

# Leeds Social Sciences Institute Impact Report 2021-2022



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Welcome address  
from LSSI Director



I am delighted to introduce this report which showcases some of the activities and outcomes from the Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) run by the Leeds Social Sciences Institute (LSSI)

This report considers the IAA funding from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) from 2019 to date. We were able to secure the largest ESRC IAA grant in the UK in 2019. With this funding we have been able to expand both the scope and scale of our interdisciplinary research activities, dissemination plans and application strategies that we are able to support and advance.

In this brochure we will show elements of our IAA funding including our responsive mode, knowledge exchange, public engagement activities, LIDA Data Scientist Posts and our contribution to the Festival of Social Science.

Under our policy engagement portfolio we have been strengthening and deepening our relations with local, regional and national government bodies and policy communities, using the Areas of Research Interest (ARI) documents that government departments produce. These documents have provided valuable points for collaborative conversations and

networking. IAA funds have been used to review and strengthen our established research and policy relations with Leeds City Council. We have enhanced our collaborative activities and deepened our strategic partnership over the grant duration.

Certain events and activities we hoped to deliver were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, but the IAA adapted to continue to operate and deliver impacts under government restrictions and remote working conditions. As we come out of the pandemic LSSI has adapted to deliver online and hybrid activities.

We are grateful to our funders, notably ESRC, as well as members of our IAA Award Panel, both within and outside the University who assist in assessing, targeting and allocating our funding resource.

**Professor Louise Waite**  
Director  
Leeds Social Science Institute

# ESRC Impact Acceleration Account

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) awarded Leeds Social Sciences Institute £1.3m of funding through the ESRC Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) in April 2019 – March 2023

During the funding period we have successfully applied for further funding from ESRC these are, £70k for the Local Acceleration Fund (to accelerate our ongoing work in connecting communities in Leeds), £100k for Commercialising Research out of Social Sciences (to support researchers to build networks with potential users of the products of their research) and £50k from Research England Participatory Approaches Fund (to create a toolkit and resources for researchers across the University).

IAAs are institutional awards provided by ESRC to universities to deliver funding mechanisms for social science knowledge exchange and impact activities at a regional, national and international levels.

The IAA is a unique funding model that allows us to support social science researchers across multiple schools and faculties to maximise the impact and influence of their research.



The IAA has four key aims, these are to:

- 1. Build relationships and networks with potential users of research to facilitate co-production of research and maximise impact.
- 2. Support researchers to build networks with potential users of the products of their research, and further work to enable proof of concept for their innovations.
- 3. Improve engagement with the public sector, policy sector, civil society, industry (including SME's and local business) and the public.
- 4. To embed the social science IAA within wider interdisciplinary institutional impact activities and programmes, including those aligned to EPSRC/NERC/Wellcome, the University themes/platforms and NEXUS.

# ESRC Impact Acceleration Account Awards

The ESRC Impact Acceleration Account  
1 April 2019 – 31 March 2023





# IAA funding and award process

We have held 15 open calls for impact project proposals since 2019. Applications received have been from across the 4 funding streams, Responsive Mode, Knowledge Exchange, Rapid Action, and Public Engagement

Rapid Action proposals are received on an ongoing basis and reviewed by a smaller panel.

Applications are reviewed by representatives from the five main faculties which host social scientists across the University and the Research and Innovation Service. We also have representatives from our private, public and third sector partners.

The final round of applications to the ESRC IAA was held in July 2022 with projects to be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

Further details of each funding stream are below.

## Responsive Mode

**Provides flexible funding up to £15,000**

This fund provides flexible funding for cross disciplinary projects that demonstrate strong user engagement with potential to impact on policy and/or practice in the private, public and third sectors in the UK and overseas.

The fund has supported activities such as building relationships and networks with non-academic partners; development of activities designed to apply previously completed research to policy and practice; and the co-production of knowledge or policy seminars/ workshops.



## IAA Case Study Konstantinos Stylianou

**Dr Konstantinos Stylianou used his IAA funding to create and deliver a publicly accessible database of EU competition law decisions and distribute findings of his ongoing research**

### Securing funding to share results

‘Around three years ago, my colleague, Marios Iacovides, and I received funding from the Swedish Competition Authority for a research project in European Commission case law,’ Konstantinos explains. ‘Yet it soon became very clear the work we’d been doing would be useful to other people researching the same field. We needed a way to turn our findings into something that could be accessed by the public.’

‘We secured further funding, but it was limited,’ he adds. ‘We knew our ambitious work would need a greater pot of money, so Professor Adam Crawford, the previous Director of LSSI, told us about the IAA funding. We work with a lot of external partners, so we needed Adam’s help and guidance through our application. After applying to the Responsive Mode stream in May 2021, we received the funds in July and began the project in September that same year.’

### Developing a database to distribute knowledge

With the IAA funding, Konstantinos and his colleague wanted to deliver a tool to make EU competition law decisions easily accessible to the public. ‘Competition law reaches all sectors of the economy and is designed to make sure markets work efficiently,’ he says. ‘Previously, finding the outcomes of cases was challenging, so we used the IAA funds to create a free, fully-searchable online database of European competition law decisions.’

‘These decisions are important, as the European Commission is the main enforcer of all EU competition law,’ Konstantinos continues. ‘Our work would mean that anyone who works in that area of law – from competition authorities and lawyers to academics – could use the database to find information quickly and easily.’



### Using funding to deliver training

Building the database needed data science, data collection and coding expertise, so Konstantinos used the IAA funding to hire an external developer, alongside a research assistant to organise the back end of the database. Once the platform was ready, Konstantinos used the remaining IAA money to organise workshops with competition authorities around the EU, introducing the database and showing them how to use it.

‘This training involved travelling to different competition authorities across Europe, telling them about the database and showing them how to use it,’ he says. ‘The feedback has been brilliant. One EU Commission staff member told us they’d been thinking of developing their own competition law database, but could for now rely on ours.’

### Planning new research to continue the project

Konstantinos plans to keep updating the database to make sure it stays relevant for at least a decade, and continue delivering training workshops across Europe. ‘The IAA funding allowed us to collaborate with others to develop the tools and contacts we needed to get to this point. Now that we’ve identified the seven main goals of competition law and created the database, we can expand our research into new developments in the field,’ he explains.

‘This next stage of the project relies heavily on the database we’ve built with the IAA funding. With more people looking into the goals of competition law through our platform, we’ll be able to provide more conclusive evidence. We hope to have a full draft ready by the summer, and publish it at the end of 2023.’

