

Nottingham Business School
Public Policy and Management Research Group
A research group within
The Centre for Economics, Policy and Public Management

Annual Report
2023



NOTTINGHAM
TRENT UNIVERSITY

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1. Introduction

The Public Policy and Management Research Group is a research group within the Centre for Economics, Policy and Public Management Research (CEPPM) in Nottingham Business School. CEPPM, is led by Professor Robert Ackrill and is currently one of the nine major research centres within the business school.

The Public Policy and Management Group within CEPPM is led by Professor Peter Murphy and Associate Professor Peter Eckersley and in 2023 had an active core membership of 14 members (10.15 FTE) of faculty. Both CEPPM and the Public Policy and Management Group are shown in the dark blue boxes on the current Research Structure Map of the business school below (Figure 1). Membership of a particular research group is not exclusive, and individuals are free to be part of more than one research centre or group within the business school. The group have members from all five of the business school disciplinary based departments. Membership has remained relatively stable, although Professor Murphy reduced his commitment and assumed a part-time role as from August 2022. Dr Peter Eckersley will assume sole leadership of the centre in 2024.

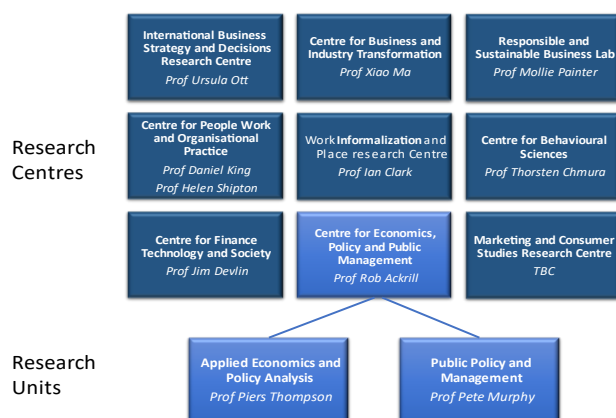


Figure 1. NBS Research Centres and Research Units

The PPM research group continues to work with an extensive network of associates, visiting scholars and collaborators both within NTU and in the wider academic and practitioner communities (Appendix A). These associates contributed hugely to the group's outputs and to its influence in both academia and to the policy and practice of public service delivery internationally, nationally, and locally.

As in recent years, the group has been greatly assisted in their efforts to develop the international dimensions to their work by **Professor Ileana Steccolini** from Essex University (formerly of Newcastle and Bocconi Universities), by **Professor Joyce Liddle** of Northumbria University by **Professor Greg Bamber** of Monash Business School in Melbourne and more recently by **Professor Toshi Ishihara** of Kwansei Gakuin University in Japan.

Professor Steccolini is Professor of Accounting, President of the International Research Society for Public Management and founder and chair of the Accounting and Accountability Special Interest Group of the International Research Society for Public Management. Professor Liddle is the former Honorary Chair of Joint University Council for Public Administration in the UK and previously was the chair of the Public Policy and Management Research Group when she was at NTU. Professor Greg Bamber is the Director, International Consortium for Research in Employment & Work, Centre for Global Business, Monash Business School, and a member of the External NBS Research Advisory Board. Professor Toshi Ishihara of Kwansei Gakuin University in Japan is the Chair of CIPFA (Japan) and Honorary Professor at Edinburgh, Kent, and Birmingham Universities.

Since December 2021, Dr Peter Eckersley, has been honoured by a research fellowship at the Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space in Erkner (near Berlin), where he has been researching climate policy in German cities and the PPM research group have continued to benefit from Dr Peter Eckersley's joint appointment. In August 2022, Dr Martin Jones visited Kwansei Gakuin University in Japan. Kwansei Gakuin are the lead partner of a Joint Research Project investigating whether the (former) Audit Commissions Performance Management Regime for Local Authorities in England has lessons for the performance management regime for local authorities in Japan. Dr Jones was appointed as a Visiting Professor at Kwansei Gakuin University.

