Institution: University of Suffolk

Unit of Assessment: 20 – Social Work and Social Policy

1. **Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy**

Academic teaching at the University is based around four academic schools. Each school has its own academic focus that is reflected in its portfolio of courses. Our research activities are structured around our areas of distinctiveness and their associated research institutes and centres (see REF5a.1.1).

Although a relatively new university, we have quickly established a track record for excellence in social policy and social work research across a number of specialist areas. Our research profile also extends to other distinct areas, as we establish further key research institutes and centres. UoA 20 Social Work and Social Policy is the only UoA submission we are making to REF 2021 and, as such, consider our research in this area to be a key strength. The submitting unit includes staff from the School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Suffolk Business School and the Research Directorate. All our CAT A staff are members of a research institute and/or centre. Each of these are interdisciplinary and pan-university structures, creating an excellent research environment for all researchers, while bringing staff together.

Staff from the submitting UoA 20 – **Andell, Ayling, Dogaru, Gartland, Seal, Sinha** and **Thomas** – are members of the Institute of Social Justice and Crime (formerly the Suffolk Institute of Social and Economic Research). The institute includes two themed centres: Centre for Children and Childhood Studies (**Boggis, Clark, Coombs, Richards** and **Marsa Sambola**) and the Centre for Abuse Research and Evaluation (CARe – **Bond, Adisa** and **Tyrrell**).

Institute for Social Justice and Crime

Centre for Children
and Childhood Studies

Centre for Abuse
Research and Evaluation
(CARe)

The submitting unit's vision is to be an intellectual and operational vehicle that is committed to the development of transformational research. We explore new areas of enquiry from a transdisciplinary perspective, to provide real life solutions to key social problems. Staff from the submitting unit work with government departments, local authorities, health and social care providers, NGOs and policy makers. Focusing on one of our six distinctives, the **Institute for Social Justice and Crime** builds on our research strengths in this area. It informs our strategic approach to research in relation to UoA 20 Social Work and Social Policy, and we have developed a number of key specialisms in this field: including research on disadvantage and inequality; research on abuse and safeguarding, and children and childhood research.

Supporting our open and inclusive approach, as set out in our Code of Practice for REF 2021, staff in the submitted UoA for Social Work and Social Policy total 15 who, according to research interest, are broadly distributed into three specialisms:

1)	Insight into disadvantage and inequality	**Ayling, Boggis, Dogaru, Gartland, Seal, Sinha** and **Thomas**
2)	Research on abuse and exploitation	**Adisa, Andell, Bond, Dogaru** and **Tyrrell**
3)	Children and childhood studies	**Boggis, Clark, Coombs, Dogaru, Marsa Sambola, Richards** and **Tyrell**

We intentionally work collaboratively with public, private and charitable sector partners in our research programme, constantly evaluating service delivery to evidence 'what works'. Subsequently, relatively quickly, we have made significant regional and national impact by engaging effectively with commissioners, service providers and service users.

And so, to build on our successes to date over the next five years, we will:
- Provide effective support for our social work and social policy research programme post-pandemic
- Embed our use of research data to strengthen our research governance, evidence success and impact evaluation
- Strategically invest any QR funding resulting from this submission in new and emerging areas and support cutting-edge research

- Identify, grow and support new talent in important research areas to increase the number of CAT A staff to 60%
- Continue to develop and establish a world-class social justice and crime research environment
- Increase the number of PGRs to 100 (Social Work and Social Policy)
- Build on our new partnership with the University of Brighton to exploit new opportunities towards our application for Research Degree Awarding Powers (RDAP), especially in relation to widening participation internationally.

The unit's research defines and seeks to understand social problems and their impact. It has a strong focus on social work, especially in relation to safeguarding, social policy, criminology and criminal justice policy. The aim of the submitting unit is to respond to the research needs of our community. We have successfully achieved this objective and will continue to build on our contributions to research, knowledge and practice to address the pressing social problems that face our society, including:

- theory
- methodology
- empirical research
- ethics and values
- pedagogy comparative research
- research into international institutions and forms of welfare politics, policy and practice
- conceptions of crime and criminal justice.

Using a range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches, the unit considers policy and practice, governance and management, service design and evaluation of 'what works' in service delivery and use, as well as inter-professional relationships (**Andell, Adisa, Bond, Dogaru, Gartland, Thomas** and **Tyrrell**). For example, **Andell** conducted research (see REF3) on improving safeguarding practices for young people involved in county lines; **Adisa** explored effective interventions for victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse; **Bond** researched online harms (see REF3) and **Tyrrell** researched how young people can effectively contribute to policy making. A key element of the research programme has been to purposefully link with and in some cases, co-produce with a variety of stakeholders (public and private), professionals, volunteers, service users/participants and carers.

A significant body of the work produced by the submitting unit analyses, evaluates and provides critical insights into where the key dimensions of representation and identity intersect – particularly with marginal and/or excluded groups and communities in relation to gender, sexuality, 'race'/ethnicity, disability, age and migration/citizenship status (**Adisa, Ayling, Boggis, Coombs, Richards, Seal** and **Sinha**).

Institute for Social Justice and Crime
Supporting the University's Research and Scholarly Activity Strategy introduced in 2018, the Institute for School Justice and Crime drives forward one of the university's six areas of distinctiveness (see REF5a.1.5):

1. Health and wellbeing
2. Sustainability
3. Digital futures
4. Crime and social justice
5. History and heritage
6. Excellence in Education.