To access the database, visit <https://db-comp.eu> or email [K.Stylianou@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:K.Stylianou@leeds.ac.uk)



IAA case study  
**Julie Firmstone**

**Dr Julie Firmstone used funding from the IAA to engage the UK public in discussions about ethical journalism, submitting her evidence to the press regulator, IMPRESS, and reporting her findings**



**A crucial review into media ethics**

Alongside Co-Investigator at the University of Derby, Professor John Steel, Julie's project began with their recent research into defining press freedom. 'Trust in the press and news journalism in the UK is in decline,' she explains. 'We were looking at countries outside the UK for best practice examples of ethical journalism, interviewing journalists across Europe. Then, we submitted our findings to UK press regulator, IMPRESS.' 'After examining our findings, IMPRESS was keen to work with us to better engage the public in discussions around journalism ethics as part of regularly reviewing the standards code that their member publications sign up to,' Julie continues. 'Discussions about standards in journalism and how to regulate the news media tend to happen amongst policy makers and the media industry at elite level, so the public voice is lost in the process. It's crucial this voice is heard, so the idea was to develop a way to listen to the public to truly represent their views.'

**A collaborative approach to gain IAA funding**

To deliver the engagement research, Julie and John needed funding – and quickly. 'The pilot needed to happen promptly as the IMPRESS review of codes was

already underway,' says Julie. 'We began looking to access funding pots, but the long wait to secure the money was proving a challenge.'

Julie contacted LSSI about the IAA Responsive Mode funding, and John applied to a similar fund at Derby. 'Our project is particularly relevant to the IAA as it concerns public engagement, using existing research to make a wider impact,' Julie explains. 'We submitted applications, engaging collaborative partners from outside the universities and gaining a letter of support from IMPRESS. This helped us secure the funding we needed to begin our work.'

**A method to gather quantitative and qualitative data**

Once they received the IAA funds, Julie and John began engaging the public – researching their attitudes to, and their knowledge of, ethical journalism. 'What followed was a big collaborative endeavour between IMPRESS, the University of Leeds and the University of Derby, a professional polling company and, of course, the general public – made possible by the funding,' says Julie. 'John and I designed a national public survey, consulted with IMPRESS for their design input, and employed a professional market research company to administer the survey and make sure it was nationally representative.'

'Over 3,000 people across England, Scotland and Wales responded to the survey,' continues Julie. 'We also invited participants who'd agreed to be part of a focus group to attend one of five sessions, where we gathered nuanced, qualitative data. This helped us to further understand what the public want from their news and what standards of journalism they expect.'

After analysis of both the survey and focus groups, Julie and John presented their findings to a range of sources. 'We attended the International Communication Association conference in Paris in June

2022 – the biggest event of its kind for media and communication scholars worldwide,' says Julie. 'We also presented our findings to IMPRESS in June, providing them with an interim report for internal circulation. After some more analysis, the findings were published in a News Literacy Report, drawing from the engagement research. Both John and I presented the key findings in an online event in collaboration with IMPRESS on 30th November 2022.'

**A platform to launch further research**

The next stage for Julie and John is to write up their findings and circulate them in academic journals. Alongside this, they are working on an application for a five-year grant to expand their pilot into a much bigger project. 'Thanks to the IAA funding, we've been able to develop a methodology and a toolkit to engage the public in ethical journalism discussions,' Julie says. 'The new funding we apply for will help us expand this on an annual basis, making sure we have the resources to engage with the media industry and create conversations that put our findings into practice.'

'By generating public engagement and piloting the toolkit, we're able to see what does and doesn't work and refine this in the future,' concludes Julie. 'We've established strong relationships by collaborating with IMPRESS, and our findings have been really revealing. Low news knowledge equates to low trust in the press and media. Therefore, it's vital people can access a valued source of news. Without that, there are significant implications for democracy, so this IAA-funded engagement project has been incredibly important - making sure public views are heard by the people with the power to make changes.'

Learn more about Julie's work [Co-I, AHRC Project, Defining Freedom of the Press, AH/R00644X/1](#)

[PI, ESRC IAA Engaging the public in regulating for ethical journalism.](#)



# Knowledge Exchange Fellowships

**Provides flexible funding up to £10,000**

The Knowledge Exchange scheme facilitates interactions between external organisations and the University to build and strengthen relationships and facilitate knowledge exchange.

The scheme provides academic staff with opportunities to work with non-academic partners either at the partner's place of work or for the partner to work on a project at the University.

# Rapid Action Fund

**Provides funding up to £2,000**

The Rapid Action Fund allows social scientists to quickly react to influence governmental, national and international debate. Academics can respond to tactical, urgent and pressing opportunities in short timescales.

The funding is used for:

- The creation of short-term impact projects
- Workshops, events, conferences or meetings that will inform impact
- Travel to meet with policy departments
- Development and pitching of ideas to broadcast media



IAA Case Study  
Hanna Pettersson

Former PhD Researcher in the School of Earth and Environment Hanna Pettersson secured IAA funding to make a research trip to Spain to expand and share the finding of her human-wolf coexistence study



An opportunity for ethical, engaged research

Hanna’s PhD supervisor, Claire Quinn, introduced her to the IAA funding. ‘I’d been looking for a way to return to the study communities to get their input on my results and explore the effects of a new National Wolf Hunting Ban in Spain,’ says Hanna.

‘Sharing the progress and results of a qualitative research project, like mine, with the people involved is extremely important,’ she adds. ‘Yet it’s difficult to find the time and resources, so we researchers don’t do it as often as we should. The IAA funding provided a fantastic opportunity to conduct reciprocal research.’

Understanding human-wolf coexistence

Hanna’s research project centred on human-wolf interactions in Spain. ‘Across Europe, large carnivores are returning to places they’ve not inhabited for many years, if ever before,’ she explains. ‘This can be very difficult for people

living in the countryside. We wanted to understand how we could support communities to adapt so both humans and animals can coexist – and flourish.’ ‘To learn more about people’s experiences of sharing spaces with these creatures and how it has impacted their lives, I spoke with groups and individuals to understand what was needed to enable safe and successful coexistence,’ continues Hanna. ‘That included anything from asking conservation managers questions to herding sheep alongside shepherds to fully relate to their experiences. It’s complex, and spending time with the locals illustrated that the context is completely different for each village. That’s why returning to share my findings with each community face-to-face was so important.’

‘My research was not only interdisciplinary, but transdisciplinary,’ Hanna adds. ‘I worked with local communities to generate and exchange information, and with natural scientists who could tell me how the wolves were moving between communities. These scientists were co-authors on my research publications and heavily involved in the workshop initiative.’

First-hand connection with case study sites

As soon as Hanna received her IAA funds, she returned to her case study sites in Spain: one where wolves have always been present, another where



wolves have recently returned, and finally a location where it’s likely wolves will make a new home. This time, she spent three weeks moving between the locations to present and discuss her findings with the communities.

‘The funding allowed me to make these journeys between sites, and spend enough time in each location to speak to the people who live there,’ she adds. ‘That included taking part in a conflict transformation workshop and presenting my research findings in an open session at each community.’