This year because of circumstances outside of our control our attendance at national and international conferences has unfortunately been curtailed for another year, although there has been a return to face-to-face conferences in 2023, and we are expecting a full return in 2024.

The 'core' members of the group in 2023 were: -

Professor Peter Murphy, Director of the Public Policy and Management Research Group.

Associate Professor Peter Eckersley, Deputy Director of the Public Policy and Management Research Group

Associate Professor Zara Whysall Department of Human Resource Management.

Associate Professor Will Rossiter, Director Economic Strategy Research Bureau.

Dr Martin Jones, Head of the Department of Accounting and Finance

Dr Sarah Pass, Department of Human Resource Management.

Dr Michael Hewitt, Economics Department.

Dr David Candon, Economics Department.

Dr Diana Frost Department of Management

Dr Yu-Ling Liu-Smith, Research Fellow (Health and Social Care)

Dr Catriona Logue, Economics Department.

Katarzyna Lakoma, Research Fellow and Doctoral Candidate (Emergency Services)

Bernard Kofi Dom, Lecturer Accounting and Finance Department and Doctoral Candidate.

Charlotte Pell Doctoral Candidate (Emergency Services)

The group's structure and its activities have continually evolved to meet the interest of its members, to facilitate the Business School research agenda and to contribute to the Business Schools submissions to the Research Excellence Frameworks and its international accreditations, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and EQUIS, the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD). During 2023, NBS had an EQUIS reaccreditation visit in November and the results are currently awaited.

Although, the next sections outlines the NBS strategic plans for the future, and the group's purpose and structure, this annual report is primarily concerned with reporting the activity of the group in the past year 2023, which are documented in Sections 5 and 6.

2. NBS Research and Innovation Plan 2019-23.

In January 2020, the Deputy VC (Research and Innovations) announced a new title, format and timescale for the School Research Plans which during the last four years have been entitled School Research and Innovation Plans. The plans are accompanied by an annual investment bid. The previous plans were required to align with the NTU submission to REF2021 and reflect the university's adoption of three career pathways (Teaching & Practice, Teaching & Research and Teaching & Scholarship).

In June 2019, the Business School and the University had approved the latest version of the NBS Research Plan 2019-23. This articulated the schools' intention to continue to make a significant step change in the quality and quantity of research outputs and to increase the level of research capacity and capability of the school during this period. It sought to build on the success of REF2014, and the first successful accreditations by AACBS and EQUIS. The 2021 - 2023 NBS Research & Innovation Plans were set within this longer-term strategy which itself reflected the Business Schools strategic plan to 2025.

The NBS School Research & Innovation Revised plan for 2021-23

In March 2021, NBS updated its Research and Innovation Plan and confirmed the two new overarching Strategic Objectives that were included in 2021 to reflect the NTU strategic vision following the review of the university's mission in the 'University Reimagined' initiative.

Strategic Objective 1. Overall Research Objective

To continuously improve and facilitate NBS research excellence and scholarship in the fields of business, economics, and management.

- To develop our individual and collective research capacity and capability to internationally excellent and world leading levels so as to meet all four international business school accreditations by 2025.
- to investigate and research both nationally and internationally, and to nurture and develop future generations of researchers in both our business and management research disciplinary and interdisciplinary research.

Strategic Objective 2. NBS Contribution to NTU Strategic Research Themes

The university has identified and invested in the development of inter-disciplinary research under 5 Strategic Research themes. These are:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Medical Technologies and Advanced Materials
- Safety and Security of Citizens and Society
- Sustainable Futures, and
- Global Heritage: Science, Management and Development

NBS and the PPMRG are committed to developing interdisciplinary research and to developing its contribution to the NTU strategic themes. NBS and PPMRG has significant contributions, and an existing research footprint in three themes (Health and Wellbeing, the Safety and Security of Citizens and Society and Sustainable Futures).

Strategic Objective 3. The 2021 REF outcome.

