

RESEARCH PROPOSAL 2023 - 2028

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| Name of Academic Lead: | Julian Manley |
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Tick which research area this plan refers to:

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|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Health and Wellbeing | <input type="checkbox"/> | Public Value Governance | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Place Development | <input type="checkbox"/> | Social Inclusion | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

NB This proposal to be completed with reference to the WRL Business plan 2023-2028

Insert names and roles of other research team members:

| Name | Role |
|----------------|--|
| Suzanne Wilson | Research Fellow in Social Inclusion and Community Engagement |

Q1. Define the research proposal for 2023-2028 for the above area with reference to:

- (i) the activities the team proposes to undertake;
- (ii) the scope and, in general terms, methodology;
- (iii) what is new and original and the capacity for invention, innovation and added value.

We recognise that these plans will be more detailed for the early years than for the later years.

Q2. Describe the expected outputs from the proposed work described in Q1, and how they might impact on discourse in the policy community and political economy through their dissemination.

Q3. Describe a plausible chain of causality which suggests the impact the proposed work may have in creating public value and contributing to the Common Good

Q4. State how the proposed plan will address the overarching charitable objects of WRL and the aims and objectives of the Business Plan 2023-2028.

Between October and December 2023, the focus of the Westlakes research will be on completing the current research within Community Power, a local piece of research working (1) with Cumberland Council to develop new forms of democratic participation, and (2) the EU Horizons project 'YouCount', an international project on applying citizen social science for social inclusion, based in Preston but with transferable learning to Westlakes Research.. Following the competition of the current research, two main projects will demonstrate public value and social value by promoting social inclusion (Creative Community Voices and West Cumbria Child Poverty Forum). These projects, which build upon the research undertaken by Suzanne Wilson between 2017-2023,¹ will work towards advancing the common good and impacting policy, community and the political economy. All research will be conducted within the Centre in Community Connectedness and Cooperation (CCCC) which is situated in within the overall framework of PACT and the School of Health, Social Work and Sport. It is intended that the academic relationships between this Preston-based Centre, the School and the UCLan Institute will develop stronger and more beneficial mutual support relationship networks with the WLR project. Within the WLR project itself, efforts in inter-disciplinary work between the research strands will be highlighted. The CCCC will organise periodic seminars at Westlakes to

¹ See Suzanne Wilson's outputs on CLOK: https://clock.uclan.ac.uk/view/creators_id/swilson21=40uclan=2Eac=2Euk.html

disseminate and celebrate the work of WLR. In collaboration with WLR, we will endeavour to increase and keep a record of impact, with a view to enhancing public appreciation of the impact of WLR and contributing to the potential for an Impact Case Study (ICS) for the forthcoming REF. All research activity will include the inclusion of an academic appointment to the Westlakes campus who will work under the guidance of Manley and Wilson.

Research Project 1: Creative Community Voices: A participatory arts programme to promote community health and wellbeing in low-income coastal communities

Overview of research activity

Community health and wellbeing is an ongoing policy challenge in low-income coastal communities, with above average morbidity rates across various indicators.² A community-based arts research programme will enable socially excluded communities to become community expert researchers. They will be supported to provide expertise and leadership to two significant local projects:

- **Cumberland Council (Family Hub):** Cumberland Council's pilot 'Family Hub' proposes to be a 'one-stop shop' for all early year's services, based in Whitehaven.
- **Rosehill Theatre (KIND):** The KIND project aims to support wellbeing and help reduce isolation across communities in Whitehaven experiencing social exclusion, blending creative wellbeing, social prescribing, socially engaged art, and community collaboration.

The work will network community expert researchers in a place-based participatory art project to promote community health and wellbeing in families and communities' social inclusion through informing and influencing the development and delivery of the Family Hub and the KIND project. Although the two projects are separate, several overlapping themes exist (community wellbeing, social exclusion) and a working group will identify opportunities to collaborate within the work (see below).