The wider impact of IAA funding

As well as allowing her travel to, and within, Spain, Hanna could continue her degree around her research project thanks to the IAA funding. ‘I was able to defer my PhD for a month, giving me the chance to disseminate my results without delaying my thesis deadline,’ she says. ‘Naturally, PhD time is precious, and without the funding I wouldn’t have been able to take a month away and return to Spain.’

Hanna has now completed her PhD in the School of Earth and Environment at the University of Leeds, yet her wolf conservation project in Spain will continue. ‘I became a permanent member of the conflict initiative project following the workshop, which will give me the opportunity to share my research findings every year,’ she explains. ‘The membership will help maintain engagement with stakeholders in Spain to understand new developments and build new projects - and was only made possible by the IAA funding.’

To learn more about Hanna’s work [https://environment.leeds.ac.uk/see/pgr/2556/hanna-pettersson#journal-article\\_div](https://environment.leeds.ac.uk/see/pgr/2556/hanna-pettersson#journal-article_div)

Public Engagement Fund

Provides funding up to £5,000

This fund supports public engagement within the social sciences and promotes public understanding of social science and the impacts of research on cultural life.

The fund provides a way to disseminate public engagement through accessible forms through face-to-face events, social media and virtual online activities and events.

IAA Case Study  
Sara Gonzalez

Professor Sara Gonzalez and her colleagues are using their IAA funding to create a website, helping them share their ongoing research into the benefits of traditional markets with local authorities



Discovering value and sharing potential

Sara and her team of collaborative researchers, including colleague Dr Myfanwy Taylor, had been researching traditional markets for a number of years. ‘Markets – the physical places people go to shop – provide huge community value,’ Sara explains. ‘They support different types of people, particularly those on low incomes or in minority groups, in a variety of ways. Economically, they provide a place to buy affordable produce and somewhere for traders to make a living. Yet they’re also incredibly important hubs for social connections. People from different cultures mix and the elderly and isolated find a sense of community in a safe space for interaction.’

Despite these findings, Sara and her team discovered many local authorities did not

fully appreciate the value of their local markets. ‘We wanted to share the results of our research so stakeholders could better understand their potential,’ she says. ‘We decided to develop a website so we could signpost local authorities to our findings and introduce them to our ideas.’

Developing a website to communicate findings

Sara successfully applied for the IAA funding to create the new website. ‘We had a website based on our initial research project, but we needed to communicate our findings more clearly,’ she explains. ‘To do that, I wanted to employ someone to refresh the website, making it easier for people outside the university to find information and use it in a way that was relevant to them.’

Once funding was secured, Sara chose to employ Rosie Wilkinson, a research assistant on her previous project, to bring the new site to life. ‘We want to share what we have learnt from best practice around the UK about how to make markets community hubs for inclusive economies,’ Sara says. ‘Rosie is breaking down our findings, extracting information from our reports and outlining everything we’ve learnt in an accessible way.’

Connecting funding streams to spread awareness

‘Our IAA funding contributed to a small part of our wider research project,’ Sara

explains. ‘Yet it’s a vital piece of work that’s helped us find an easier way to communicate our findings. The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) financed our previous research work in this field, so we already recognised that funding would help us reach wider audiences.’

Sara and her colleagues are continuing to disseminate their vision of markets as more than just retail environments. ‘Naturally, markets will still need to make money,’ she says. ‘But we can further explore their potential as community spaces, focussing on food justice, public health and affordable, warm spaces for everyone.’

‘We’ve had many enquires through different parts of our work, from speaking at conferences and on the radio to people looking at the website,’ concludes Sara. ‘We are working as consultants at one local council, searching for alternative ideas about how they can make their markets socially inclusive. Now we’ve made these connections through our research, we can keep sharing our message, evidencing how markets can be community hubs and supporting more local authorities and individuals who share this vision – and make a change.’

Learn more about Sara’s work <https://trmcommunityvalue.leeds.ac.uk>



Public Engagement case study  
**Briony Thomas**

**Dr Briony Thomas used her joint appointment at the School of Mechanical Engineering and School of Design to expand her *Creative Science in Schools* project, using IAA funding to broaden teaching methods across the school science curriculum**

**Securing funding to expand existing activities**

Briony's work began as a Public Engagement Fellowship project at the University of Leeds, which grew rapidly. 'Initially, the Medical Research Council provided some funding for our first year of activities within local schools,' she says. 'However, we wanted to share our work more widely. Though I knew of many large grants available, our challenge was finding smaller pots of money to extend the project – until we discovered the IAA funding.'

'Creative Education, by its nature, is an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) area, so the IAA funding felt like something I could go for,' Briony adds. 'I successfully applied through the Public Engagement strand, proposing to focus our IAA-funded work on a second year with the schools to widen our networks.'

**Developing partnerships to empower young people**

Briony and her colleagues had been running their Creative Science in Schools project with an academy trust in Batley, West Yorkshire, for a couple of years. After she secured the IAA funding, Briony spoke to the school trust about the potential of extending their partnership.

'At the time, it was clear young people did not truly understand what was happening during the Covid-19 pandemic, and there was a lot of misinformation,' Briony explains. 'This was particularly targeted at certain demographics, such as young people who were told receiving a vaccine was at odds with their religious beliefs. We wanted to understand how we could support teachers to discuss these issues in school, and co-created a series of STEAM education activities that brought together creative arts and science teachers to deliver a cross-curricular learning programme. The children gave us questions that they wanted to ask scientists, which we used to shape the educational activities. This empowered the

children with the knowledge to answer their own queries and challenge the information they received.'

**Providing new platforms to share information**

'We feel there's a gap in the national curriculum where some valuable topics, like the science of disease prevention and control, aren't covered until children specialise in key subjects,' Briony says. 'We wanted to expand general science knowledge, so we focussed on the 7-13 age group, carrying out creative activities to explore key areas. This encouraged informal discussions amongst the children about their science learning, which the teachers observed and supported in the classroom.'

Though Briony applied for the IAA funding and steered the project, she's keen to stress the work is a collaborative effort. 'The project could not be delivered by any one discipline, so it's crucial to bring together different skills and experiences,' she says. 'We've worked with five faculties in the university (biology, medicine, arts, engineering and education), research students and designers and we could not deliver the project without the school leadership teams. Their partnership is critical to help us design activity programmes and identify gaps and challenges.'

**Exploring opportunities to engage wider audiences**

'Our IAA funding runs until March 2023, so we can broaden the work we deliver,' explains Briony. 'For example, we were invited to deliver creative workshop activities at the Otley Science Fair in November 2022. When we applied for the IAA funds, we hadn't featured the science fair in the scope of our work. Yet its late inclusion made sense as our work evolved, as it's allowed us to connect with families in a different way at a new location.'