This strategic is currently being review following the completion of the REF 2021 exercise and the publication of the results last year. The university is already well advanced in its planning for the submission for REF 2028 following initial guidance published by the Higher Education Councils who design and implement these exercises. The university has also appointed a new Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation), Professor Richard Eames who joined the university in January 2023. The DVC (R&I) will oversee the strategy for preparing the NTU submission for REF 2028.

Strategic Objective 4. Research Leadership, Infrastructure, Capacity and Capability.

The NBS Research Leadership, infrastructure capacity and capability were required by the university to be reviewed over the year 2022/23, following the publication of the REF2021 results. This is an ongoing exercise but the new research leadership structure, has been agreed. The new Associate Dean Research Professor Jo Richardson now chairs the NBS Research and Innovation Committee and be responsible overall for producing the NBS REF2028 submission. She is assisted by three Director posts (Directors for Research Outputs for Research Impact and for Research Income). Each of these posts is formally supported by a Deputy or Joint appointment, and all of these appointments have been made. In 2024 there will be formal reviews of the Research Center's and the research infrastructure with the intention of having the new arrangements in place by the start of the academic year 2024/25.

Strategic Objective 5. NBS Research Centers.

As mentioned above and identified on Figure 1. 'NBS Research Centres and Research Units' the nine current centres and their leaders are listed below.

- Responsible and Sustainable Business Lab led by Prof Mollie Painter
- Centre for People, Work and Organisational Practice led by Prof Helen Shipton, and Prof Daniel King
- Work Informalization and Place Research Centre led by Prof Ian Clark
- Centre for International Business Strategy and Decisions led by Prof Ursula Ott
- Centre for Behavioural Sciences led by Prof Thorsten Chmura
- Centre for Economics, Policy and Public Management led by Prof Rob Ackrill
- Centre for Finance, Technology and Society led by Prof James Devlin
- Centre for Business and Industry Transformation led by Prof Xiao Ma
- Marketing and Consumer Studies Research Centre (currently vacant)

As shown on Figure 1 in the introduction to this report the Centre for Economics, Policy and Public Management led by Prof Rob Ackrill has two Research Units

- Applied Economics and Policy Analysis led by Prof Piers Thompson.
- Public Policy and Management led by Prof Peter Murphy and Dr Peter Eckersley.

Strategic Objective 6. Investment strategy

The investment strategy for research at NBS focuses upon building research leadership, capacity, and capability through the school wide strategic leadership of the Research and Innovation Committee and its sub-groups, working with and through the NBS research centers. As well as developing school wide leadership and infrastructure, investment over the last four years has been focused and directed into developing robust and enduring research infrastructure and research support for all research centers and groups.

3. The PPM Research Unit: Purpose and Objectives.

The Public Policy and Management Research Group reviews its purpose and objectives annually in order to remain current and relevant to the schools' aims and objectives for research. Although there has been a review, the group's **purpose** for 2023 remained the same as in the previous year which was to:

- Provide a focus for the scholarly activities and a distinctive research identity for public, leadership, management and governance research within the Business School.
- Provide a catalyst for organisational, staff and curriculum development in public policy, public management and service delivery.
- Generate interest and financial support for research and other scholarly activity in public policy and management.
- Promote, disseminate, and support the research of members of the group, and our collaborators and associates.
- Facilitate the creation of public value and optimise the social impact and influence of the research and activities of its members.
- Facilitate interdisciplinary and international collaborations, within Nottingham Business School, across Nottingham Trent University and in the wider academic community interested in the theory and practice of public policy and management.