The research process will be creative, flexible and iterative; therefore, it is impossible to provide a concrete structure for the entire project. However, six phases of delivery will guide the research:

- **Phase One: Establish a working group.** Create a core working group of key partners and stakeholders, including Family Hub staff, art practitioners from Rosehill and third-sector organisations.
- **Phase Two: Recruit community expert researchers:** Working group to co-create a creative recruitment programme based on creative arts and social justice themes. The project aims to recruit ten community expert researchers for each project, which, as well as mothers and fathers of young children, will include young people, members of the older generation and newly settled members of the community.
- **Phase Three: Forum theatre 'training':** As part of the training for the community expert researchers, Forum Theatre will be used as a pedagogical tool to help develop an understanding of the broader causes of social exclusion and imagine new systems and opportunities to promote social inclusion. This pedagogical tool will then be used with social workers and other social care staff to help the workforce understand the lived experiences of individuals and families experiencing social exclusion and the wider causes behind these conditions.
- **Phase Four: Community engagement:** The community expert researchers will work within their respective projects (Family Hub and Rosehill) to co-design and co-deliver a series of community engagement activities to understand the lived experiences of social exclusion in low-income coastal communities. The engagement will be based on different forms of creative practice, and outputs will include recommendations for service development in terms of social care and engaging with creative industries.
- **Phase Five: Service co-production and co-evaluation:** The community expert researchers will then work with the Family Hub and Rosehill to use the results to inform services, focusing on relationships and social networks.

² Whitty, C. (2021). Chief Medical Officer's Annual Report 2021: Health in Coastal Communities. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/chief-medical-officers-annual-report-2021-health-in-coastal-communities> [accessed on 15.03.2022].

- **Phase Six: Evaluation:** The impact of the research, both in terms of individual, service and policy impact, will be critically evaluated using the proposed 'Achieving Public Value through Community Capital' framework detailed later in this report.
- **Phase Seven: Impact and dissemination:** The impact of the research will be systematically monitored throughout the project, with the ambition that it will be included in the REF2028 submission. In addition to 'real world impact', the research will be disseminated within the academic community through peer-reviewed articles, book chapters and international conference presentations.

Researchers will be offered opportunities to come together to develop their network, share experiences and identify ways to collaborate further. Towards the end of the project, the community expert researchers will also be encouraged to consider options to ensure the sustainability of the research network.

Scope

Public value is central to the research, which also expands on the research themes emerging from previous projects, principally those relating to social inclusion, loneliness, co-production and low-income coastal communities. Considering these themes, this programme will specifically view social inclusion in terms of health, wellbeing, and place, consistent with the WRL research themes.

The project will collaborate with local and national partners, drawing on existing partnerships and fostering new relationships from various sectors. These will include:

- Public sector (for example, Cumberland Council)
- Third sector (for example, South Whitehaven Youth Partnership, Shackles Off Youth Projects, Howgill Family Centre, Cumbria Community Foundation)
- Creative sector (for example, Rosehill Theatre, Oddarts)

Data from the research will link in with the national Family Hub network, thereby providing a national platform to disseminate findings and achieve impact with reference to public and social value. The research approach will be critically analysed and will consider the implications for a scalable, national implementation for public and social value, with potential international impact to be made through further dissemination.

Methodologies

We will expand on the methodologies developed in previous research, developing a creative participatory programme co-produced with communities. The methods will include, but not be limited to, Forum Theatre, photovoice, poetry, music and art. Traditional methods, such as interviews and focus groups are also likely to be used.

Originality

Creative participatory methods have been widely used to inform policy.³ However, the current project provides an innovative tool for an existing policy intervention (the Family Hub model). It also provides innovation in adding to the limited literature around participatory methods with low-income coastal communities, a field in which Suzanne Wilson is building an expanding portfolio of work. The research will also draw on learning from the public health benefits generated from the Preston Model, ensuring cross-fertilisation between the Preston and Westlakes campuses.

Building on the evidence from previous projects,⁴ it is hypothesised that added value will be generated through gains in wellbeing on a personal level, potentially offering savings in public services through a lessened demand for services. The additional individual capacity and sense of citizenship could result in additional employment or volunteering outputs, again demonstrating public value for the common good. Added value will also be generated through 'expert community' informed services, that is, services developed by those with lived experience, thereby having a unique understanding of the challenges encountered and practical solutions.