Our research active staff from all four academic schools and different disciplinary backgrounds are integrated effectively to fulfil our pan-university distinctives and drive our approach to interdisciplinary research. Attracting over £1M since 2015, the Institute for Social Justice and

Crime provides an innovative approach to interdisciplinary research and a high-quality evaluation service on domestic abuse, sexual abuse, online risk, social migration, youth justice and youth unemployment, informing real-world public policy. The submitting unit's interdisciplinary approach comprehensively works with national governments, local authorities, charities and private sector companies. We offer substantial research experience, cutting-edge expertise, a focus on delivering high impact findings which make a difference, and a passion for designing robust, efficient solutions. The research of the submitting unit plays a vital role in our University's aim to make a significant impact on our society. We work closely work with our external partners to deliver new insights and 'what works' findings for reaching potentially world-changing conclusions.

One example of how our research has made a difference to society is through the Better Policing Collaborative (BPC). Underpinned by the principle that good decision-making should be informed by the best available evidence, submitting unit staff (**Bond** and **Dogaru)** undertook a comprehensive programme of academic-practitioner collaborative research in 2015, as part of the BPC, and funded by the College of Policing. To help build sustainable capabilities to understand, critique and use research evidence to improve public safety and the use of resources in responding to crime, they worked with Police Forces and Police and Crime Commissioners. One of the work packages, by way of example, identified effective interventions for preventing and reducing domestic abuse in England and Wales.

Our strategy for impact
Our impact strategy supports staff in their activities, enabling positive results from our research efforts. We have, as outlined in REF5a.2.4, pioneered making our research reports publicly available (in an accessible format on the University website) alongside evaluations of 'what works', recommendations and toolkits to provide solutions to social problems and improve service delivery. We use social media tools to disseminate and share our research findings and to highlight specific examples of the impact that our research is having on society. Our external relations team work closely with academic staff from the submitting unit to effectively communicate our research findings and engage the public with our research programme, through public events, workshops, digital and print media.

As previously detailed, the submitting unit has intentionally worked with a range of key stakeholders to identify research priorities. We deliberately design social policy and social work research projects to identify potential impact (for example, using Theory of Change approaches that include objectives for impact). Staff from the submitting unit undertake stakeholder mapping activities to identify groups and organisations who may be interested in our research and actively plan for building knowledge exchange events and programmes. Subsequently, we consistently monitor and evaluate our research impact through stakeholder engagement and feedback. For example, in 2018 we explored perceptions of dementia through a multi-stakeholder event bringing together researchers, people living with dementia, carers, practitioners, public and voluntary organisations. Additionally, we also bring together 180 safeguarding professionals and educators annually for Safer Internet Day.

While our externally facing impact activities are monitored through the Research Management Group, we have embedded research impact into induction sessions for new staff, annual appraisals for CAT A staff, and provide training for staff with external experts. We host impact workshops and events with external experts to foster a collaborative, shared understanding of impact, how to best deliver it and how to evaluate it. All staff from the submitting unit have attended an impact workshop delivered by Professor Mark Reed and are expected to outline their plans for impact in their five-year research plans, with impact indicators included and agreed within annual objectives in appraisals.

Our costing model incorporates required funding for dissemination activity, public engagement and impact resourcing. The research directorate provides advice, guidance and resources to support staff in the submitting unit with monitoring and capturing impact. They also assist in obtaining testimonials and feedback from stakeholders, help devise dissemination strategies and impact evaluation frameworks. We encourage all our CAT A staff to put forward potential impact

case studies for consideration and adopt an open and transparent process for selection. As exemplified by our two impact case studies submitted for REF 2021, we have supported our staff in identifying the benefits of their research through external review and feedback. Staff from the submitting unit work collaboratively to provide feedback on how to evaluate impact and communicate it effectively.

We have also enhanced how we monitor and evaluate impact. To expand and maximise our impact, our more proactive and structured engagement with research users and beneficiaries is reported via a Research Management group to the Senior Leadership team. We have invested in resources and mechanisms both to support impact delivery (for example, on our website) but also to help in recording and communicating internally and externally what the impact of our research is. For example, our research is showcased in the University's Annual Review and the institute's Annual review document, specifically showcases the work from the submitting unit.

Staff from the submitting unit are actively involved with the university's research committee and governance structure, including the University Research Ethics committee. Staff from the submitting unit also lead the school ethics committees where our robust terms of reference, guiding principles and academic expertise ensure that we support our students to ethically engage in empirical research with children, prisoners, and vulnerable groups.

As a university, our vision (see 5a.1.4) is to be a community impact university. The research undertaken by the submitting unit concerning Social Work and Social Policy strategically supports the University's vision. In developing our area of distinctiveness in social justice and crime, the initial strategy for the submitting unit focused on providing **insight into disadvantage and inequality** to help provide understanding and effective solutions to identified social problems. As our body of research grew, it was clear that within this broader remit two specialist strands were emerging – **abuse** and **childhood** – with a number of staff researching in these fields. The research from the submitting unit, therefore, is clustered into three themes:

Disadvantage and inequality

Abuse

Children and Childhood
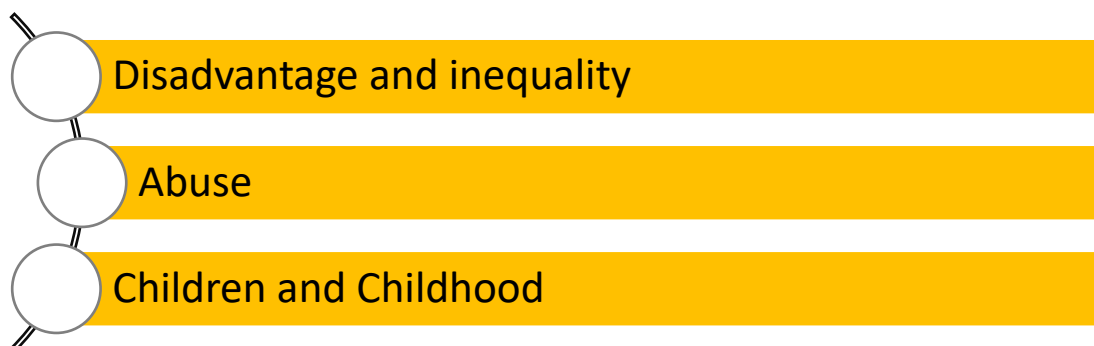
Theme 1: Insight into disadvantage and inequality

Our research on social justice, **disadvantage and inequality** has continued to grow and inform solutions to social problems. For example, **Dogaru**'s research, commissioned by Suffolk Community Foundation (a significant funder to Suffolk's voluntary and community sector, distributing more than £27,000,000 in grants to local charities and community groups across the county) demonstrates how deprivation manifests itself across Suffolk to highlight the concept of 'hidden' needs. Also challenging hidden disadvantage, **Thomas**' research analyses the impact of reforms (designed to address economic and demographic challenges in England) on the current reform agenda as it threatens care service quality for older people, outlining improvements to the way in which services might be organised. This work has been highly influential in health and social care management, focusing on responses to the 'wicked' problems caused by economic, demographic and social pressures.

In overcoming disadvantage, our focus on **social mobility** is key to understanding inequality. Leading developments in this field with work on STEM, race, migration and queer pedagogies are

Gartland, **Ayling, Sinha**, **Adisa**, and **Seal**. The insightful body of work they have created showcases the importance of ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality in understanding contemporary experiences of identity in late modernity within an increasingly globalised society. Our work in this field (see REF2) is making important contributions to the debates in widening participation. This supports our reputation as a widening participation university, reflecting our position of being ranked third in the country by HESA for the proportion of students from low-participation backgrounds. Our programme of empirical research has led to new insights: on the role of student ambassadors to inspire young people to follow careers in engineering, science and other STEM subjects (**Gartland**); how heteronormativity in higher education can be interrupted and resisted (**Seal**); how Nigerian parents use the international secondary education market, privilege and elitism to retain social standing **(Ayling)** and has sought young people's perspectives and marginalised voices within this discourse to debunk anti-migrant arguments **(Sinha).**

Theme 2: Research on abuse and exploitation

The growing body of research specialising in understanding the nature of and effective responses to abuse, grew out of the volume of abuse research the University undertook in the first few years of independence. **Bond** analysed offending rates across five police forces and a comprehensive evidence review of interventions to respond to, prevent and improve reporting rates of domestic violence in the UK. **Adisa**'s work has further developed the University's reputational expertise and links to policy efforts in improving and strengthening the evidence base for 'what works' in tackling such crime. The unit's work on migrant survivors is helping to improve our understanding of the vulnerabilities migrant communities face concerning domestic abuse and how we might best respond to this. This work has been commended by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. With respect to prevention, **Adisa**'s research on domestic abuse perpetrators is contributing to the knowledge base on working with men in community-based settings towards addressing their behaviour. The University hosts the Domestic Abuse Research Network (DARNet) established in 2019 to support knowledge exchange and collaborative research on domestic abuse. Members representing 17 UK universities contribute to the network, alongside four police forces, county councils, statutory sector social care services and the voluntary DA sector.

Having established a substantial body of work on online risk, **Bond and Tyrrell**'s research on online abuse and harassment has included ground-breaking insights into young people's experiences with social media, sexting, revenge pornography and how to more effectively safeguard vulnerable groups online. This programme of work led to funding from OfS (formerly HEFCE) for research on Digital Civility in UK universities, which informs the UUK guidelines for Changing the Culture: Tackling online harassment and promoting online welfare. This work supported Amnesty International researchers to investigate experiences of gender-based violence online and, working with the Marie Collins Foundation, their research on effectively supporting children after online sexual abuse and image-based abuse forms one of our impact case studies (see REF3).

Both our impact case studies relate to safeguarding. **Andell**'s research (see REF3) highlighting the criminal exploitation of vulnerable children and young people involved with "county lines" has shaped policy and guidance at local and national levels to enable a more effective response to this problem. The work underpins new approaches in professional practice and training in child and adolescent safeguarding.

Bond, Dogaru and Tyrrell have undertaken pioneering work with helplines. Working closely with UK Safer Internet Centre, **Bond** and **Dogaru** carried out the first evaluation of the national Revenge Porn Helpline, with **Bond** and **Tyrrell** providing the follow up study in 2018. **Bond** and **Dogaru** also produced the research for Child Helplines International on the awareness of 116 111 across Europe in 2017.