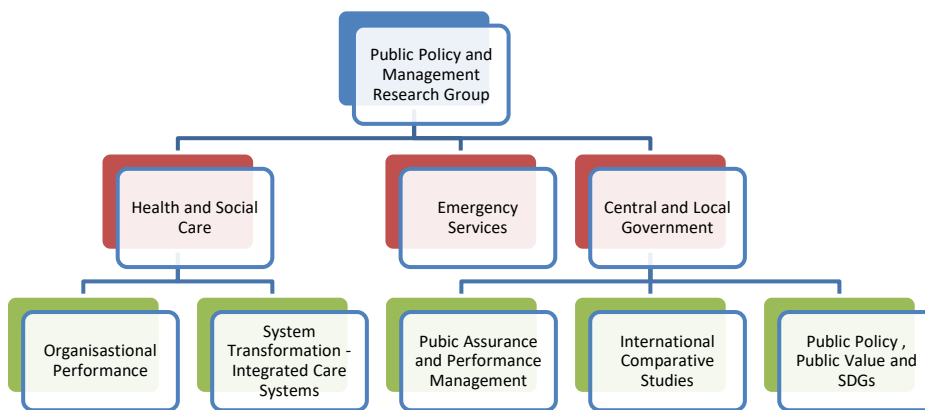
The latest **objectives** of the group acknowledge and embrace the Strategic Objectives of the NBS Research Strategy which are articulated in the Research and Innovation Strategy. The current objectives for PPMRG have remained broadly consistent for the last six years.

To facilitate the creation of public value and optimise the social, economic and environmental impact of our research on the teaching, theory and practice of public management inside and outside of NBS.

- To maintain and develop the current applied and operational research focus without inhibiting new initiatives or missing significant opportunities.
- Implement the PPMRG's annually reviewed strategy for the development of research into public policy, administration and management.
- To maintain and develop the external profile of the group and maintain interdisciplinary and international collaborations with identified individuals and institutions.
- To make an appropriate contribution to meeting the ambitions of the NBS Research Plan, the NTU Strategic Research Themes and the NBS submission to the Research Excellent Framework.
- To expand research capacity through grant-related activity, consultancy contracts and engagement with funding providers.

4. Group Structure and Interests

The Public Policy and Management Research Group has been structured for the last five years around three broad areas of interest, which are shown on the diagram below.



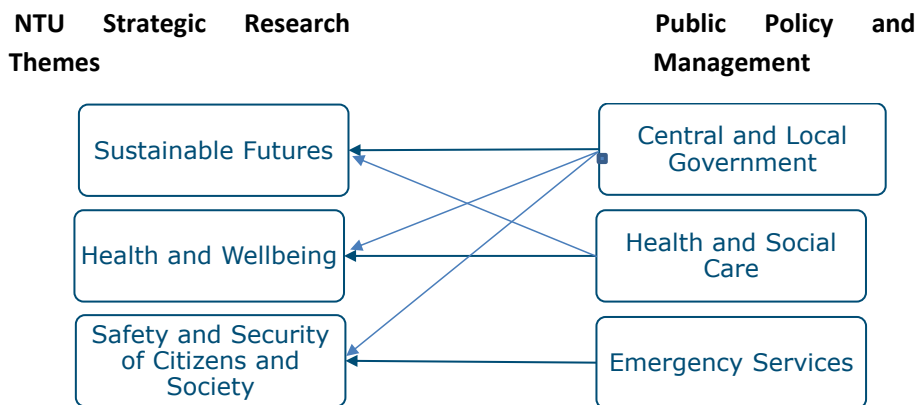
Two of the programmes ‘Health, and Social Care’, and ‘Central and Local Government’ have developed two and three complementary work streams respectively: while ‘Emergency Services’, was merged into a single generic work in 2017. This structure was then maintained for the duration of the REF2021 period, reviewed and updated revised as part of the CEPPM Centre’s 2023 review.

The group are also actively involved in a number of projects that fall under other research groups within NBS most notably the Applied Economics and Policy group, the Centre for Finance, Technology and Society and the Responsible and Sustainable Business Lab.

NBS and PPMRG actively encourage all members of the research group to become members of another research group, and this has greatly facilitated and promoted inter-disciplinary research over the last five years. In addition, we have established links with Research Groups sharing our interests across the university particularly research groups in the School of Social Sciences.

NTU has also designated five Strategic Research Themes which are intended to promote and support interdisciplinary research across the university. As mentioned above, PPMRG actively contributes to to three of these themes; Sustainable Futures, Health and Wellbeing and the

Safety and Security of Citizens and Society. The key contributions to the NTU strategic research themes are illustrated on the diagram below.