Research Project 2: West Cumbria Child Poverty Forum: Relational collaboration for the common good

Overview of research activity

³ For example, Aldana, A., & Richards-Schuster, K. (2021). Youth-led antiracism research: Making a case for participatory methods and creative strategies in developmental science. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 36*(6), 654-685.

⁴ Connected Communities Reports (2020-2023): [Ormsgill](#), [Moorclose](#), [Woodhouse](#), [Mirehouse](#)

West Cumbria Child Poverty Forum (WCCPF) promotes social inclusion in families experiencing poverty by working with stakeholder organisations to ensure that policy development and implementation reflect the best interests of such families. Facilitated by UCLan, members include the local authorities, statutory services and the third sector. WCCPF influences change by holding themed events attended by MPs, local authorities, schools, housing authorities and third-sector organisations, facilitating dialogue and encouraging collaboration. The events have received a collective audience of over 400 people, leading to the publication of a several reports.⁵ These publications have attracted national/ international interest through multiple dissemination events and presentations.

The proposed work for the next five years will build on the established reputation and influence of WCCPF, piloting the newly developing policy-lab format to facilitate policy co-production.⁶ We want to continue to bring all parties together to create a new way of participatory working to provide inclusive opportunities for young people. The aim is that this iterative process will provide a new framework for co-producing local policy and influencing local practice, which consists of four stages:

- **Stage one: Dialogical forum:** Multi-stakeholder events will bring diverse stakeholders together to co-create a series of recommendations concerning a specific issue related to child poverty.
- **Stage two: Intermediate dissemination:** Results will be shared with a small selection of stakeholders from Cumberland Council. Data can be presented as a series of challenges and be operationalised through an action plan/ work plan.
- **Stage three: Refine recommendations:** Delegates from the dialogical forums will be invited to reconvene to refine the recommendations. Data from the event will be analysed, and a final set of recommendations will be written.
- **Stage four: Disseminate recommendations to appropriate audiences:** Recommendations will be presented to influential decision-makers and practitioners, with the purpose of influencing policy and practice surrounding the alleviation of poverty of families in Cumberland.

Scope

Public value is central to the research, which also expands on the themes continually emerging from the work of WCCPF, relational practice, collaboration and partnerships, community wealth building and policy co-creation. Considering these themes, WCCPF will specifically view social inclusion in terms of health, wellbeing, and place consistent with the WRL research themes. Principles behind the Preston Model and Community Wealth Building will also be integrated into understanding collaborative practices in achieving public and social value.

The project will collaborate with local and national partners from various sectors, drawing on existing relationships and fostering new ones. These include:

- Public sector (for example, Cumberland Council)
- Third sector (for example, South Whitehaven Youth Partnership, Shackles Off Youth Projects, Howgill Family Centre, Cumbria Community Foundation)
- Private sector (for example, Sellafield Ltd, BECBC)

The impact of the policy lab method will be continually evaluated, and findings will be disseminated through national networks. These include think tanks and action groups such as the Joseph Rountree Foundation, the Child Poverty Action Groups and People's Powerhouse. Existing connections to central government departments will also be utilised to ensure the research maximises impact, including the Department for Levelling Up and the Policy Lab within the civil service. By drawing on the emerging literature on public and social value (for example, Manley & Prinos, 2023),⁷ new understandings concerning the concepts will be explored and the aims and objectives of the WLR project will be enhanced through the collaboration between research projects and the different disciplines that have been brought together for the purposes of seeking fruitful alternatives to economic value and social transformation, in Cumbria and

⁵ WCCPF Report: WCCPF Reports: [Building a Therapeutic Community around Child in Poverty](#), [The impact of COVID-19 on families in West Cumbria](#), [Moving from a Transactional to Relational Approach to Meet the Needs of Families](#), [The Impact of Poor Housing on Children's Life Chances](#), [Making a Difference in Your Community](#)

⁶ Hinrichs-Krapels, S., Bailey, J., Boulding, H., Duffy, B., Hesketh, R., Kinloch, E., ... & Grant, J. (2020). Using Policy Labs as a process to bring evidence closer to public policymaking: a guide to one approach. Palgrave Communications, 6(1), 1-9.