Dogaru, Bond and **Adisa**, working in partnership with Survivors in Transition, have produced a programme of research on the impact of **child sexual abuse,** benefitting survivors in getting their

views heard, while educating key stakeholders. In a world that rightly demands proof of purpose, we have been able to create a robust evidence base – not only for use with commissioners and stakeholders but for other organisations supporting survivors of childhood sexual abuse – to use as leverage for funding to better support survivors. The work has also been used to inform and amend professional practice with survivors as a psycho-educational tool.

Our specialisms in creative research design and effective knowledge exchange is underpinned by the rigour of scholarship together with the provision of high-quality research and evaluation for statutory and non-statutory agencies located locally, nationally and internationally. Which is how we have built on our inter-disciplinary research specialisms on sexual and domestic abuse, digital rights, and undertaken policy-focused research to effectively safeguard victims and prevent abuse.

Theme 3: Children and Childhood Studies

The submitting unit has built a substantial body of research in relation to children and childhood (see REF2). The work is supported by an interdisciplinary centre that acts as a catalyst and facilitator for research, education and training, policy development, media engagement and community awareness. The research based on the interdisciplinary study of children and childhood at regional, national and international contexts stems from the successful and high-profile work of interdisciplinary academics across the University to bring together the diverse disciplines that study children's lives. These include sociology, health studies, disability studies, social policy, education, anthropology, and psychology. It builds upon the successful International Childhoods Conference (2013, 2015, and 2017), the online journal Childhood Remixed, and a growing community of postgraduate and doctoral students.

The work of **Richards, Clark** and **Boggis** has driven the rapidly developing field of childhood research to advance methodological conversations about what constitutes ethical research with children. Their extensive body of work includes those messy spaces of traditionally taboo topics, such as research on intercountry adoption **(Richards)**; childhood sexuality **(Clark)**; disability **(Boggis)**; race **(Ayling** and **Sihna)** children's perceptions of death **(Coombs)**, youth justice and inclusion **(Tyrrell)** and adolescent mental health **(Marsa Sambola)**. As such, the centre has demanded a prominent place in the global agenda for childhood research extending theoretical, ethical, and methodological conversations into new territories that can inform contemporary practice, policy and academic debate.

New areas of research activity include children's mental health, decolonisation of education and childhood research, and supporting young children in school experiencing bereavement.

New directions

As a submitting unit, we will continue to ensure that our interdisciplinary research strengths have a clear focus, identity and presence, to further encourage research collaboration both within the university and with other external partners. As our research culture develops, we will appoint research leaders to drive and develop new research themes. For example, we have an increasing body of work across the university on LGBTQI+, and decolonisation of education curriculums. These leaders will work in partnership with staff at all levels to consolidate existing research strengths and develop new opportunities for synergy and collaboration across the University and externally. We will continue to support and encourage excellent research that does not align with current themes to encourage new ideas and areas of interest. We will, however, agree performance indicators for the research themes, which acknowledge and respect different research arenas, taking into account different research models. These will be monitored through the University Research and Enterprise Committee, using their assessments to inform decisions on the life span of each theme.

In support of the wider organisational goals for achievements in the next five years, the submitting unit will be:

- significantly strengthened with the new Professorial appointment for leading the Institute for Social Justice and Crime, and the appointment of a business development manager to identify, support and maintain new partnerships and research opportunities
- investing the HEQR funding to engage further in long-term strategic planning for research as it relates to social work and social policy
- doubling our income from partnership working and externally funded research
- strengthening our track record for high-quality research internationally
- establishing a M-Res programme
- supporting the achievement of Research Degree Awarding Powers
- supporting our staff to achieve a critical mass of Category A (60%)
- building a more substantial submission for UoA 20 for the next REF, supporting staff to develop high quality research outputs, extensive knowledge exchange activities and impact case studies.

Public engagement

We have invested in a stronger web presence for our research, especially in relation to social work and social policy. We have also highlighted our partnership approach with examples of how our current research projects are making an impact. Research related to social work and social policy draws a wide range of academic colleagues, potential collaborators, and policy makers so we ensure that the University's strength related to research in this field is actively promoted and disseminated in good time with the wider public. In addition to the public engagement (outlined in REF5a.2.4), staff from the UoA engage with the public at a variety of events including:

- **Voice of the Service User** events which actively bring together academics, professionals from statutory and non-statutory organisations and people in the community who rely on public services to consider how to better engage with service users to improve outcomes in an increasingly challenging environment
- **Safer Internet Day** (organised by the joint Insafe-INHOPE network with the support of the European Commission) is celebrated by 170 countries worldwide on an annual basis. The event brings academics, police, social care, educators, parents and children together on our campus to raise awareness of emerging online issues and current concerns. It enables all stakeholders to join together to make the internet a safer and better place for all, especially for children and young people
- Three **Focus on Survivors** events brings together 180 commissioners, policy makers, academics, professionals, volunteers and survivors of childhood sexual abuse to discuss how to bring about whole system change by ensuring that the voice of the survivor is heard.

As outlined in REF5a, this UoA follows the wider institutional strategy and compliance with concordats on open data, research integrity and public engagement. Linked to our public engagement and impact strategy, we have also purposefully been pioneering an agenda of publishing nearly 20 research reports, evaluations and toolkits publicly, available on the university website since 2015.

2. People

Our staff

The submission for UoA 20 includes 15 staff, two professors (**Bond** and **Seal**); five associate professors (**Boggis, Dogaru, Gartland, Richards** and **Thomas**); six SLs (**Andell, Ayling, Coombs, Clark, Marsa Sambola** and **Sinha**) and two ECRs (**Adisa** and **Tyrrell**).

