and co-convenor of BSA 'Digital sociology' study group. **Head** also regularly submits entries for BSA Network magazine. **Hayes** was BERA abstract reviewer and **Weston** is a steering group member of the British Society of Criminology Vulnerability Research Network and the NW ESRC DTC's Researching risk work in young lives' network. She also organised a panel at the ISA conference (2018). The British Sociological Association funded two one-day seminars (£1000 each) organised by **Doherty** and **Xu**. We are members of international and national professional organisations, including: British Education Studies Association, British Society of Gerontology, European Association for the Study of Science and Technology (EASST), European Sociological Association, European Society for Rural Sociology, Feminist and Women's Studies Association (FWSA), Media, Communication & Cultural Studies Association (MeCCSA), International Association for Media and Communications Research, Society for the Social Studies of Science.

Research Citizenship related to review of research and research funding: **McGhee** was external REF reviewer for Social Policy for Northumbria for REF 2014, **Martens** is a member of the European Science Foundation College of Expert Reviewers (from 2019) and **Shardlow** was a member of ESRC Grant Assessment Panel B between 2014 and 2016. Members of the unit have reviewed research proposals for the following international funding agencies: Irish Research Council, Laureate Awards Scheme 2017/18 (**Hayes**); European Science Foundation; Research Council Flanders; Humanities in the European Research Area; Humanities and Social Sciences Panel (RGC) Hong Kong; the Portuguese Public Funding Agency for R&D; Strategic Research Development Grants, City University, Hong Kong. We also review proposals for the AHRC, the ESRC, Leverhulme, and the British Academy. **Bernard, Holohan, Jones, Leach**, **Martens** and **Rosenfeld** are all on the ESRC peer review college, whilst Martens and Shain have reviewed for the BA Knowledge Frontiers programme. **Shain** also reviews for the Society for Research into Higher Education and the Equality Challenge Unit.

Boards, editorships and reviewing work for journals and publishers: Colleagues serve as chief editors of the British Journal of Sociology of Education (**Shain**), Cultural Politics (**Featherstone**), Journal of Social Work (**Shardlow**), and Teaching in Higher Education (**Hayes**). Staff sit on 27 editorial and advisory boards, have reviewed papers for in excess of 100 journals, and we have reviewed book proposals and manuscripts for 19 publishers: Poole has provided sleeve endorsements for books published by Palgrave Macmillan and Routledge.

PhD Examining: Members of the unit have externally examined 14 international and 22 national PhD theses. Internationally, we have external examined for the University of Southern Australia (**Bernard**); the University of Technology, Sydney (**Martens**); RMIT, Australia (**Shardlow**); Deakin University (**Lippens**); The University of Peshawar (**McGhee, Shain**); the National University of Singapore (**Shardlow**); the University of Gothenburg (**Devedason**); the University of Antwerp (**Martens**); the National University of Ireland (**Pascal**); and the University of Stravanger, Norway (**Shardlow**).

External panels / committees (promotion and other): Featherstone sat on promotion panels for York University (Canada) for Associate and Full Professorships; **Martens** on a tenure track promotion committee at Wageningen (Netherlands) and **Poole** for McMaster University (Canada). In the UK, we have served as external experts on promotion panels at Aberdeen and Staffordshire University.

Personal esteem indicators: McGhee was awarded a Fellowship of the Royal Society of Arts for his contribution to Sociology in 2015 and he became a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in 2016. **McGhee** is also visiting professor (2019-2021) at the Shanghai University of Politics and Law, China, and **Shardlow** was visiting professor (2010-2016) at the Polytechnic University of Hong Kong. **Pascal** and **Poole** were visiting fellows at La Trobe (Australia) and University of Silesia (Poland). Featherstone and **Shain** presented semi-plenary lectures at the European Sociological Association conferences in Prague (2015) and Manchester (2019). International keynote and plenary invitations were received by **Shain** (University of South-East Norway, 2017); **McGhee** (Shanghai Women's Federation International Conferences in 2016 and 2018) and **Shardlow** (The Congresso Internacional de Serviço Social in Portugal and the How to Achieve Progress in Children's Welfare conference in Lithuania (2016). International lectures were delivered by **Corcoran** (France), **Huan**g (China, Taiwan, USA, Vietnam), **Lippens** (Italy), **Rosenfeld** (Israel), **Shardlow** (China), **Sirriyeh** (Australia) and **Weston** (Spain). Colleagues received invitations to present 6 keynote addresses to academic audiences in the UK (**Shain** at the Gender and Education Association Conference (2015), **Poole** at the University of Nottingham (2018), Wells at the international Law Enforcement and Public Health conference, **Xu** at the University of Manchester) and 16 lectures in UK HEIs (including SOAS, Birkbeck College, Kings College, Cambridge University, Edinburgh, Sheffield and Nottingham University) in the UK. **Martens** participated, by invitation, in the 'Methods for Researching Sensibilities' seminar organised by the ESRC National Centre for Research Methods Innovation Forum in Manchester (2018). We are proud that our ECR **Xu** was shortlisted for the 2017 British Journal of Sociology of Education Best Early Career Article.