Next for Briony and her team is to share their work with an even larger audience. 'At its heart, our project is an equal partnership between us and the schools we support,' she says. 'Shortly, we'll be hosting an exhibition stand at a science education conference alongside pupils who'll be talking about their science learning. That will open the project nationally to science educators, who can share their experiences, engage with the arts and deliver material that's outside the formal curriculum.'

'I was also invited to deliver a talk for the World Health Organisation on using arts to communicate science during the pandemic,' Briony concludes. 'It was a real honour, and chance for me to share the value of the work we're doing on a global platform.'

Learn more about Briony's work <https://lssi.leeds.ac.uk/esrc-iaa/case-studies/education/steam-for-integrated-education>





# Additional Funding Awarded 2021-2022

LSSI were awarded funding from ESRC and Research England for Commercialising Research out of Social Sciences (CRoSS), Local Acceleration Fund (LAF) and Participatory Research Fund

### Local Acceleration Fund

We were awarded £70k which builds on, and accelerates, local impact by facilitating connectivity, collaboration and capacity building within the Leeds City Region and the University of Leeds.

This work will develop (as already used builds on above) and accelerate the implementation of the recommendations and action plan from the report ‘Unlocking the Potential of Civic Collaboration: A review of research policy engagement between the University of Leeds and Leeds City Council.’

The fund provided resources from January to September 2022 to fast track elements of the ongoing work. This allows us to develop infrastructure to support closer collaboration with Leeds City Council and test mechanisms for uptake of evidence to meet local needs. The three elements of the project were:

- 1. Community engagement to accelerate the use of data for policy making in local government.
- 2. Test and implement an online tool for children and young people to understand the carbon footprint of food choices through the school meals pilot.
- 3. Create an online collaboration resource to connect academics with policymakers to support Leeds City Council to research local policy and practice.

The projects were delivered through workshops in schools and the creation of online resources including an online game for children and the production of a toolkit. The resources created by the fund will be sustained after the funding has finished. Further development and creation of joint resources will be built upon beyond the end of the project.

### Commercialising Research out of Social Sciences (CRoSS)

The fund aims to build the capacity and capability of social science researchers and knowledge exchange professionals to identify and support opportunities for commercialising outputs from social science research.

A mapping exercise has been completed to identify IAA projects which have the potential for commercialisation, working closely with the University of Leeds Commercialisation Team to support social scientists with potential early-stage commercialisation. We will be developing and delivering a training programme which will focus on potential knowledge gaps in the early-stage commercialisation process, and we will be developing a CRoSS Resource Hub.

### Research England Participatory Research Fund

As part of the Research England Participatory Research Fund we developed a co-production research toolkit which is part of a suite of resources to enhance co-production and participatory research practice at the University of Leeds. The toolkit includes a suite of videos, podcasts and written case studies that were produced through interviews and written case studies from academics. These materials have been produced as a resource for early career researchers, or researchers who are looking to commence their co-production research journey.



# LIDA Data Scientist Development Programme

The ESRC IAA has supported the well-established LIDA Data Scientist Development Programme, previously LIDA Data Science Internships, since 2019, with the IAA providing funding to support six posts

This award-winning Programme has successfully demonstrated the value of building data science capacity amongst early career researchers through short-term data science challenges. The Data Scientists appointed work with external stakeholders who share the Programme’s mission of data science for public good. It is a unique Programme in providing graduates and career changers from a range of social science backgrounds, both quantitative and qualitative, from Batchelor’s to PhDs, with the opportunity to collaborate with an external organisation, using real-world data on social science research challenges, under the

mentorship of leading academics. The projects vary, dependent on the organisation and the academic’s research focus, but this might include the analysis or visualisation of ‘big data’, as well as other socially beneficial outputs including public engagement communications and events, interactive data products, and awareness-raising case studies. This Programme has a proven impact track record, from influencing policymakers to changed attitudes in schoolchildren, whilst providing valuable work experience to develop the next generation of social data scientists, in line with the Government’s National Data Strategy.





Data Science for Low-Carbon Cities

Claire Shadbolt, Prof. Andy Gouldson  
University of Leeds and Leeds City Council

As part of the efforts to reduce carbon emissions, this research has evaluated the cost and carbon effectiveness of low carbon measures to adopt in the housing sector providing local authorities with the tools to thoroughly analyse energy use and housing data to bring cities closer to becoming carbon neutral

Project overview

This project will identify and visualise opportunities for energy and carbon savings in the housing sector of Leeds. It will enable Leeds City Council to prioritise its investments by upgrading the social housing stock through retrofit measures to reduce energy use, carbon emissions, deprivation and to improve public health (Fig. 2). Creating an interactive model allows the user to target and prioritise investments and policy interventions. This has the potential for impact because Leeds has recently published aspirations to become carbon neutral by 2050.

Data and methods

The model uses data from the National Household model1. This is based on Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) that predicts energy usage of a dwelling using a building physics model which includes assumptions about the building itself (e.g. age and construction type), a ‘typical’ occupancy and the local weather. Retrofit measures data is derived from the National Household model. Each property type and retrofit combination has its own cost, lifetime, energy savings and energy demand remaining.

From Leeds City Council, we have a dataset of the existing social housing stock for Leeds as of March 2020. This contains a plethora of property-level data to help identify possible retrofit measures for the household and to calculate current energy consumption (Fig. 3).

For the project, we created an interactive model in Excel where the user sets

constraints and selects a prioritisation option to pick houses to retrofit in the housing stock they wish to analyse. The options require either a fixed financial budget, a carbon reduction target or a SAP band target. By allowing the user to control the parameters, they can compare different outputs to see which ones meet their objectives.

The resident’s behaviour (rebound effect) and the quality of retrofit materials and installation (performance gap) will affect the real energy usage in the household. This is accounted for in the model by including a factor to calculate more realistic emissions and energy savings.

Key findings

After the model picks houses to retrofit, key outputs are displayed on a dashboard, where users can see a snapshot of the outcomes of a retrofitting project with the parameters and prioritisation option they set. Information about carbon emission savings (Fig. 1), costs and condition of the stock pre- and post-retrofit in terms of SAP rating over the timescale of the retrofitting project is shown.

Furthermore, on an individual household level, the user can find information about when the model picks properties to be retrofitted, along with potential costs and emission savings

with the proposed retrofit measures the model recommends for that property. These individual households are collated into two-year cycles to help the user plan the retrofit of these properties. It lists the number of retrofit measures per each property type, the location at the LSOA level for the properties and the set of retrofit measures proposed for each property. This helps the user to evaluate and plan the steps required to achieve carbon emission reductions and SAP rating targets in a given housing stock.

Value of the research

The work will allow Leeds to develop targeted interventions and investments to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions of their social housing stock. Therefore, this work will directly complement the work of the Leeds Climate Commission and its efforts to deliver rapid cuts to the city’s energy use.