The majority of the submitted staff are based in the School of Social Science and Humanities, with one staff member from Suffolk Business School (**Thomas**) and two from the Research Directorate (**Bond** and **Tyrrell**). The staff base for the submitting unit is a stable one. Staff are retained and supported through promotion, and only **Clark** has left (in 2019) with **Seal** being recruited into the

submitting unit in early 2020. All research active staff have individual, five-year research development plans. These are used to outline research and publication activity as well as identify support and professional development needs to help realise these outputs. These plans are used in the annual appraisal process, aiding the discussion and planning of research across the submitting unit. The University introduced protected research hours for research active staff (see REF5a.2.1) and for this submitting unit, a research mentoring programme is in place where mentors have received training to effectively mentor colleagues and support their research development. The voluntary mentoring programme is separate from managerial arrangements and provides less experienced research staff with support and encouragement from more experienced colleagues. All staff in the submitting unit hold a mentor role to help other staff members develop a personal research strategy, plan and targets. They provide constructive feedback and act as a critical friend, helping their peers to monitor the achievement of targets and outcomes. Reading and commenting on draft papers for publication is expected, as well as offering advice and guidance on suitable journals in which to publish. Working with the Research Directorate, they additionally provide guidance on funding opportunities, as well as (as appropriate) collaborators, and comment on draft grant applications. The mentoring scheme is having a positive impact for all staff and fosters collaborative research endeavours across the submitting unit with the highest level of ethical integrity.

As outlined in REF5a.3.3. and REF5a.3.4, the University has the HR Excellence in Research Award and a highly comprehensive programme of research training opportunities. All staff in the submitting unit contribute to the Research Development Programme and have access to the weekly workshops, seminars and events. We have developed an annual progression process in line with the Suffolk Academic Model (see REF5a.2.1) where staff can apply to move from CAT B to CAT A, supported by their individual research plan which identifies training needs accordingly. All staff in the submitting unit have access to funding to attend conferences, and access different forms of development activity, including personal study, online learning opportunities, internal and external courses, workshops, plus planned research activity and experiences.

Additionally, we have adopted a collaborative 'round table' approach to bid development where all the people with relevant expertise build bids and share their knowledge to increase collaboration and cultural competence across the submitting unit. There is a weekly drop-in surgery where staff can meet with the AD Research and the Research Development Manager to receive advice and support with their research ideas. There is a very active, thriving research seminar programme where staff and PhD students come together to present and discuss research and an explicit recognition and celebration of research achievements which are widely publicised.

In the last few years, staff from the submitted unit have been supported through:

- The introduction of a Workload Allocation Model (WAM) to ensure all research staff have protected time for research, which also acknowledges that high quality research outputs and developing research bids require resourcing
- New working practices that promote research time and are flexible enough to support impactful outcomes, respecting different approaches and disciplines
- Using funded research projects to support buy-behind for teaching and for funding potential PhD research
- A programme of support for ECRs and those currently CAT B (see REF5a.2.1) wishing to become Cat A, including 75 hours protected research time on the WAM
- All staff have 18 days protected time for research and scholarly activity
- The new mentoring programme
- Seminar series
- Dedicated funding for external staff development and conference attendance.

100% CAT A staff (as defined on census date) aligned with UoA are being returned to REF 2021 in accordance with our Code of Practice. The 15 CAT A staff in the UoA 20 constituted 52% CAT A (on census date) staff across the university as a whole, demonstrating that the UoA is by far the

strongest at UoS. We were granted exemptions for eight other UoAs due to the small number of associated FTE. Staff in the UoA Social Work and Social Policy come from a range of backgrounds, research expertise and experience and we are very proud that we have been able to submit such a body of excellent research outputs. Membership of research institutes and centres is open to all and 100% of CAT A staff are members of an institute, actively contributing to the research agenda. The submitting unit doubled the number of CAT A staff (autumn 2020) and also made senior appointments to strengthen the research expertise and leadership. **Seal** was appointed a Professor of Social Mobility and education early in 2020. He is leading the evaluation of our Access and Participation plan and research on LGBTQI+. A new professorial position as Director of the Institute for Social Justice and Crime was approved in 2020. Our revised policy of only recruiting research active academics with PhDs is helping to strengthen the research culture, increasing our research activity and capacity to supervise PGR students. Over the past 12 months we have had new CAT A staff in Psychology, Education, Childhood Studies, Law and English. These academics are all research active, building funding applications, producing publications and taking leadership roles in some of our newly created research interest groups.

Postgraduate Research

Ours is a growing, thriving, multi-disciplinary postgraduate community. With the support of our validating universities (University of Essex, University of East Anglia and since 2020, the University of Brighton) the School of Social Science and Humanities has played a leading role in the development of postgraduate research culture. The school now supports 34 PGR students – nearly half the PGR population at UoS – with the other PGRs in the three remaining academic schools. In 2017, the School of Social Science and Humanities introduced and piloted a 1-2-1 support programme to assist PhD applicants develop their proposals and applications to study with us. This project was specifically designed to assist applicants from a widening participation background. As outlined in REF5a.1.1, we are, as an institution, exemplary at supporting WP students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and in this project, we extended this expertise to PhD applicants. Each applicant was invited to meet the school PhD programme leader; talk informally about their proposed research; receive detailed advice and feedback on their proposal; be guided towards specific reading to build their knowledge around proposed method, methodology and ethics, and given access to literature to support the building of their proposal. All applicants involved in this project were successful in their applications. All of these PGR students have since successfully passed their progression board and are part of our growing PGR community. Having proved to be successful in supporting applicants to improve the quality of research proposals, the scheme was subsequently rolled out across the institution. The school is supporting 10 fee-waiver scholarships for PGR students, and we anticipate growing the PGR numbers in Social Work and Social Policy to 100 in the next five years.

