**SOCIAL SCIENCES AT LEEDS**

**UNDERSTANDING AND INFLUENCING TODAY’S SOCIETY**

Social scientists at Leeds are addressing some of the most important challenges of our time. Leeds researchers are engaging in research that is influencing policy and practice in diverse areas including population ageing, growth and migration, social justice, economic prosperity, climate change, insecurity and global politics.

The breadth and depth of our research expertise, together with our interdisciplinary approach, and our capacity to build productive external partnerships enables Leeds academics to be aligned with the University’s Strategic Plan, in particular contributing to Leeds’ reputation as an outstanding research university through producing world-class research that delivers knowledge with impact.

In collaboration with research leaders across the University, the LSSI team is advancing the implementation of the ambitious Social Sciences Research Strategy, approved in 2014, which is aligned with the University’s Strategic Plan. Our aim is to produce ‘knowledge with impact’, that shapes policy, public debate, and professional practice. We also aim to advance the integration of social sciences methodologies and concepts across the social sciences and beyond.

This strategy is being driven by the LSSI team, which includes Deputy Directors, Professor Paul Routledge, Professor in Contentious Politics and Social Change (Environment), and Professor Jennifer Tomlinson, Professor of Gender and Employment Relations (Leeds University Business School), supported by the LSSI Co-ordinator, Sophia Kennedy and Support Assistant, Susan Darlington.

Adam Crawford, Director, Leeds Social Sciences Institute

“There is a need to shape policy and public debate in our society. Social scientists at Leeds have a wide range of expertise, distributed across six faculties, and addressing key societal issues, such as:”

Jo Johnson, Minister for Universities and Science

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**What makes us distinctive**

There are currently over 300 social scientists at the University of Leeds with a combined research income of £1.36 million. The quality of social sciences at Leeds is reflected in the assessments achieved in the Research Excellence Framework 2014. In terms of research impact across the social sciences at Leeds, we are ranked amongst the top 10 universities in the UK, with particularly strong performances in law, business and management services, politics and international studies and social work and social policy.

In terms of the quality of research (as measured by overall grade point average) the University was ranked 15th with over 79% of the submission judged to be world-leading or internationally excellent.

Our combination of scale, breadth and quality is one of our key strengths. Our academics are passionate about applying their research findings to develop new ideas, skills, and to contribute to major issues facing society, such as healthcare and wellbeing, ageing populations, climate change, economic growth and sustainability.

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I’d like to thank Professor Jennifer Tomlinson, Professor Paul Routledge, Professor Adam Crawford, Susan Darlington and Sophia Kennedy.
RESEARCH EXCELLENCE WITH IMPACT

Delivering outstanding research with lasting impact is at the heart of Leeds’ Social Sciences Research Strategy. Our portfolio includes large-scale, prestigious projects that have attracted major external funding and achieved significant impact, including:

- Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy – www.ccccep.ac.uk
- National UK INDEMAND Centre – www.ukindemand.ac.uk
- Financialisation, Economy, Society, Sustainable Development (FESSUD) project (fessud.eu), led by the Business School, is currently the largest social science research project funded under Framework 7
- £7.2 million HEFCE-funded Catalyst Fund Project: N8 Policing Research Partnership led by Leeds to develop a new programme of research and knowledge exchange to inform future policing policy, developing and testing innovative approaches to policing and crime reduction. www.n8prr.org.uk
- Case studies on these pages show the breadth of impact achieved by our social scientists, from influencing policy, to directly usable outputs, knowledge translation and public engagement.

INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

One of our key strengths is the ability to make connections across and beyond the social sciences, bringing together academics from a range of disciplines to advance our research thinking around particular problems. This approach supports the University’s strategic focus on multidisciplinary research and is reflected in numerous collaborations:

1. BI ULD (Infrastructure Business models, valuation and Innovation for Local Delivery), a partnership between Engineering, Business and Environment, funded by the EPSRC and ESRC. www.research.ncl.ac.uk/build
2. EPSRC funded Innovation Knowledge Centre in Regenerative Therapies and Devices, involving academics from the social sciences in partnership with Medicine and Health and Engineering – www.medical-technologies.co.uk
3. ESRC funded Consumer Data Research Centre, a collaboration involving academics from Business and Environment. www.cdcrc.ac.uk

Leeds also has a reputation for investing in world-leading, sector-facing, interdisciplinary networks. Seven of these are established: Health, Water, Food, Energy, Culture, Cities, and High Value Engineering.

