

<b>Institution: Newman University</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: Social Work and Social Policy</b>
<p><b>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</b></p> <p>The Social Work and Social Policy UoA was established in 2012 to provide an inclusive, supportive and developmental space for colleagues at Newman whose research and scholarly activity was focused on aspects of social policy and/or social work (in its broadest sense). The Unit meets quarterly and has grown in size and strength significantly since its inception. The Unit's aim is to cultivate and produce critical research under the umbrella theme of social justice. We seek to impact on a range of real-world issues from education to health, youth issues and crime, with a focus on informing professional practice in these areas and enhancing the volume and quality of knowledge exchange and transfer into both the professional and public community.</p> <p>Unit members are grouped in seven, sometimes overlapping, research clusters that each seek to influence aspects of social policy in a number of separate, but related fields.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criminology, Criminal Justice and Law</li> <li>• Work with Children, Young People and Families</li> <li>• Youth and Community Work, Youth Studies and Informal Education</li> <li>• Critical Pedagogy</li> <li>• Early Years and Multi-Professional Practice</li> <li>• Health and Social Care</li> <li>• Educational Policy</li> </ul> <p>The unit includes researchers working under two of the university's research centres: The Children, Young Persons and Families Research Centre and the Romero Freire Research Institute.</p> <p><a href="https://www.newman.ac.uk/research/research-centres/children-young-people-family-research-centre/">https://www.newman.ac.uk/research/research-centres/children-young-people-family-research-centre/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.newman.ac.uk/research/research-centres/romero-freire-institute/">https://www.newman.ac.uk/research/research-centres/romero-freire-institute/</a></p> <p>The Unit is provided with a clear direction via Newman's Research, Scholarship and Enterprise Strategy 2014-2020 which oversees all postgraduate research students and the research activities of academic staff. The University sees the SWSP Unit of Assessment as a key internal body which can help build institutional strengths in a subject area that reflects Newman's wider commitment to social justice, whilst also providing a developmental space within which colleagues working in this area can be nurtured from early career researchers and developed into roles such as postgraduate supervisors. The University has allocated resources strategically to support staff development in the Unit and help to grow the Unit's research income streams. This has included supporting staff to develop funding applications for conference attendance, convene symposiums and to run internal seminar series. This institutional commitment continues and is seen as central to ensuring the environment and culture necessary for the university to progress towards a number of its stated goals, including the successful establishment of a mature, self-sustaining research base at the University and the gaining of Research Degree Awarding Powers.</p> <p>Originally conceived and convened by Dr Mike Seal, Dr Pete Harris and Allison Tatton, Governance of the unit rests with the Graduate School and is led by Professor Mairtin Mac an Ghaill (returned in the Education UoA) and Dr Mike Seal. Academic staff involved in the unit have, in the relatively short period since its establishment, built up a diverse and robust body of research outputs and outcomes that, with the support of the University's Research Centres, builds on areas of proven research strength. Unit outputs include journal articles, books and reports focusing on a range of theoretical, methodological, ethical, practice and pedagogical issues as applied to social work and social policy, with specific focus on areas of youth and</p>

community work, health and social care, most levels and aspects of education, social work, and crime and justice policy, whilst also making links to a number of related disciplines such as human geography and law.

Our vision for research is underpinned by the University's core values and its mission to make a positive difference to individuals and communities through the contribution of its staff, students, and graduates. The University's Research Strategy has focused investment funds on Units submitting to the Research Excellence Framework, whilst enabling early-career researchers to develop their capacity. The University encourages partnership and collaborative research with public and third-sector bodies, as well as fellow academics, on a range of real-world issues including education and well-being, heritage and culture, community and professional development. Newman additionally advocates research-informed professional practice across all subject areas, enhancing the volume and quality of international research and encouraging knowledge transfer into the regional community. While different areas have a research or practice focus, the University encourages and expects all academic staff to engage in advanced scholarship. At Newman, this means that scholarship is purposeful, well-founded and appropriately conducted; it produces meaningful results which are communicated effectively. It may involve knowledge creation, integration, sharing or application, as well as the development of ways of knowing in others. Such scholarship may issue in research publication but equally may find expression in other disseminated outputs and forms of public engagement. Research seminars are held throughout the year, some organized centrally or by Research Centres and some within subject areas and Faculties. Contributors to these seminars are a mix of University staff, research students, and invited speakers from other institutions. The University's Research Committee takes as its remit a strategic role in all aspects of developing and sustaining a successful research culture and research performance. The Committee's major function is to ensure that the University's areas of research strength and comparative advantage are protected and enhanced, that research potential is nurtured and that resources are strategically targeted to build an externally recognised research presence.