This model has the potential to be easily adapted to be used for housing stocks



in other cities. As a tool to help local authorities plan property level retrofitting projects, it has far reaching implications by improving housing quality in the city for its communities and to develop a new and beneficial capability for prioritising investments to accomplish carbon emission reduction objectives. Quote from project partner

“We would endorse working with LIDA and LMU as they adapted the model to suit the need of Housing Leeds and the asset data that it owns. Claire was also flexible in carrying out additional changes requested by Housing Leeds to add further treatments to the model.”

Insights from Leeds City Council

- Predict the cost and impact of retrofitting a given housing stock across a period of time under different scenarios.
- Target investment in improving energy efficiency, reducing carbon emissions and tackling fuel poverty.
- Trace the effectiveness and efficiency of retrofitting properties over time.

Research theme

Urban analytics

People

Andy Gouldson, Professor of Environmental Policy, University of Leeds  
Andrew Sudmant, Research Fellow, University of Leeds  
Nahim Ruhi-Khan, Head of Strategy and Investment, Leeds City Council  
Neil Diamond, Investment Planning Manager, Leeds City Council

Partners

Leeds City Council  
Funders  
Leeds Social Sciences Institute ESRC IAA award and Leeds City Council

References

- <sup>1</sup> <https://www.cse.org.uk/projects/view/1233>  
<sup>2</sup> National Housing Model core components

Fig. 1 - CO2 emissions over time

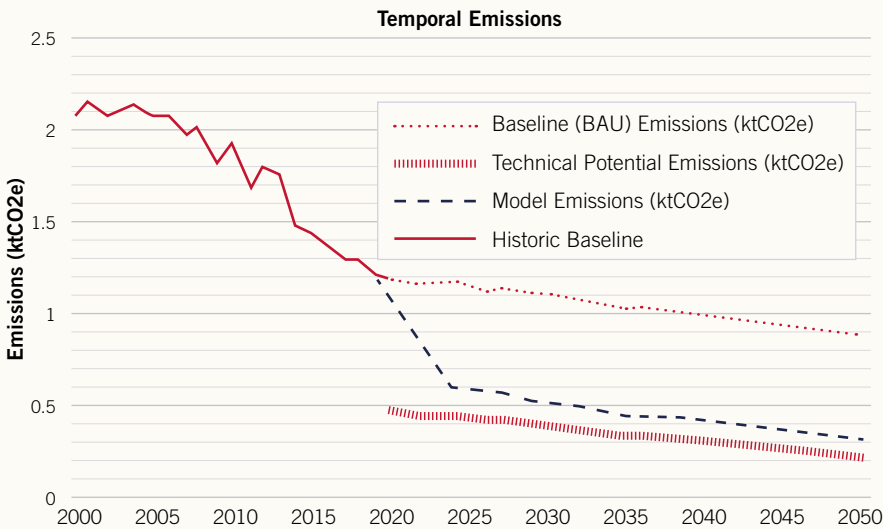


Fig. 2 - Leeds Social Housing current stock condition

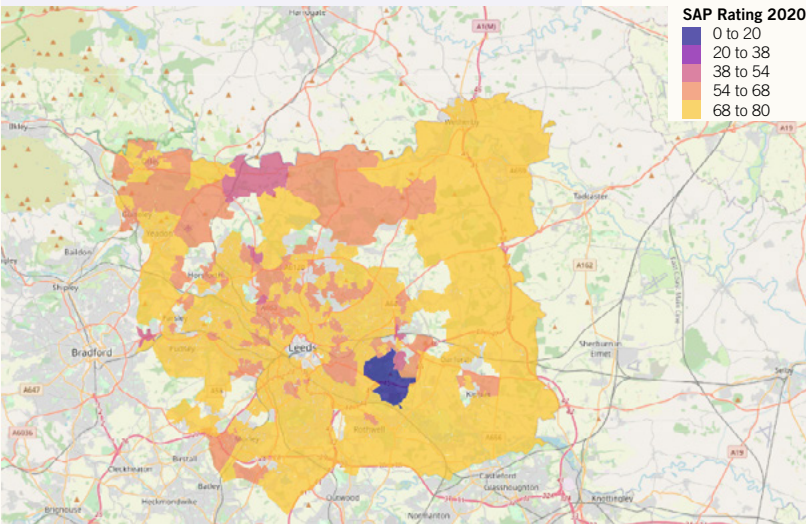
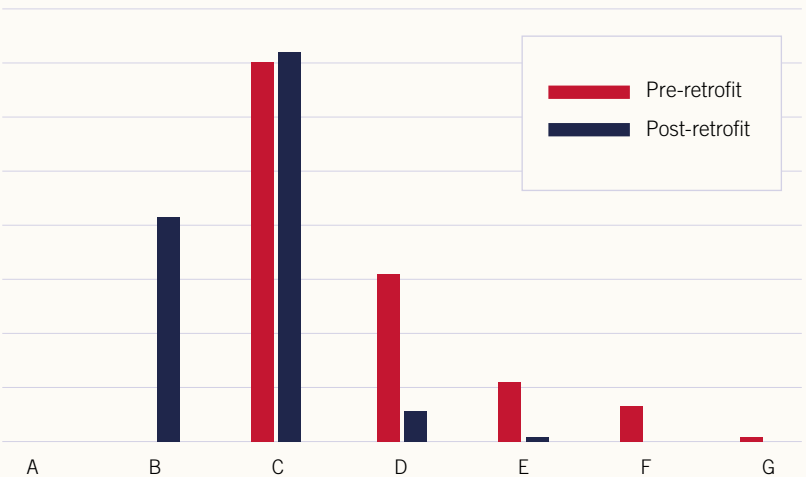


Fig. 3 - Stock condition pre- and post- retrofit





Born In Bradford – The effects of COVID-19 pandemic on the development of children

Dr. Matthew Walker, Prof. Amanda Waterman, Sam Relins  
University of Leeds and Bradford Institute for Health Research, NHS

Children had substantial changes to their lives over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic; how might their cognitive abilities allow them to cope with these changes?

Project overview

Born in Bradford (BiB) is a study that follows a cohort of children in Bradford from birth, aiming to understand the health, wellbeing and developmental outcomes across childhood and adolescence. Coincidentally, BiB is excellently placed to examine effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the development of children, including their education, over the last two years. Our work aims to understand the interaction between sociodemographic factors and cognitive development, including the impact of remote learning during the pandemic.

Data and methods

Between 2007 and 2011, 12,500 pregnant women were recruited to take part in BiB. The resulting children have had a range of measures taken, from physiological samples (e.g. blood) to cognitive assessments. The cognitive assessments included measures of working memory, inhibition, and processing speed. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these children were towards the end of primary education and moving into secondary school. Three surveys were sent out to the children to complete, including one that was sent out as children were returning to school after the major lockdowns (Phase 2: September 2021). BiB has linked their responses to pre-existing measures, offering a rich dataset to examine complex questions.