Ensuring sustainable infrastructure

SuRe Infrastructure brings together researchers and projects with a common interest in the links between infrastructure, sustainable energy and resource use.

A number of projects are already producing impacts, including the iBUILD (Infrastructure Business models, valuation and Innovation for Local Delivery) project, funded by a £3.5 million grant from the EPSRC and ESRC, and with £1.8 million support from industry and government agencies. Drawing together experts from three universities – Leeds, Newcastle and Birmingham, iBUILD focuses on the networks of roads, energy, water, waste and ICT which affect our social, environmental and economic wellbeing. An iBUILD/Leeds report coordinated across four faculties at Leeds has influenced infrastructure UK, part of HM Treasury, and is cited in HM Treasury’s Green Book supplementary guidance used to support effective decision-making in infrastructure spending.

Also delivering significant impact, is an iBUILD report by Steven Hall and Katy Roelich, identifying ways in which local electricity supply could transform our energy system and offer alternatives to the ‘Big Six’ energy suppliers. The Government’s Department of Energy and Climate Change has used the report to update national energy strategy and the Association of Public Sector Excellence is using this work to support decision to support development of municipal energy suppliers.

See sure-infrastructure.leeds.ac.uk for more information.

Understanding patient experience

Advances in understanding cancer at a molecular level are leading to new treatments, but also to profound changes in the experiences of patients undergoing treatment and participating in research programmes. Clinicians need to be able to keep pace with these changes and understand what it means to be patient in the ‘post-genomic era’.

New funding by the Wellcome Trust will enable sociology researchers at the Universities of Leeds and Edinburgh to explore these issues, focusing on where and how patients feature in cancer research, clinical practice, public health, service reorganisation and advocacy work.

“Our aim is to study patient and professional experiences to gain insights that can be fed directly into the design of services,” explains Anne Kerr, Professor of Sociology at the University of Leeds.

The researchers will work closely with the 100,000 Genomes Project, set up by Genomics England to establish a new genomics medicines service for the NHS.

Contributions to methodology

We also have an impressive array of methodological skills – Leeds hosts one of the existing six NCRM nodes in geo-spatial analytics: TALISMAN (School of Geography). Our expertise in the management of large data sets and quantitative methods are also underscored by the recently awarded ESRC Consumer Data Research Centre. Other notable strengths in research methods include realist evaluation methods to evaluate social and health policy and the analysis of longitudinal qualitative data pioneered via the Timescapes project.

Data analytics management

The Leeds Institute for Data Analytics (LIDA) draws together researchers from across the University in interdisciplinary projects that explore ways to access, protect and exploit Big Data. Within LIDA, the Consumer Data Research Centre is working with private and public organisations to open up new data resources to researchers. The data, which are generated by retail and service organisations as part of their daily business processes, can be used to understand the needs, preferences and behaviours of consumers. Researchers within the CDRC are looking at ways that further value can be extracted from these data sources so that they can be used to benefit businesses, government and society.

The Centre, which is directed by Professor Mark Birkin, received £5 million in funding from the Economic and Social Research Council as part of ESRC’s Data Investments. It is run in partnership with University College London, and the Universities of Liverpool and Oxford.

See cdcrc.ac.uk for more details.
Co-ordination of large, multidisciplinary research grant applications

LSSI supports the development of large interdisciplinary research grant applications in response to research council calls. This is especially for larger grants and cross council initiatives where novel world class multidisciplinary approaches are required and where substantial institutional support is needed. A recent success is the ESRC funded Consumer Data Research Centre on Big Data.