5. Review of Activity in 2023.

The group has seen an improved year in terms of publications and scholastic outputs (see section 7 below) but has still been adversely affected by the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the need to reschedule both the 2021 REF submission and the Business School’s AACSB and EQUIS reaccreditations. We anticipate the affect diminishing as nearly all our regular domestic and international conferences, symposia and workshops are schedule to return to normal face to face operations in 2024.

The focus has been on publishing outputs which will facilitate our external ‘impact’ with communities of practice as well as building further research capacity and collaborations, developing new researchers, and building on our international links as we attempt to strengthen the schools’ international profile.

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Last year the team started to develop projects that could potentially form the basis for Impact Case Studies for REF2029. As of December 2023, the business school and the REF2029 Planning Group have reduced the NBS portfolio of 18 emerging impact case studies to 9 case studies to be targeted at REF2029 of which 4 are based within the PPM group (see Appendix B). In addition, we have 3 case studies being developed in parallel with preparations for the 2029 REF exercise but developing along a longer-term impact trajectory.

- Local economic development research with impacts on policy and practice (Rossiter)
- Transforming business through culture change (Whysall)
- Engage for Success: Improving workplace and employee engagement (Pass)

- The policy delivery and performance management of Local Authority services (Murphy/Eckersley/Jones)
- Improving policy, service delivery and public assurance in the reform of Fire and Rescue Services in England (Murphy/Eckersley).
- Health and Social Care: the employment prospects of carers and the development of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Social Care (Murphy)
- Early Childhood Development in Nottingham and Children missing from education (Liu-Smith)

To facilitate our strategy for development and impact, and to contribute to the NBS research environment, in previous years the group has attempted to help host, organise and/or support a number of national and international academic and practitioner conferences. Amongst other initiatives we have supported (virtual or traditional) conferences or panels relating to public management, public accountability, and performance management. These have again been disrupted this year as some conferences have continued to be delivered using online delivery platforms, or in hybridized formats, although this form of delivery continues to mean the size and number of contributions has been reduced. Nevertheless, group members, individually or collectively, have been actively involved in organising online conference programmes, panels, delivering papers, and organising debates, although not to the same extent as in pre-pandemic years.

Wherever possible, and subject to the constraints of the peer review assessment process, members attending conferences try and provide multiple contributions in terms of papers and presentations at the conferences they do attend. Group members also provided papers and presentations at professional practitioner conferences and have published in professional and institutional publications, as we look to increase the practical and societal impact of our work.

The group runs an annual series of internal research seminars, which is integrated with the Accountancy and Finance Departments seminar series co-ordinated by Dr Stephanie Giamporcaro. This monthly seminar series was re-established in 2022 on a hybrid-virtual basis.

The new NBS Research and Innovation Strategy, the EQUIS re-accreditation and the REF2021 submission previously had a considerable influence on the groups' activity. This year and last the group has had to spend a considerable amount of time in undertaking primary fieldwork for new projects, and building the research foundations of potential impact case studies for the school to consider for the 2029 REF. All three sub-units within the group have continued to organise their activity to meet these challenges and continue to develop potential impact case studies from their work, as well as strengthening our contribution to the NTU/NBS research environment.

The impact of the pandemic can be illustrated by the following table which provides the number and types of publication the group have published since 1st January 2018. In every year since the team was reconfigured in 2015 the number of outputs increased, until the last four years, when the Covid-19 pandemic coincided with end of the last REF period, although there has been a welcome upturn over the last three years.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Peer Reviewed Journal Articles	6	13	14	13	12	8	12	18
Book Chapters (of which Books)	2	13 (2)	14 (2)	11 (2)	7 (1)	3 (0)	5 (0)	6 (1)
Professional Journal Articles	5	3	4	5	3	4	2	6
Reports for External Bodies	8	3	11	11	8	10	19	8
Conference Presentations	30	19	27	43	12	24	26	29
Working Papers	0	1	4	3	0	2	1	3
Other Publications	2	0	0	8	3	3	3	9
Totals	53	52	74	94	45	54	68	79