As an exploratory study, we set out to explore relationships between the demographic and cognitive measures and the Phase 2 survey responses, hoping to understand how children coped during the pandemic. Using R and Quarto, interactive summaries of these variables have been produced



offering a rapid way for researchers to explore and examine relationships between various different variables.

Key findings

One of the most insightful results from this project has been the opportunity to present complex data in a friendly and accessible way that will engage a range of audiences from academics and policy makers, to the general public.

Additionally, there are some interesting patterns between measures of working memory (Forwards Digital Recall, Backwards Digit Recall, Corsi Task) and survey responses relating to how the children feel they perform in school, their

friends and family and socialising.

For example, children that say they have difficulty finding answers in school tend to have lower working memory scores. There also appears to be some trend between working memory and how often they are bullied, with lower working memory scores being bullied more often.

Children with lower working memory scores are also more likely to speak to a teacher, parent or guardian when they are worried about something. Whereas children with higher working memory scores are more likely to keep it to themselves, or tell a friend.

Children with slower processing speeds also spend less time socialising using

mobile phones than those with faster processing speeds.

Value of the research

This work offers a real opportunity to engage the children who took part in answering the survey questions, as well as the wider BiB cohort. The work can also be expanded to other BiB projects to visualise their outcomes and findings. The findings from this research are a great starting point to future in-depth investigations into how children coped with COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown within Bradford and the wider UK community.

Insights

- Interactive visualisation of data offers a key way of engaging people with research
- Working memory scores relate to children's perception of their performance in school
- Working memory scores also relate to a range of social measures.

Research theme

- Health
- Societies

Programme theme

- Statistical Data Science

People

Dr. Matthew Walker;  
LIDA, University of Leeds

Prof. Amanda Waterman;  
School of Psychology, University of Leeds

Sam Relins;  
Bradford Institute for Health Research, NHS

Partners

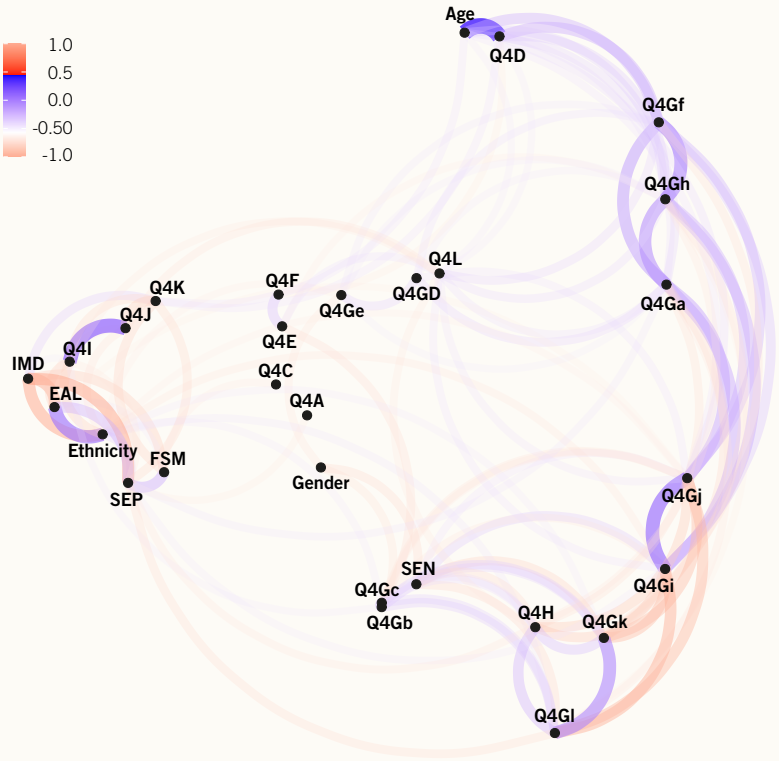
Bradford Institute for Health Research, Funders

The Leeds Social Sciences Institute  
ESRC IAA award.

A network plot, below, shows the relationship between the responses to the survey section “School and Education”. The plot shows correlations between different questions and demographic data, such as English as an Additional Language (EAL). Questions that are grouped closer together have similar responses, and the correlations are shown by lines joining the question numbers. Thicker lines are stronger correlations, and the colour of the lines show if the relationship is positive (blue) or negative (red). For example, the cluster of questions Q4Gj, Q4Gi, Q4Gk and Q4GI are grouped closely together indicating that responses to those questions were similar. From the lines between them it's possible to see that children that like their class (Q4Gj) are less likely to have trouble figuring out the answers in school (Q4GI).

“This is a valuable piece of work for Born in Bradford which has helped us to look at the responses to surveys we completed during the COVID pandemic in an innovative way. Being able to visualise the complex relationships between social, demographic and cognitive data has given us new insights into how children coped during the pandemic.”

Josie Dickerson  
Director of the Better Start Bradford Innovation Hub and Bradford Inequalities Research Unit.





# Postgraduate Researcher (PGR) Placement Scheme

## LSSI facilitates a Post Graduate Researcher placement scheme

The scheme enables Postgraduate Researchers to partner and work closely with non-academic organisations. Through collaboration, both PGRs and partner organisations can gain experience, share knowledge, gain appreciation of different professional values and cultures and explore the application of research in professional practice. The scheme is funded from University of Leeds HEIF fund.

The applications to the scheme are either student led or led by an external partner. The scheme aims to:

- Provide PGRs with the opportunity to develop professional skills and collaborative understanding of research users and their needs through research-based engagement with external partners.
- Provide partners with access to innovative ideas, knowledge and research that could improve policy or practice and enhance organisational learning and performance.
- Foster the development of collaborative partnerships between external partners and researchers at the University of Leeds.
- Enhance take-up and application of evidence-based knowledge and maximise the impact of social science research within the business community.



## PGR placement case study Amy Redhead

Amy is a Postgraduate Researcher in the School of Sociology and Social Policy, and completed a 6-month placement at International Journal of Disability Studies and Social Justice (IJDSJ)

During her placement, Amy met many team members from Pluto Journals and attended weekly meetings with members of the IJDSJ team. Amy established a good working relationship with both the founders of the IJDSJ, Professor Angharad Beckett and Professor Anna Lawson. Amy felt that ‘From the outset, I was made to feel not only welcome within the IJDSJ community, but my ideas and insights were valued and respected’.

Amy’s main responsibility was to help establish the International Disability Studies (IDS) Network membership scheme. She was tasked with researching online government guidance on how to establish and register the IDS Network for Charitable Incorporated Organisation status. In addition to this, Amy assisted the Centre for Disability Studies Administrator with the building of the IJDSJ and IDS Network websites, specifically in creating an interactive world map highlighting the geographical locations of the IJDSJ board members.