Of the 15 staff in the submitting UoA, 10 supervise PGR students. All PGR students have a supervisory team consisting of at least two members of research active staff and benefit from an individualised annual review board, chaired by the school ADR to advise on progress. In addition to the comprehensive research development programme provided by the Graduate School (see REF5a.3.4), all new students have a school specific induction to their PhD programme. As members of the school, students join and contribute to the monthly research seminar programme, receive and contribute to the school magazine, and have access to specific methodology support from academic colleagues across the school. Staff also contribute their specific knowledge and expertise to the PGR workshops organised by the Graduate Office.

Equality and diversity

Staff demographics	University context
13% of submitted UoA defined as ECR at REF 2021 census date	
100% UoA 20 submitted staff are on permanent contracts at REF 2021 census date	
93% of UoA submitted staff returned with no known disability; 7% disability declared at REF 2021 census date	Compared to overall staff profile of 5% who have a declared disability
Gender of submitted staff FTE returned are 53.84% female and 46.16% male	Compared to overall staff profile of 64% female and 36% male
67% of submitted staff returned as White British; 20% BAME and 13% White other	Compared to overall staff profile of 81% identifying as White British; 7.6% as BAME and white other at 7.9%

University of Suffolk's recruitment and selection process is a partnership between People and Organisational Development and the school or department. As outlined in REF5a.3.2, the school supports the University's Equality and Diversity Policy. Staff from the submitting unit promote equality and diversity within the school and across the university, advancing equality of opportunity for all (for example, through membership of Senate and other relevant committees and groups) including all groups with protected characteristics for both staff and students. All staff undertake mandatory online EDI training every three years. Applications for and successful progression to SL/Associate Professor are evaluated, and since 2015, there is a similar success rate for gender and ethnicity. We ensure that our admissions processes for PGR are equitable and we actively provide opportunities and access events and channels to a broad, diverse range of students. Our experience of being a widening participation university (see REF5a.1.1) ensures that we are mindful of the different needs of different students at all levels, including postgraduate. In line with our institutional values and mission statement, we offer open, recruitment and admissions experiences to welcome potential students, and foster a positive relationship with future students from the outset. We recognise that a diverse student and staff body brings with it a range of skills and experience which adds to the PGR experience and improves satisfaction.

Currently our PGR profile for PhD students studying social work and social policy is:

83% Female: 17% Male
White British 83%: BAME 11%: White other 6%

We actively review and refine our practices to implement equitable admissions practices. The PGR committee includes PGR representation from the school to ensure that we are open, respectful and responsive to a diverse student body. On an ongoing basis, we monitor the range of applications by gender, ethnic group, sexual orientation, disability and age to identify areas where discrimination could potentially occur.

The school actively addresses any equality, diversity and inclusion issues identified by the Staff Survey and PGR feedback, and we regularly solicit staff views and feedback through the School Executive and the PGR committee. Staff from the submitting unit supported the action plan's development for the concordat of HR Excellence in Research Award (REF5a.3.3.), they have devised and recommended measures in support of the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion objectives and will be actively involved in the forthcoming application for Athena Swan.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

The University's Research and Scholarly Activity Strategy (see REF5a.2.1) sets out how research income opportunities are sought and supported. We have a dedicated research office and finance team who work with staff in the unit to support and advise on developing, costing and managing research grants. The research development manager provides fortnightly 'drop in' surgeries for staff in the submitting unit and supports both the Associate Dean for Research in facilitating interdisciplinary approaches to bid writing, as well as the peer review process for applications.

The success of the strategy is evidenced by our sustained record of successful research funding. From being a new university in 2015, staff from the submitting unit are responsible for generating over **£1M in income** since the University gained independence – 57% of the total research income for the University as a whole (See REF5a.4.1). This Unit has returned HESA research income of **£1,068,892** including funding from HEFCE and the College of Policing; HEFCE/OfS Catalyst funding; UKSIC; UK Government Equalities Office and the Royal Society of Engineering,

Our stakeholder engagement model with statutory and non-statutory organisations significantly contributed to our success in securing this amount of income when we have not been eligible for QR funding. We have purposefully sought a diverse range of funding sources as we have built and established our research profile for social work and social policy. We have developed a collegiate approach to developing bids, supported by the research office, peer review with staff, and work with colleagues in the Finance directorate, to ensure a time efficient process for approving bids.