6. Published Outputs 2023

Academic Journal Articles

CANDON, D., HEWITT, M., LIU-SMITH, Y.-L. and MURPHY, P., 2023. Do carer tasks predict carer employment? Evidence from the Survey of Adult Carers in England. *Social Policy and Administration*. ISSN 0144-5596

ECKERSLEY, P., FLYNN, A., FERRY, L. and LAKOMA, K., 2023. [Austerity, political control, and supplier selection in English local government: implications for autonomy in multi-level systems.](#) *Public Management Review*, 25 (1), pp. 1-21. ISSN 1471-9037

ECKERSLEY, P., FLYNN, A., LAKOMA, K. and FERRY, L., 2023. [Public procurement as a policy tool: the territorial dimension.](#) *Regional Studies*, 57 (10), pp. 2087-2101. ISSN 0034-3404

ECKERSLEY, P., HARRISON, O. and POBEREZHSKAYA, M., 2023. [A new framework to understand the drivers of policy mixes in multilevel contexts: the case of urban air pollution.](#) *Environmental Policy and Governance*, 33 (2), pp. 178-190. ISSN 1756-932X

ECKERSLEY, P., HAUPT, W., WIEGLEB, V., NIEWIND, J. and OTTO, A., 2023. [Intentionality and visibility in state- and society-led climate approaches: towards a more comprehensive understanding of local adaptation initiatives](#). *Geographica Helvetica*, 78 (3), pp. 369-380. ISSN 0016-7312

ECKERSLEY, P. and PELL, C., 2023. [Debate: we need to be honest about the validity and purpose of business cases in public services](#). *Public Money and Management*, 43 (5), pp. 434-435. ISSN 0954-0962

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KERN, K., ECKERSLEY, P. and HAUPT, W., 2023. [Diffusion and upscaling of municipal climate mitigation and adaptation strategies in Germany](#). *Regional Environmental Change*, 23 (1): 28. ISSN 1436-3798

LAKOMA, K., 2023. [A comparative study of governance changes on the perceptions of accountability in Fire and Rescue Services in England](#). *Public Administration*. ISSN 0033-3298

LAKOMA, K. and LIU-SMITH, Y-L 2023. Debate: Lessons learned from the emergency services' response to the Covid 19 pandemic. *Public Money and Management*. DOI: [10.1080/09540962.2023.2291291](https://doi.org/10.1080/09540962.2023.2291291)

LAKOMA, K. and MURPHY, P., 2023. [The evaluation of Safe and Well visits as part of the prevention activities of fire and rescue services in England](#). *International Journal of Emergency Services*. ISSN 2047-0894

McCANN, M. and HEWITT, M., 2023. [Academic performance and work placements: does academic performance influence the decision to complete a work placement?](#) *Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning*, 13 (1), pp. 97-112. ISSN 2042-3896

MURPHY, P. and LAKOMA, K., 2023. [How did fire and rescue services in England respond to the COVID-19 pandemic?](#) *International Journal of Emergency Services*, 12 (1), pp. 77-90. ISSN 2047-0894

MURPHY, P., LAKOMA, K., ECKERSLEY, P., DOM, B.K. and JONES, M., 2023. [Public goods, public value and public audit: the Redmond Review and English local government](#). *Public Money and Management*, 43 (3), pp. 242-250. ISSN 0954-0962

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Field Code Changed

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BARBERA, C., **DOM, B.K.**, DU BOYS, C., KORAC, S., SALITERER, I. and STECCOLINI, I., 2023. [Government financial resilience – a European perspective.](#) In: C.L. JOHNSON, T.T. MOLDOGAZIEV and J.M. ROSS, eds., *Research handbook on city and municipal finance*. Elgar handbooks in public administration and management. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, pp. 408-432.