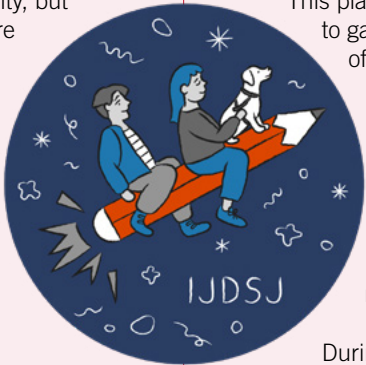
Amy explains her scope and purpose during the six month placement:

‘In order to establish a membership community, I explored different organisations that could be contacted as potential collaborators in the IDS Network. I created a table that outlined various potential contacts, including disabled peoples’ organisations, multinational, academic networks, national disability networks and human rights organisations, who were then contacted by the editors regarding potential involvement’.

Amy continues ‘Another of my tasks involved researching suitable networking and conferencing software packages that would enable the Network to communicate with members and host conferences from the same platform. In order to explore different methods of communication I arranged ‘pitch’

meetings with several software companies and trialled various different software packages’.

When asked to give a short summary of her time at Pluto and the IJDSJ, Amy gave a positive insight into her time spent there:



‘This placement allowed me to gain an understanding of how a cutting-edge, open-access publisher operates and has given me insight into not only how crucial open access publishing is, but also what needs to be done in order to make it successful.’

During my six months working with the IDS Network, I have learnt invaluable lessons that will equip me going forward in academia. Understanding the processes involved in establishing a membership community, as well as working closely with people directly in the publishing field, has been both engaging and rewarding. I feel that I have certainly gained expertise from working on this placement, skills that I will be able to transfer to future endeavours, be they in an academic role or non-academic capacity. I would like to thank LSSI for providing this PGR Placement; Pluto Journals Ltd for sharing

their knowledge and expertise; and finally, all of the staff working on the IDS Network for embracing me into their ever-growing community and allowing me to undertake this practical work towards social change and justice for disabled people’.

Having had such a positive impact, Amy expressed her eagerness to remain involved in the building of the IDS network and has offered her help in any capacity, working around her PhD. Since leaving she has have remained in contact with the team and has written a short ‘think-piece’ outlining a potential social media strategy. On top of this, she will continue to hold a voluntary role within the network.

The project not only had a positive impact on Amy, but she made a positive impression on those she worked with as seen in this quote from Professor Angharad Beckett who is the co-chair of the IJDSJ:

‘Amy has been immensely industrious, imaginative and collegiate in this role and we will miss her. She has helped lay the foundations for a new International Disability Studies Network, to which the journal will be associated. We hope she will remain involved in the journal and network longer term. She has demonstrated an ability to take on new tasks/challenges effectively and good judgement’.





PGR placement case study

**Natalie Hopkins Leeds Safe Injecting Facility: Stakeholder perceptions**

Natalie Hopkins is a Postgraduate Researcher in the School of Biomedical Sciences, and completed a 3-month placement at Humankind



The purpose of this project was to explore the views and perspectives of key stakeholders in Leeds looking at the benefits, limitations and identifying any determinants (i.e barriers and facilitators) of operating a Safe Injecting Facility (SIF) in Leeds. An SIF is a site which permits the administration and consumption of already purchased street drugs in the presence of trained staff who monitor for overdose or risky injection practices and can treat drug users safely and quickly if necessary. Natalie interviewed eight stakeholders online. Three overarching themes emerged from the data: (1) socio-economic and healthcare derived benefits of operating a service, (2) challenging public perception and reducing stigma, (3) combating barriers and challenges for operating an SIF.

All participants expressed positivity and optimism towards operating an SIF and highlighted advantages such as reduced overdose deaths, reduced medical complications that often lead to hospitalisation, reduced crime rates

and advocating of services to individuals not currently seeking treatment. Stigma was emphasised as an important barrier that requires a whole systems approach to challenge and shift culture. Lastly, if the time is not right, both politically and locally, participants offered alternatives such as an assisted treatment programme whereby drugs are prescribed, and individuals engage in treatment through the programme.

The project was successful in achieving the aims and objectives set out, with 8 hugely informative and data-rich interviews conducted and a detailed report produced. The themes that emerged from the data supported the pre-existing benefits of SIF's in the literature and outlined challenges of operating the service with potential ways to address such challenges.

Project lead, Mark Crowe, was impressed with Natalie and provided this feedback: "It's been a pleasure working with Natalie, she got to grips with the project

really quickly even though it was a new area of work for her. The interviews she carried out were very professionally done and yielded very rich data. Natalie's analysis was insightful and structured so well that we used it as a template for the companion pieces to her work. Humankind is grateful for the support the LSSI in enabling this project to happen. We've had good communication with the team. This is has been a good piece of work which is being considered by senior managers in Humankind as part of the decision making process about pursuing a safe injection facility in Leeds."

Natalie felt the benefits of this three-month placement as she felt that conducting research in areas that are external to her field was an important development opportunity. It allowed her to build on her interpersonal skills and qualitative research skills. This placement had a positive impact on her as she intends to stay in contact with Humankind for any future work or collaboration opportunities.





# ESRC Festival of Social Science

The ESRC Festival of Social Science takes place at institutions across the UK and spans a wide range of audiences. It offers an insight into some of the country’s leading social science research and how it can influence our social, economic and political lives both now and in the future

Since 2019 through the IAA we have supported 36 activities for the Festival of Social Science. During the pandemic activities had to be adapted to be online and then to a hybrid model. This year’s Festival was held for 3 weeks starting in October and supported 14 activities. The ESRC chose the theme of “My Local Area” for the Festival this year. Events taking place this year were a mixture of in person, hybrid and online.

To further support this year’s activities, LSSI arranged for public engagement training to take place before the festival began for festival activity leads. Training was held on the topics of Introduction to Public Engagement, Online Engagement and Practical Planning. Activities taking place this year were:

- You say day-tah, I say dah-tah: Learning code by exploring regional language variation – a 45 minute online workshop that provided an introduction to data science by exploring regional language variation and guided participants through writing their first piece of code at home.
- Radical Geography: Think Global act Local: This was an hour long interactive workshop which took place in Schools looking at Radical Geography - how we engage with geography in our everyday

life through micro plastics. What they are, why they exist, and how we can go about creating a more sustainable world.

- Disruption, Disobedience and Creativity: Arts Activism in climate justice: A 25 minute workshop highlighting issues of climate justice. The workshop introduced scholar activists and arts activism practitioners discussing the role of arts activism in the current conjuncture, one marked by the convergence of economic, social, political and ecological crisis.
- Community-based storytelling sessions in Keighley using the Imagination Library to improve family cohesion: This talk outlined the evaluation of the community storytelling sessions and discussion on the impact of this initiative on children’s reading ability, language development, motor skills and the broader impact on parents and the family unit.
- Local Voices, Celebrated Nationality: The Dialect and Heritage Project: two activities were delivered by the Dialect and Heritage Project, firstly an online quiz to test participants knowledge of English dialect words. The second was a 30 minute online talk about Dialect and heritage matter – they connect us to the past, the present and to specific people and places.