For the coming five-year period 2021-2025, Newman's institutional research strategy, and in turn the UoA's, will build on the current research plan while focusing on specific areas of implementation: an attainment of Research Degree Awarding Powers, research integrity, Open Research compliance, and the equal promotion of disciplinary, cross-disciplinary, and interdisciplinary research. The implementation of the UoA's and the University's research strategy is underpinned by the support provided by the Research Office and Graduate School, including: the maintenance of a University-wide repository and research data base; the preparation and provision for the Research Committee of up-to-date information on research performance in the University; coordination of all matters relating to postgraduate research students; oversight of the establishment and operation of the University's research centres; organization of a seminar programme bringing together researchers with internal and external speakers to debate research findings, discuss methodologies, and share academic insights; coordination of the University's links with relevant research networks; support for the administration of the University's forthcoming submission for Research Degree Awarding Powers.

Mirroring Newman university's distinctive commitment to transformational impact for social justice, the Unit also seeks to support and produce research/scholarship that makes a positive difference not only to society more broadly to the local community too. Working in partnership with students and public sector and third sector institutions, the unit has already developed (and intends to broaden) its relationship with local agencies and the community via innovative community projects such as the ReachOut youth and community project, and the Community Criminology project.

The Unit's stated remit is to:

- Via cultivation of consultancy and employer engagement, create further opportunities and funding for research, emphasising social enterprise as a means to enable staff and students to work collaboratively to tackle social problems and improve communities.
- Support the Children and Young Person and Family and Romero Freire Research Centres through support of funding applications.
- Seek to increase externally-funded research and evaluation projects, independently and in collaboration with partners in the UK and overseas, using community-based projects such as the Community Criminology and ReachOut project .
- Co-ordinate and prepare submission for periodic research exercises in the area of Social Work and Social Policy.
- Support members in developing outputs for the REF and more generally in developing their research interests and in producing publications.
- Act as a conduit for developing ideas for collaborative research and for dissemination of research through seminars and conferences via the Young People, Children and Families and Romero Freire Research Centres.
- To act as a link for the SWSP research area to the University Research Committee.

Fundamental to the University's Strategic Plan as a University with a Catholic Foundation is its commitment to the formation of staff and students. This is expressed in Newman's People Strategy 2015-20, which states the University's values and principles of organizational development: 'The University is committed to advancing equality of opportunity and eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to foster good relations between people from different groups which embraces and celebrates diversity in line with our values and principles' The University's research environment, community, and culture is supported by the Graduate School which has the primary responsibility for postgraduate research student training and social and intellectual integration while playing a key role alongside Faculties, Subject Areas, and Programmes in developing career pathways for successful research students. Institutional development and support for research students is provided by the Graduate School, while pastoral support and mentoring is provided by the Postgraduate Research Co-ordinators. In addition to attracting self-funding students, the University occasionally offers research studentships through a competitive bidding process, funded at the level of Research Council stipends. The University offers training to PGR students preparing for a career in teaching in Higher Education and opportunity is available wherever possible for students to gain in-class teaching experience.

Our commitment to formation includes the community of our research students and our approach to supervision is characterised by individual support as well as high-quality supervisory teams. We aim to create an environment that develops our supervisory capacity and enables our doctoral and MPhil students to reach their goals and realise their potential as early career researchers. Working with partners, as individuals or external supervisors, we aim to work within the Researcher Development Framework to enable our researchers successfully to make their own significant contribution to knowledge and to advance their own professional and career opportunities.