Beyond the University, the Institute also has strong links to the NB Social Sciences Research Partnership, a collaboration of the eight most research intensive universities in the North of England: Durham, Lancaster, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield and York.

LEEDS SOCIAL SCIENCES INSTITUTE (LSSI)

LSSI provides cross faculty support for the social sciences which is targeted around three key priorities:

- Developing interdisciplinary research excellence
- Impact, knowledge exchange and user engagement
- Training and capacity building for early career researchers

1. Developing interdisciplinary research excellence

The Institute has introduced several key innovations to support and develop interdisciplinary research:

Interdisciplinary research networks and collaborations

Networking is a hugely valuable way of identifying opportunities to work across disciplines. LSSI supports initiatives to encourage people to make the most of these opportunities, such as dedicated workshops and informal lunchtime discussions.

Our workshops are aimed at researchers who are keen to develop or extend research partnerships and share best practice. The workshops are designed around emerging research themes, such as inequality; migration; EU funding sources; new potential collaborations between the social sciences and humanities, and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

A lack of facilities, such as seating and public toilets, are the key barriers for older people considering a trip into the city centre, according to research by the Ageing, Leisure and Design cross-faculty research group.

The project, led by Dr Kishore Budha in the School of Design, and Alison McKay in the Faculty of Engineering and Socio-Technical Centre, explored the experiences of older residents negotiating retail spaces and the impact that this has on their wellbeing.

The research was funded through a pilot study by an LSSI seedcorn grant, available to support the early stages of cross-disciplinary research projects and help prepare them for further funding bids.

By bringing together specialists from diverse research areas across the University including branding and marketing, mechanical and electronic engineering and psychology, the project identified ways in which opportunities for leisure activities among the elderly could be improved.

A further research grant from the British Academy/ Leverhulme Trust has now been secured to continue the research which, ultimately, will be fed back to product and service providers.
2. Impact, knowledge exchange and user engagement

We continue to build bridges between our research community and external organisations as a means of developing new meaningful research collaborations which are linked to relevant issues and challenges facing practitioners and policy makers.

LSSI works closely with the University’s interdisciplinary networks, most notably with the “Cities” research theme, which links activities across seven faculties to address areas such as transport, socio-technical systems, low carbon transitions, urban data analytics, social justice and global society and business. The breadth and scale of these topics go beyond traditional town planning or civil engineering approaches to cities.

This externally focussed approach has already delivered significant impacts.

The goal of maximising the impact of our research is further supported by high profile LSSI events and seminars. These provide a platform to stimulate discussion and creative thinking around some of the difficult policy challenges facing local, national and international governments and to focus on how we can work together to address these challenges through research evidence, scholarship, knowledge transfer and innovation. Events are open to staff, students and external organisations from the public, private and third sectors.

Keynote presenters include prominent guest speakers, offering expert knowledge and insight.

Public order policing

A fresh approach to crowd psychology is enabling police forces to develop new ways of managing potentially volatile situations such as public protests or football matches.

Developed by Clifford Stott and colleagues in the School of Law, the approach encourages dialogue and communication to facilitate lawful behaviour, instead of needing to use force once situations have escalated towards violence.

Many UK police forces have now set up Police Liaison Teams (PLTs) trained to implement these ideas. “Police behaviour has a profound effect on crowd behaviour and PLTs can liaise and communicate with groups to steer them away from conflict,” says Dr Stott.

The research at Leeds has been funded by the College of Policing and the ESRC. In 2014, Dr Stott was awarded first prize in the public policy category of the ESRC Celebrating Impact Award for his work in developing PLTs.

Dr Stott is currently working with Police both within and beyond the UK to explore how these ideas can also be implemented in tackling football ‘hooliganism’.

Understanding pressure ulcers

Colleagues in the Leeds Institute for Clinical Trials Research have a substantial track record in the study of pressure ulcers, or bed sores.

A recent programme grant, led by Professor Jane Nixon and funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), included a combination of scientific and social science studies. One of the latter led to the development of a novel tool for assessing patients’ risks of developing pressure ulcers, PURPOSE-T, which is now in routine use in several NHS Trusts. A second study identified patients who had developed severe pressure ulcers, and retrospectively constructed detailed accounts which revealed how and why they developed.