**THE 2022 FESTIVAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE**  
22 October – 13 November

Economic and Social Research Council



- Sustaining Active Travel at the local level: How to involve young people in decision making and planning for a more sustainable future – a 45 minute presentation, discussion and training on a new toolkit designed to help local community organisations understand the barriers young people face around active travel in their area and to create actionable information to improve young people’s experiences of travel in the community.
- Board Reading? Using Games to Develop reading Comprehension: A 90 minute workshop demonstrated how family friendly board games can develop children’s reading comprehension. The workshop was open to all ages from primary school age children upwards.
- Diversity in Development - Individual Action, International Impact: This was a taster session on International Development and how the subject is relevant for all. Secondly a student led panel with a diverse number of students talking about their journey through higher education and into the world of International Development.
- The future of work: does place still matter?: This hybrid event discussed the implications of different

- hybrid work patterns and explored what it means for employees, businesses and cities.
- Grandparents in the Woods: An interactive event to learn from the ecological wisdom of the Indigenous peoples of India where families have an animal or a plant as a clan ancestor.
- Beyond Allyship: Racial Inclusion and Sense of Belonging: This interactive workshop and round table discussion explored the African philosophy of Ubuntu. The round table discussion explored the role and application of Ubuntu with regards to racial equality and sense of belonging in public policy.
- Who the folk feeds the nation? The voices behind your food: This was a live performance to discover life as a seasonal migrant worker in British farming followed by an audience Q&A.
- Co-POWeR: exposing the hidden stories of the pandemic: A short animated film was shown to illustrate the research findings of Co-POWeR’s research on the impact of COVID-19 on the BAME families and communities in the UK. To find out more visit Co-POWeR [website](#).



IAA Supported Initiatives

LSSI have recently increased our suite of online resources. We have expanded the ‘Social Science Shorts’ to 12 bitesize videos showing the interdisciplinary social science related research that has been carried out across the university.

Engaging Public Policy

The IAA allows social scientists to engage with a variety of external partners, organisations and policy makers.

LSSI’s aim is to connect high quality social science research at the University of Leeds with individuals and groups who can utilise the research to create real world impact.

In order to facilitate this our LSSI coordinated activities and seminars with governmental departments brings together University of Leeds researchers and policy makers, helping to focus on routes to engaging with policy.



Linking Leeds with the Department for Transport

Following suggestions by both academic and policy colleagues during an IAA-funded event, ‘Engaging Social Sciences in the Department for Transport’ in 2020, LSSI co-created the webinar series ‘Linking Leeds with the DfT’ with colleagues in the Social and Behavioural Directorate of the government department.

The Linking Leeds with the DfT webinars aim to help build a richer connection between the academic and policy worlds by inviting social scientists from Leeds and members of the government department to engage in dialogue around key research questions of mutual interest. These events are also open to other sectors and so help to generate multi-stakeholder dialogue around shared societal challenges relating to transport.

Our first mini-series, which ran from June to December 2021, centred around questions relating to the societal and economic impact of COVID-19 on transport in its broadest sense. An academic presentation followed by



an interactive Q&A session allowing audience members from across academia, policy worlds and to find out more and engage in a wider discussion.

The next series of webinars commenced in November 2022 and will run until March 2023. The upcoming talks will focus on the following DfT’s priority areas:

- Decarbonisation
- Levelling up
- Improving transport for the user

LINK series with DWP

The Leeds Social Sciences Institute has collaborated with DWP LINK team over a number of years to help connect academic and policy worlds.

The DWP link series has been renamed to Linking Leeds with DWP and has evolved to include other Universities across the UK, including University of Leeds, University of Sheffield, University of Loughborough and University of York. The 2022-23 academic year will see speakers discuss DWP’s research interests and challenges. The seminars are held once a month.

Policy Engagement Kickstart

Development of a policy engagement kickstart programme co-designed and run by LSSI, Policy Leeds and Organisational Development and Professional Learning (OD&PL). The programme is open to researchers of all career stages and is run over 2 hour sessions across 4 modules, self study material and online. The third cohort of researchers started the programme in October 2022 with the programme running again in the Spring term.

Leeds City Council

In 2020, LSSI led a Review of (research/policy) Collaborations between University of Leeds and Leeds City Council. The Review findings informed a list of recommendations for enhancing and accelerating

collaboration. A group of senior leaders across both organisations formed a Reference Group to oversee the mobilisation of these recommendations which were reformatted into an Action Plan. The Reference Group decided that the first action to be taken was to establish shared research/policy priorities for collaboration which would underpin this work. In light of this, in Dec 2020, LSSI hosted two-day repeat workshops which aimed to bring together academic staff at UoL and LCC policy relevant officers to begin sharing ideas as to what the societal challenges facing cities like Leeds are and what therefore what the priority areas for working together could potentially be. These discussions were framed by the Leeds City Council Three Pillars of: Inclusive Growth; Climate Change; and Health and Well-being.

In collaboration with Leeds City Council, LSSI are planning to deliver Innovation Forums to further collaborative engagement between Leeds City Council and academics to discuss specific topic areas around ‘Areas of Reseach Interest’; Food, Inclusive Growth, Education, Place, Culture and Digital. The Innovation Forums will be held in Spring 2023.

Internationalisation

LSSI undertake internationalisation activity to provide opportunities for learning and sharing of best practice in interdisciplinary social science and impact. Whilst our responsive mode and other schemes are open to applicants with international partners and impacts, we also work with key collaborators to support learning for our social science community.

By working with other interdisciplinary social science institutions around the world we can understand and learn from other approaches to research impact, and support opportunities for collaborative and comparative research and methods development which can better meet the challenges faced by research users.

Our strategic collaborations with the Institute for Social Sciences Research (ISSR) at the University of Queensland and the Instituto de Investigaciones Gino Germani (IIGG) at the University of Buenos Aires are key partnerships for peer learning with similar interdisciplinary social science institutes. Capacity to engage internationally was significantly affected by the pandemic, but collaborative activity is now re-emerging. This is best seen through a collaborative online workshop with the University of Buenos Aires, in October 2022, and has been followed up with a collaborative pump priming scheme, funded by the University of Leeds, where we have been able to fund 7 collaborative projects between the 2 institutions. Similarly, with The University of Queensland (and the Social and

Public Health Sciences Unit at The University of Glasgow), there have been a series of online collaborative workshops themed around aspects of co-production and policy, with a peer learning in-person event scheduled to take place in Brisbane in February 2023.

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