Research student training is provided locally and centrally. The central programme is overseen by the Graduate School and the postgraduate research coordinators. All research students have access to a dedicated PGR room for facilities on-campus and to help build community cohesion. All students are able to apply for an annual financial contribution to research training activities, printing is free, and supervision talks place in teams to ensure a range of expertise and continuity. Through our relationship with our research-degree awarding partner, research students also have access to the facilities, virtual and physical, available at Liverpool Hope University.

## 2. People

A significant proportion of full-time academic staff in the unit are active contributors to subject associations, learned societies and relevant professional bodies (see list below). The unit's ongoing strategic objectives include the facilitation of an environment where *all* members of the unit and other academic staff can develop a research profile, embark on and/or successfully complete doctoral study, connect with subject associations, deliver seminar/conference papers, and collaborate with researchers both within and beyond Newman, publishing and disseminating the results of research or advanced scholarship. All have some recent personal experience of research activity, acting as external examiners for research degrees, serving as validation/review panel members, and having contributed to collaborative projects with external organisations.

The unit regularly contributes to the PGR training programme delivered in partnership with Liverpool Hope University. All research students have access to a dedicated PGR room for on-campus study and socialising, which helps to foster community cohesion and build relationships across disciplines. Printing and photocopying facilities are available free of charge to all research students, and they have an annual allowance of up to 20 free inter-library loans. In addition, each student is eligible to apply for financial support of up to £150p.a. for research activities, including conference attendance, travel to libraries/archives, books and equipment. In addition, through our formal partnership with Liverpool Hope University, Newman research students have access to their facilities, both virtual and physical. Institutional membership of CREST also provides further opportunities for collaboration and networking with a wider PGR community, and for bidding for funding to support training and conference attendance.

All staff in the unit are engaged in research or other forms of advanced scholarship and are able to demonstrate achievements that are recognised by the wider academic community to be of national and/or international standing. The Unit is also committed to building a community of research students and high-quality supervisory teams. This includes developing supervisory capacity in the Unit that will attract doctoral and MPhil students. Going forward, the unit will focus investment on developing academic staff who are not currently engaged in research, practice, or other forms of advanced scholarship, and especially those from underrepresented groups in H.E.

Our specific staffing strategy for the Unit in the next 5 years will be to:

- Attract and grow new postgraduate researchers from the student body and target support in the shape of mentoring early-career researchers, recognising a wide range of research achievements;
- Support staff and students to develop successful research, social ventures and enterprises in partnership with others

The strategy includes a commitment to support and promote equality and diversity. As such the Unit also has a stated objective to:

- Grow the proportion of staff returned (especially those from underrepresented and BAME groups) to the next Research Excellence Framework;
- Target support at staff from underrepresented and BAME groups, especially those embarking on or completing doctoral study and those seeking promotion to academic leadership as Readers and Professors.

Newman University is a member of the GuildHE Research Consortium, previously the Consortium of Research Excellence, Support, and Training (CREST), and thus works in a network of over two dozen small and specialist institutions who collaborate in the provision of postgraduate resources, including an annual summer school, a shared repository, and close collaboration over a shared agenda with respect to research policy and practice.

<https://research.guildhe.ac.uk/about/>. Newman is also a member of the Cathedrals Group

association of fifteen universities, nearly all ex-teacher training colleges, all of whom share a common mission of service that includes a commitment to research which is of societal benefit and contributes to the public good <https://www.cathedralsgroup.ac.uk/>

### 3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Integral to the operation of the unit is a well-developed institutional infrastructure which oversees the research activities including the University Research Committee, the Research Degrees Subcommittee, and the Research Ethics Committee. These committees play a decisive role in all aspects of sustaining a successful and ethical research culture and environment, ensuring that the strength and capacity of the SWSP UoA is enhanced. The Unit's convenors have developed an infrastructure that stresses participatory decision making, collegiality and co-production, with an emphasis on support for early career researchers. This has led to a professional culture where staff and student potential to develop into active and reputable researchers is recognised and nurtured alongside the activity of more established and experienced researchers in the Unit.