The submitting unit has specialised in creative research design and effective knowledge exchange, underpinned by the rigour of scholarship and the provision of high-quality research and evaluation for statutory and non-statutory agencies located locally, nationally and internationally. We have built on our inter-disciplinary research specialisms on sexual and domestic abuse, as well as digital rights, and undertaken policy-focused research to effectively safeguard victims and prevent abuse. We have worked with a range of statutory and non-statutory organisations, including the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Amnesty International, Government Equalities Office, UUK, OfS, West Midlands Police, the Co-Op, Nominet Trust, Beat, Childnet International, the Marie Collins Foundation, Child Helpline International, Youth Offending Service, Royal Academy of Engineering, RSA, Comic Relief, the Home Office, Get Safe Online, Internet Matters, the Revenge Pornography Helpline, the Better Policing Collaborative, HEFCE, the College of Policing, Nominet; Survivors in Transition, Suffolk Constabulary, Norfolk Constabulary, Office of Police and Crime Commissioner, Suffolk County Council, Norfolk County Council, Anglia Care Trust, Iceni, and Surviving Economic Abuse.

Percentage	Statutory and non-statutory research partners by category
81%	UK central government bodies/local authorities, health and hospital authorities
12%	UK charities
2%	UK other sources
1%	UK industry
1%	UK research councils

The submitting unit is further supported by a network of social policy and social work visiting professors and senior fellows, each of whom actively contribute to the research programme, collaborations and funding applications. Since 2015, the submitting unit has built up a network of eight visiting professors and 14 visiting fellows who contribute to research, PGR supervision, seminars and collaborative bids, distributed across the different foci of the unit:

Research focus	Number of visiting professors and fellows
Criminology and policing	6

Sexual, domestic and online abuse	8
Childhood and youth	3
Social policy, social work inequality and disadvantage	5

Staff from the submitting unit are based at our Ipswich campus in the state-of-the-art waterfront building. We have invested across our campus to create environments that showcase the latest teaching and research facilities. All staff have a desk, networked PC, phone and access to a printer in open plan, shared office spaces. The design of the waterfront building where staff are based lends itself to collegiality, with seminar spaces, kitchen facilities and smaller meeting rooms. PGRs have dedicated shared office in the library – with a kitchen area, and comfortable seating, as well as office space and equipment.

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

Staff from the submitting unit advise policy makers, commissioners and service providers – both statutory and non-statutory – in the UK and overseas. They are active across the academic research community, providing reviews for leading journals, funding panels and professional bodies. Our staff are already actively contributing to the research base of social work and social policy, the economy and wider society.

National and international collaborations:

Our academic staff are continuously involved in a number of national and international research projects:

Bond was scientific advisor to the Scientific Advisory Board German Consortium Health Literacy in Childhood and Adolescence (HCLA) 2015-2018. Co-ordinated by Bielefeld University, the consortium consists of four partners (Bielefeld University, University of Duisburg-Essen, Robert Koch Institut Berlin, University of Education Freiburg) funded by the Ministry of Education and Research investigating general, mental and e-health literacy of children, adolescents, families, and professionals working in education, health, and social care.

Bond and Dogaru's research significantly contributed to the **Better Policing Collaborative** (BPC) led by the Centre for Health and Justice at the University of Nottingham's Institute of Mental Health. The BPC is a consortium of universities: Birmingham, Derby, Liverpool, Manchester Business School, and University of Suffolk alongside Skills for Justice (the national sector skills council) and Crest Analytics, their commercial partner. The BPC works with police forces and Police and Crime Commissioners to build sustainable capabilities to understand, critique and use research evidence to improve public safety and resource use.

Andell leads UoS research on gangs and is a member of the **International Eurogangs Group**, consisting of leading European and American scholars researching gangs and troublesome youth groups. Researchers within this network have been working together for more than 15 years to develop and apply a common framework for comparative research, based on standardised methodological instruments and a common research design.

Adisa, Bond and **Tyrrell** lead the **DARNet** network hosted by CARe, University of Suffolk. The network currently has 186 members, including researchers from University of Essex, Coventry University, University of Exeter, Lancaster University, UCLAN, Centre for Criminology, University of Oxford, University of Roehampton, Birkbeck, University of London, Warwick Law School, University of Bedfordshire, Bournemouth University, University of Sussex, Brunel University, Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge, University of Northampton, and four police constabularies (Suffolk, Norfolk – including OPCCN – Cambridge and South Wales).

Journal editorship and preparation:

Staff review for a range of social work and social policy journals. **Andell** is a reviewer for the International Journal of Addictions, Safer Communities, MPDP Social Sciences, and the Journal of Social Services. **Thomas** is a reviewer for the Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, Journal of Health Organisation and Management, and the European Journal of Business Research Methods. **Boggis** reviews Disability Studies Quarterly and is an editor of Childhood Remixed. **Seal** is an editor for the International Journal of Open Youth Work, Youth and Policy, and an editorial board member for Workability New Internationalist imprint. **Richards** was Special Editor of Genealogy's special edition 'Children and Childhood through a Genealogical Lens'. **Sinha** is a reviewer for the European Journal Cultural Studies and Qualitative Research, and **Bond** is on the editorial board for Sage Open (Sociology); reviewer for Media, Crime and Culture, New Media & Society, and the Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education.

Service to professional associations or learned societies:

Seal was convener of Post Compulsory and Lifelong Learning Special Interest Group, British Educational Association, 2020; Sexualities Special Interest Group, British Educational Association, 2014-2016; 'Religion and Sexuality: Where are we now?', Sexualities Special Interest Group Seminar, British Educational Association, in Sept 2020; and 'Challenging Heteronormativity in and through Youth and Community Work', Youth studies and Informal Education Special Interest Group Seminar, British Educational Association, in Sept 2020.