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HAUPT, W., **ECKERSLEY, P.**, IRMISCH, J. and KERN, K., 2023. [Fridays for Future auf lokaler Ebene: Aktivität und Stärke der Ortsgruppen in deutschen Städten.](#) In: J. POLLEX and A. SOSSDORF, eds., *Fridays for Future. Einordnung, Rezeption und Wirkung der neuen Klimabewegung*. Wiesbaden: Springer, pp. 213-240. ISBN 9783658414467

MURPHY, P., 2023. [Housing policy and provision after COVID- 19.](#) In: A. BONNER, ed., *COVID-19 and social determinants of health wicked issues and relationalism*. Bristol: Policy Press.

PASS, S., KOUGIANNOU, N., RIDGWAY, M. and **LIU-SMITH, Y.-L.**, 2023. [Exploring employees' lived experiences at NHS England during the COVID-19 pandemic: the role of meaningful work.](#) In: *CIPD Applied Research Conference 2023*. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, pp. 3-5.

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ALLISON, S. and HEWITT, M. 2023. Identifying socio-demographic characteristics of pregnant women presenting as smokers during pregnancy: employing Acorn segment types. Nottingham: Nottingham Trent University.

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PASS, S., COURT-SMITH, J., LIU-SMITH, Y.-L., POPESCU, S., RIDGWAY, M. and KOUGIANNOU, N., 2023. [Engage for Success: UK employee engagement survey 2022: exploring the impact of COVID-19 on employee engagement in the UK](#). London: Engage for Success.

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DOM, B.K., **MURPHY, P.**, **JONES, M.**, and COLLINS, A. Wicked problems and tempting solutions: Navigating Local Government finance amid austerity and perceived vulnerability. ICOPA Symposium Durham 11-12th December 2023

ECKERSLEY, P., **LAKOMA, K.**, CAYGILL, T., **MURPHY, P.** and **PELL, C.**, 2023. [Understanding power and accountability in different governance paradigms](#). In: IRSPM Conference 2023, Budapest, Hungary, 3-5 April 2023.

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Appendix A.

Associates, Visiting Scholars, and Research Collaborators

Professor Joyce Liddle (Northumbria)

Professor Ileana Steccolini (Newcastle)

Professor Toshi Ishihara (Kwansei Gakuin)

Professor Iris Saliterer (Freiburg)

Professor Malcolm Prowle (Gloucestershire)

Professor David Buchanan (Cranfield)

Professor Paresh Wankhade (Edge Hill)

Professor Laurence Ferry (Durham)

Professor Ian Hodgkinson (Loughborough)

Professor Greg Bamber (Monash)

Professor Anthony Zito (Newcastle)

Professor Charlotte Burns (Sheffield)

Professor Kristine Kern (Leibniz Institute)

Dr Wolfgang Haupt (Leibniz Institute)

Dr Paul Tobin (Manchester)

Dr Anthony Flynn (Cardiff)

Associate Professor Kirsten Greenhalgh (Loughborough)

Associate Professor Russ Glennon (Manchester Metropolitan)

Appendix B.

Impact Case Studies in Development

1. Local and regional economic development and regeneration

Team: Will Rossiter, David Smith, Daniel McDonald Junor, Craig Bickerton and Konstantinos Karagounis.

2. Fire and Rescue Services

Team: Pete Murphy, Peter Eckersley Michael Hewitt, Katarzyna Lakoma, Charlotte Pell and Florian Biermann.

3. Engage for Success

Team: Sarah Pass, Nadia Kougiannou, Maranda Ridgway and Yu-Ling Liu-Smith.

4. Transforming business through culture change

Team: Zara Whysall, Maria Karanika-Murray and Aquila Yeong.

5. Health and Social Care

Team: Pete Murphy, Michael Hewitt, David Candon and Yu-Ling Liu-Smith.

6. Local and Central Government

Team: Pete Murphy, Peter Eckersley, Martin Jones, Katarzyna Lakoma and Bernard Kofi Dom.

7. Early Childhood and Children missing from education.

Team: Yu-Ling Liu-Smith, Catriona Logue, David Candon and Pete Murphy.