This infrastructure is underpinned by the practical support provided by the Research Office and Graduate School, including a number of facilities pertaining to the Unit's research and research impact. The Research Office and Graduate School provides research administration and postgraduate coordination. The Research Office organises and runs the central Research Committee, research degrees committee and research ethics subcommittee. With representation from researchers across the Faculties and UoAs, the committees provide an infrastructure for disbursement and delegation of funds, research strategy and policy coordination, oversight of the PGR environment, as well as policies for, among other aspects, ethics, open access, and research integrity. The Office provides support for the administration of the Unit's submission to the Research Excellence Framework; maintaining a Unit research data base; and administrative support with the organization of seminar programmes and symposiums. The Unit has now supported multiple events (see below) that bring the Unit's researchers together with students and internal and external speakers. The Unit has also provided practical and financial assistance to academic staff in preparing research applications, providing advice on meeting funding eligibility criteria, supplemented with the help of the University Finance department for advice on costing and pricing,

Research support activity was also underpinned by a research bid writer funded by the University from 2014 to 2018. From 2018, research funding support was outsourced on a consultancy basis. This has provided information on grants and support for external funding opportunities as well as assistance to academic staff in preparing research applications, including advice on costing and pricing, meeting funding eligibility criteria, and submission of bids. The university has at times subscribed to Research Professional, Grantfinder, and other tools to support bidding and grant acquisition. Bid writing is supported equally by the Finance Department and the Graduate School to provide a system for full-economic costing, review and quality control, authorization, and submission. To seed-fund basic research and impact, the University's Research Committee has operated a number of grant schemes during the REF period. A good proportion of QR monies has been devolved down to Units of Assessment to support research eligible for the REF and this is managed by researchers in their individual UoAs. The University has additionally operated a scheme of negotiated sabbatical support for staff, who must identify clear and measurable targets to be achieved at the end of the sabbatical period. This has been supplemented by a Small Grants scheme; a conference support scheme; support for regular research seminars, research training workshops and inaugural-professorial lectures, and financial support for staff undertaking research degrees.



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

The Unit provides a fertile developmental space for research collaboration and the development of networks between teaching staff across several subject areas at Newman (Working with Children Young People and Families, Youth and Community Work, Education Studies, Law, Criminology and Early Childhood Education, Health and Social Care) as well as staff working in the strategic roles within the Directorate of Learning Teaching and Scholarship. Members of the unit have written, edited, and published journal articles, books, book chapters and reports that reflect this broad, cross-disciplinary research focus. These outputs provide a rich resource for a diverse audience: students, practitioners and policy makers working in a number of fields related to Social Policy and Social Work. For example, book publications include:

- Working with Vulnerable Children and Families.
- Responding to Youth Violence through Youth Work.
- Philosophy in Youth and Community Work.
- Participatory Pedagogic Impact Research: Co-production with Community Partners in Action.
- The Interruption of Heteronormativity in Higher Education: Critical Queer Pedagogies.
- Supporting children and young people in schools: a guide for foundation degree students.
- Nurturing Healthy Diversity in Church Schools.

As well as this diverse publishing activity, the Unit has supported several symposiums and seminars that seek to transfer knowledge to the local, national and international wider community. One entitled, "Religious Belief, Identity and Desistance" in January 2018 was attended by over 70 delegates and brought together academics, religious leaders, students, youth workers, chaplains and ex-offenders to consider the relationship between religious belief, identity and offender desistance. Speakers included high profile researchers working in fields cognate to one of more the UoA's research specialisms, such as Professor Ross Deuchar author of the book "Gangs and Spirituality: Global Perspectives" (2018, Palgrave MacMillan), which was featured on the BBC Radio 4 'Thinking Allowed' programme in the summer of 2018. This seminar has now been developed into a book proposal.