Andell is a member of Alcohol Drugs and Crime, All-Party Political Group; Advisor to Regional Organised Crime Unit; Metropolitan Police County Lines Team; Expert Advisor to Welsh Government (Health and Care) and currently a member of the National Independent Advisory Group EQUAL, to input into MoJ and YJB policy, with regard to the Young and Lammy recommendations on disproportionality of BAME groups in the CJS.

Boggis is a member of the CEOP Education Consultation Group and Consultant to the Down's Syndrome Association.

Bond was a member of the advisory Board Internet Matters (2015-2019) working collaboratively across industry, government and with schools to reach UK families with tools, tips and resources to help children benefit from connected technology smartly and safely, alongside BBC Own it. She is an invited member of the UK Council Internet Safety (UKCIS) Evidence Group, which provides UKCIS with a critical and rigorous account of the relevant research. It includes representatives from academia, government, NGOs and industry, and meets regularly in order to identify, evaluate and commission new research relevant to child internet safety. Bond is also Chair of the National Ethics committee for the NSPCC.

Richards is an invited member of the East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust's ethics committee, developing ethical responses and strategies that enable the trust to ethically respond to demanding, changing and very challenging circumstances about the treatment of patients in their care.

Gartland is a member of the strategic board for NERUPI (a community of practice for those seeking to reduce inequalities in higher education access, participation and progression; over 60 member organisations share expertise and explore new approaches to evaluating the impact of

interventions) and a member of the Research and Evaluation Alignment sub-working group for Engineering UK and the Royal Academy of Engineering.

Gartland was awarded the Memorial Trust Travelling Fellowship in 2015 and **Gartland** and Smith (2018) Supporting progression to HE: the role of colleges and vocational courses published in Education + Training, was selected by the editorial team as Highly Commended in the 2019 Emerald Literati Awards.

Peer review and support to research councils:

Bond, Seal and **Andell** all review for the ESRC; while **Bond** is also a reviewer for the NHIR, The British Council Newton fund, The Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (the German Research Foundation) and the FWF (the Austrian Science Fund).

Key notes:

Staff from the submitting unit have provided invited keynote addresses including for example:

Andell's keynote addresses to the *Gangs and County Lines Public Policy Conference*; the *Cuckooing National Housing Conference* and the Gangs and *Missing Young People Public Policy Conference* in 2018 and **Ayling** was the invited keynote speaker to *BERA REE SIG annual writing conference* in May 2018.

Bond has been the invited keynote speaker for national and internation conferences including, for example, *Insafe*, Vilnius, Lithuania (2014); *Digital Lives and Vulnerable Young People*, Tavistock Clinic, London (2015); *Half a century of ICT in Education Meio século de TIC na Educação,* Universidade do Minho, Braga, Portugal (2015); *Click: Path to Protection Conference,* London, (2015); the Health Literacy in Childhood and Adolescence at Bielefeld University (2016); Royal College Psychiatrists Annual Scientific Conference, University of Nottingham, (2017); *Public Policy Exchange Reinforcing Child Protection Online: Minimising Risk, Boosting Digital Resilience,* London (2018); *What works in Safeguarding students online,* Office for Students, London (2018); *Public Policy Exchange Reinforcing Child Protection Online: Minimising Risk, Boosting Digital Resilience,* London (2018); *Tackling online harassment in Universities – adopting an holistic approach, UUK* annual conference (2019); JISC international Security Conference (2019 and 2020); *Tacking Discrimination and Harassment across Higher Education Conference* (2020) and *UUK Technology Mediated Abuse Webinar, (2020).*

Gartland was the invited keynote speakers at the NERUPI network event in 2020; the LEAPS in partnership with SCAPP (Scotland's Community of Access and Participation Practitioners) webinar event *Working with student ambassadors and volunteers in Widening Participation* in 2020 the *UK and USA University STEM outreach practices; discourses and identities. Narratives of Widening Participation*, SRHE (2018) and the *Terminology of Widening Participation*, OU (2015).

Sinha provided the keynote address ate the *BSA Cities, Mobilities, Place and Space Plenary* in April 2019 and *New Hierarchies of Belonging* at SOAS, Centre for Migration and Diaspora Studies in 2014. **Thomas** was the invited speaker at the *Beyond Participation, the ethic of care and emancipatory research* funded by the Israeli Science Foundation in Tel Aviv, 2019 and at the 5th Finethikon conference at KU Eichstatt (Germany) *Ethical Globalisation? Relational Ethics and the Migrant Worker.*

Conference organisation:

UoS hosts a **Safer Internet Day conference** annually, organised by the joint Insafe-INHOPE network, with the support of the European Commission over the last 10 years. Safer Internet Day is an annual campaign supported by the technology industry, such as Microsoft, Apple, Twitter,

Snapchat and TikTok, in conjunction with the European Commission. The annual event at UoS has directly reached over 1,600 professionals to date.

The Centre for Children and Childhood Research has hosted a **biennial International Conference on Childhood** since 2013. This conference attracts childhood scholars and high-profile keynote speakers from over 25 countries. Conference papers are published in our in-house journal *Childhood Remixed* and our forthcoming edited volume *Critical Perspectives on Research with Children,* where international scholars from our conference write reflexively about their research with children.

We have also established an interdisciplinary conference programme focused on the methodologies, methods and practices of **storytelling**. Our first conference held in 2018 attracted international delegates as represented in the forthcoming edited volume *Stories, Storytellers, and Storytelling.* Our second conference in this programme is scheduled for 2022.