⁷ Internal report.

beyond. Such an approach already forms an important aspect of CCCC work that seeks to understand social transformation and participatory democracy in terms of self-organising communities that define social and public value apart from economic value (see the YourMap project, for example).

Methodologies

We will expand on the methodologies developed through the journey of WCCPF, specifically focusing on developing the policy lab methodology. As explained, this is a participatory model to facilitate policy-co-creation, using an iterative process, working in a multi-stakeholder network. We anticipate that the four stages described will form the foundation of the work, which the WCCPF steering group will develop accordingly.

Originality

The development of the WCCPF policy lab will provide innovation locally by offering a vehicle for policy co-production. It will offer national insights through learning and utilising knowledge gained from the Preston Model and Community Wealth Building work led by Professor Manley. A relational added value will be created by bringing diverse stakeholders together for respectful discussions within a neutral setting. These can potentially develop new networks and change practices through a greater appreciation of the respective sectors. Added value will also be generated for the university and WRL by demonstrating its role as an anchor institution within West Cumberland through its ability to convene various stakeholders.

Research projects 3: Developing and Additional Activities that synergise with WLR

Suzanne Wilson is involved in a 5 year collaborative bid to NIHR's Health Determinants Research Collaborations⁸ with Cumberland Council and the University of Cumbria. The bid has reached the final stage of assessment and the outcome will be announced in October 2023. If successful, Suzanne will be a consultant to Cumberland Council surrounding all community engagement activities. She is also part of a regional network of coastal communities which could provide further opportunities for collaborative research. Recognising the importance of impact and dissemination, Suzanne will commit one day a week to focus on this activity, along with continuing to represent UCLan Westlakes Campus as a trustee for Cumbria Community Foundation. It is anticipated that further research funding applications relevant to WLR and the CCCC will be applied for in order to further interconnect the holistic research ventures of WLR and the CCCC.

Impact The research undertaken will significantly impact public value on multiple levels, including individual, community, regional and national. This impact will be measured by extending the existing community capital framework (measured through the dimensions of wellbeing, citizenship, capacity and social value),⁹ integrating it with a social-ecological model to present a 'Public value through Community Capital' framework. The research will pilot the model to measure public community wellbeing research.

Public Value, the common good and Westlakes Research The research plan takes into careful account the Westlakes Research charitable objects. Although this plan is focussed on the Social Inclusion strand of the WLR project, research will be viewed through the Westlakes campus as an educational *institution* in its own right, in the sense that what is sometimes referred to as a 'cluster' attributable to an 'organisation' will be reviewed periodically by meetings with the Principal Officer to ensure a growing sense of institution for the area. As institution, we will endeavour to forge closer links with the Centre in Community Connectedness and Cooperation and PACT as well as with the other strands in the WLR project. Publications will acknowledge WLR in publications that will include impactful outcomes and scholarly outputs made available to the REF, increasing the institutional visibility of WLR. We will proactively seek to record impact that serves the public good through education and dissemination of research findings and their impact in policy and the development of perceived public value. The quality

⁸ NIHR's Health Determinants Research Collaborations: [https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/support/health-determinants-research-collaborations.htm#:~:text=Health%20Determinants%20Research%20Collaborations%20\(HDRCs,on%20health%20and%20health%20inequalities](https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/support/health-determinants-research-collaborations.htm#:~:text=Health%20Determinants%20Research%20Collaborations%20(HDRCs,on%20health%20and%20health%20inequalities).

⁹ Parsfield, M., Morris, D., Bola, M., & Knapp, M. Y. M. and Marcus, G. (2015). *Community capital: the value of connected communities*. London: RSA. Available at: <https://www.thersa.org/reports/community-capital-the-value-of-connected-communities> [accessed on 14.09.2021].

of the impact will be such that the WLR project will also contribute to Impact Case Studies for the REF and for public benefit, these two aims leading to synergetic outcomes. Successful impact will depend on continued engagement with community, political and academic partners and an integrated approach that recognises that complexity is of public value as long as integration forms an essential aspect of the research. In these ways, the research is clearly focussed on real-world impact where political and other partnerships are an integral part of the institutional research delivery ultimately producing additionality/ added value in the public sphere.