As well as regularly contributing to internal events and conferences members of the Unit have attended and delivered papers at a wide range of national and international conferences, such as: BERA, Advance UK, the Foundation Years Network, The Professional Association of Youth and Community Work Lecturers, SEDA, Conference of International Youth Work Transitions and General Federation of Trade Unions Annual Conference. The Youth and Community Work team, supported by the unit, hosted an international seminar on Teaching Youth Work in Higher Education including the Launch of the 'Sage Handbook of Youth Work Practice' which members of the unit then contributed to. The seminar was a result of a two-year international Erasmus + funded strategic partnership between HE Institutions in Estonia, Finland and Newman University. The seminar focused on sharing chapters and working methods and identifying inspirational moments in teaching youth work via a world café structure.

Other conference presentations include:

- Silencing Stereotypes about Weight: Bias, the female African Caribbean Body and the clinical encounter. BSA Medical Sociology Conference. Aston University, 2014 (Andrews).
- Research in the Liminal: Research methods to engage seldom heard communities. BSA Medical Sociology Group Event, 'Under-served' or 'hard to reach'?: Community and participatory approaches in health research. Coventry University (Andrews)
- Learning from the Liminal: Researching on health with African Caribbean communities. Blackness in Britain Conference, Newman University.2013 (Andrews)

- Raising the Issue of Obesity with Patients of Improving the Uptake of Weight management Clinics. Collaborations for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care Birmingham and Black Country Dissemination Event. University of Birmingham.2013 (Andrews)
- Strong, female and Black: African Caribbean women's understanding of body size and health. Weight Stigma Conference. University of Birmingham.2013 (Andrews)
- Tuned In: Using talk radio as site for health research. British Sociological Association Medical Sociology Conference. University of York.2013 (Andrews)
- The International Conference on Critical Education, Wroclaw, Poland (Seal)
- The 2nd International Conference on Critical Pedagogies and Philosophies of Education: Liverpool Hope University (Seal)
- Youth Violence, ESRC Seminar series, Brunel University, 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2015 (Seal and Harris)
- International Conference of Outreach Workers, Denmark (Harris)
- 2nd European Convention of Youth Work Brussels Centre for Youth Ministry's Annual Conference, Birmingham (Bardy)
- Royal Geographical Society, Annual International Conference (Adekunle)
- 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference in Children and Young People's Geography (Adekunle)
- European Youth and Generation Research Network Mid Term Conference (Adekunle)
- 'Human Rights for Looked After Children', *International Days*, Thomas More University College, Geel, Belgium, 2017 (Cronin)
- 'Care Leavers: Rhetoric & Reality', *Hidden Truths: Understanding Vulnerability in 21st century Britain*. Newman University, 2013(Cronin)
- He's shown me the road"? A psychosocial interrogation of the male youth worker as role model to young men involved in violence. *A Youth Studies perspective on the discourse of youth violence: BERA*. Nottingham Trent University 24/6/19 (Harris)
- "Engaging with young people in violent subcultures" *Gozo Youth Conference*, Malta 14/4/18 (Harris)
- "'Down with the kids': On-road youth worker identities and pathways to desistance" Gender, Violence and Antisocial Personalities, University of Manchester, October 2016(Harris)
- "'Down with the kids'? 'On-road' youth worker identities, and pathways to desistance. British Society for Criminology Conference, Nottingham, 8th July 2016 (Harris)
- "'Down with the kids'? 'On-road' youth worker identities, identification, recognition and pathways to desistance". Doctoral Conference, Newman University, July 7th 2016 (Harris)
- "Prepared to be unprepared? The Participatory-Action-Researcher as Jazz-Improviser". Troubling Research, Birmingham, 8th July 2016 (Harris)
- "Responding Meaningfully to Youth Violence through Youth Work" International Conference for Outreach Workers, Oslo, April 2014(Harris)
- Birth children of foster carers: adult birth children's perspectives, CoramBAAF, London, Feb 2018 (Tatton).
- Do we want to hear? Impact of fostering of the birth children of foster carers. – Presentation at University of Bristol, June 2017 (Tatton)
- Being brought up in a foster family: adult birth children's perspectives – Festival of Doctoral Research, Newman University (Tatton)
- Sons and daughters of foster carers: how they support looked after young people – Poster Presentation at Rees Centre, Oxford University, Jan 2014 (Tatton)