The findings emphasised the extent to which the organisational context – the culture – on hospital wards and in community settings influences the likelihood that someone develops a pressure ulcer. The programme also led to the creation of the Pressure Ulcer Research Service User Network (medhealth.leeds.ac.uk/pursun). The team has won further research awards and Delia Muir, the PURSUN convenor, has won a Wellcome Trust Engagement Fellowship.

The risk assessment work has also been recognised by a Journal of Wound Care Wound Assessment and Diagnostics Award (2015) and Dr Susanne Coleman, the risk assessment project lead has received the European Pressure Ulcer Advisory Panel (EPUAP) Novice Investigator Award (2015).
3. Training the next generation of researchers

The Institute also has an important role to play in capacity building by developing and offering high quality training to social scientists across the institution, as well as facilitating networking events, particularly for early career researchers and postgraduate students. Key opportunities for social scientists include:

a. White Rose Doctoral Training Centre
The White Rose Doctoral Training Centre in Social Sciences (DTC) was established in January 2011 with an investment from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). The DTC provides a national training centre for postgraduate researchers in social sciences, including the award of 48 studentships per year. By combining the expertise of the universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York, the DTC delivers excellent supervision, first-class training and vibrant intellectual environments for postgraduate research students.

The DTC offers a comprehensive collaborative training programme that goes beyond a traditional PhD, offering advanced training in essential areas such as the use of quantitative secondary/administrative data in social science research. Our students also have the opportunity to apply for studentships which are linked to partners in the private, public or third sectors.

Visit wrdtc.ac.uk for further information.

b. Leeds University Q Step Centre
Q-Step was developed as a strategic response to the shortage of quantitatively-skilled social science graduates. It is funded by the Nuffield Foundation, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). For more information go to www.nuffieldfoundation.org/q-step

Having joined the Q-Step programme in Autumn 2014, the Leeds Q-Step Centre, led by Professor Chris Forde, is building momentum around curriculum developments and aspiration raising activities targeted at degree and secondary education students.

Throughout 2014/15, we have added a Q-Step focus to a number of aspiration raising activities run by the University’s social science schools engagement team and, with additional funding from ESRC, we will be running a multi-disciplinary event for year 12 students during the ESRC Festival of Social Science.

During the summer of 2015 we also ran a very successful Summer Research Internship scheme for second year undergraduate students. Some of the projects students worked on included ‘Customer services in hospitality in the education sector’, ‘Making sense of the census’, ‘Are UK organisations preparing for climate change?’, and ‘Healthy high streets – measuring town pride’.

The scheme provides a great opportunity for undergraduate students and research staff to benefit from collaboration on a live research project.

c. Student-led seminar series
PhD students have access to a range of additional events to support their research and career development. LSSI supports an interdisciplinary seminar series, specifically for postgraduates, to present and discuss aspects of their work with other postgraduate students in an informal environment. The series includes contributions from students from across the social sciences.

d. Enhancing skills and career development – LSSI Placement Scheme
Leeds is at the forefront of innovative developments, such as the 2012 Wilson review of university-business collaboration which recommended that: “All full-time PhD students should have an opportunity to experience at least one 8-to-12 week internship during their period of study.”

LSSI provides these opportunities by funding students to work in a research capacity on a short term project with an external organisation.

Projects might involve:
- surveying or interviewing users or providers of relevant services to identify ways in which they could be improved
- evaluating a project or scoping out the potential for a new project which aims to bring social or economic benefits to a particular community
- gathering evidence, writing reports and responding to government consultation exercises/informing policy making.

Our students have benefitted from working with organisations such as Leeds City Council, Business in the Community, Chapeltown Citizens Advice Bureau and West Yorkshire Probation Trust.

The scheme has been popular and has proved to be effective in improving a student’s employability and injecting innovative ideas into the host organisation.

www.lssi.leeds.ac.uk/lssi-placement-fellowship-scheme/