As well as the impact case studies detailed in this submission, members of the Unit have engaged directly in a wide range of impactful activities in the local community such as:

- The ReachOut Project <https://www.newman.ac.uk/about-us/student-recruitment-and-outreach/reachout/> is Newman University's outreach Youth and Community work project. Funded through the Aim Higher plus initiative (whose overarching objective is to increase levels of participation in H.E. from disadvantaged areas) ReachOut is configured into 2

broad streams of activity: Detached (street based) work in public spaces in surrounding wards and school-based outreach work. It involves a team of 2 youth workers and Newman University students engaging with some of the most socially excluded young people aged 13-19 in the local community.

- The Community Criminology project <http://www.communitycriminologyproject.co.uk>
- Measuring the Demographics of Service Users – Lozells Methodist Centre – a small participatory research project, examining the users of this centre and the impact that the service was having on the community.
- A partnership between Newman and the Centre for Chaplaincy in Education (CCE). The partnership is part of a new wider initiative to support and develop chaplaincy within schools, colleges and sixth forms, with a vision for every school and college to have a chaplain. The aim of the partnership is to research and design a nationally available programme of induction, support and continuing professional development (CPD) for chaplains in education. With this in mind, Newman University was identified as an appropriate educational partner as the University already offers an existing chaplaincy programme and therefore has the relevant skills and expertise to partner with the CCE and help the charity achieve its goals. The CCE has commissioned Newman University to complete research into the roles and skills of Chaplains and to work out the needs of Chaplains within education.
- Commissioning Together (2014-16). A two-year research project with Revolving Doors funded through Barking and Dagenham and Wandsworth Council. Training and supporting peer researchers to engage with and change the commissioning process.
- Detached youth work training and development of guidelines and policy for the Lithuanian Youth Ministry – helping the Lithuanian government develop guidelines for detached work, a service that has not historically existed in the area.
- The Voice of the Child in Care: A research partnership with Birmingham City Council with children and young people looked after by the city supporting a practitioner group, made up of practising social workers and trainee social workers.

Members of the Unit have also facilitated or participated in a range of other collaborative activities, including:

- An annual staff and student exchange with a Folk High School in Stockholm, Sweden (Harris)
- Writing of qualifications in Youth Ministry for Maryvale Institute, Birmingham (Bardy)
- An International study visit to Norway with Newman Youth Work students (Grace)
- Youth Work supervisors Training Course on Advocacy and Participation, Lithuania (Grace)
- Mapping of Youth Work Training event, Zagreb, Croatia (Grace)
- Capturing the Narratives of Youth Work Practice Rotterdam, Holland (Grace)
- Understanding how to promote Erasmus + Projects – Dublin (Grace)
- Reviewing and launching the new European Youth Work Portfolio – Brussels (Grace)

Unit members also belong to a wide range of professional associations and networks membership, including

- National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Health Services & Delivery Research Programme (Commissioned) Panel (McDonald)
- POYWE, Professional Open Youth Work in Europe (Grace)
- Christian Youth Work Consortium Executive (Bardy)
- National Citizens UK Council (Seal)
- Groundswell UK (Seal)
- Kenelm Trust (Bardy)
- Professional Association of Lecturers in Youth and Community Work (Grace, Bardy)
- Regional Youth Work Unit Working Party (Grace)
- Birmingham Voluntary Youth Service Council (Seal)



- National Youth Agency (Grace)

Unit members are currently external examiners at Leeds Metropolitan University, Bolton University, De Montfort University, Oasis College London and the YMCA George Williams College.

**Future direction**

The Unit now has plans to move forward with a repositioned and re-badged Children, Young People and Families Research Centre. This Centre will provide logistic and collegiate support to the growing cohort of active researchers working in fields related to Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice at the University.