Welcome to the first newsletter from the Emergency Services Research Unit at Nottingham Trent University.

The newsletter will be produced annually in order to provide regular updates on ESRU activities – but we hope it will also be the beginnings of a dialogue with those working in the emergency services.
Welcome

ESRU, although primarily based in the Division of Psychology, is a multidisciplinary research unit containing academics from across the University.

ESRU has a core membership who specialise in emergency services and disaster related research, and an associate membership whose primary research interests lie outside of the emergency services but whose skills are drawn upon for specific research projects. We also work with external collaborators both nationally and internationally, including colleagues based in countries such as Canada, Ireland, America and Australia.

ESRU takes a broad view of emergency services research, focusing not only on the services themselves but also on a variety of related areas. Although each member has their own personal research focus, we are passionate about supporting the emergency services and so are open to researching any topic that the services need us to. All our members are committed to conducting research that is meaningful and useful, research that has the potential to create positive changes for the emergency services, their members and the communities they serve.

This has led us to work in partnership with a wide variety of partner organisations, including not only those from the emergency services themselves but also those from related organisations, for example, trade unions, charities, government departments, training institutions and commercial organisations. We would be very happy to hear from those working in the emergency services, or in related areas, who are looking to work in partnership with academia. We also welcome suggestions for our future research directions. In addition to our research activities we also provide consultancy and training across a variety of areas. Again, if you have any needs in these areas please do get in touch.

If, for some reason, we cannot help you ourselves then we will endeavour always to put you in touch with someone who can.

ESRU membership includes academics with expertise in psychology, sociology, politics, traumatology, philosophy, accountancy, business management, forensic and therapeutic psychology, economics, ethics, public policy and management and environmental health. We use a range of research methods and approaches in our work, including advanced quantitative and statistics techniques, such as structural equation modelling and latent class analysis. We also use advanced qualitative techniques, such as phenomenology, participatory action research and visual analysis. However, we have no preferred methods instead choosing those that fit the particular research question. ESRU is an energetic group and our activities are many and varied, ranging from pure academic research stimulated by our own research interests to collaborative work initiated by external organisations related to the emergency services. We hope you will find news of our activities interesting. If you do and you would like more details about any of the projects contained within, or would like copies of any of the papers we’ve published, then please get in touch as we are always happy to discuss our work. We would be delighted if this newsletter created new relationships and opportunities for partnership working.

Viv Brunsden
Head of the Emergency Services Research Unit

In this issue
- A taste of our publications
- Knowledge Transfer Partnerships
- Research focus
- PhD focus
- Research
- A new academic journal
- Editorial activities
- Yearbook
- Other recent ESRU activities
- Teaching focus
- Seminar and conference news
- Relevant Masters courses

A taste of our publications

The following list offers a flavour of just some of ESRU’s previous publications and research reports. Where possible we have provided links to websites where the publicly available publications can be accessed; but if you would like copies of other articles listed then please do get in touch.


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Knowledge Transfer Partnership

ESRU has been successful in gaining funding for a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) with Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS).

KTPs are sponsored by government and research councils in order to encourage businesses to use the knowledge, technology and skills available within the UK’s universities. The funding is jointly provided by the Economics & Social Research Council and the Technology Strategy Board. KTP projects usually last for two years but can last for up to three years (there is also a shorter KTP scheme for projects lasting under a year). Outputs emerge from the projects continually rather than only appearing at the end of the project. This allows the organisations involved to gain some relatively immediate benefits as well as longer term in-depth considerations.

ESRU were successful in gaining funding totalling £125,434 for a two year project. The KTP will evaluate the various safety initiatives NFRS uses to support the end of the project. This allows the sharing of the knowledge and technology services that NFRS operates across both the city and county. Stages one and two developed the evidence base for the review and outlined a preferred option for reconfiguration of the service. Stage three is the formal public consultation exercise, which is now complete. As well as their formal report to Nottinghamshire Fire Authority on stages one and two, Pete and Kirsten have also produced and presented two working papers arising out of the project at national conferences. The second of these papers was jointly authored with Craig Parkin who has acted as the project director on behalf of NFRS.

Their initial thoughts were set out in presentations to the Public Administration Committee Conference (PAC) and the Institute of Fire Engineers (IFE) / Fire Service College (FSC) Research Event in 2010. An article based around these initial thoughts was also featured in Fire Magazine and submitted as evidence to the Department of Communities and Local Government Select Committee on Audit and Inspection in 2011. Following the publication of the Select Committee Report in July 2011 and the subsequent Open Public Services White Paper their latest views have now also been set out in presentations to the PAC conference in September 2011 and have again featured in Fire Magazine in October 2011.

Pete and Kirsten have also acted as independent consultants for Nottingham Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) in respect of the first two stages of their Nottingham and Nottinghamshire “Fire Cover Review”. This review follows the Integrated Risk Management Planning process and will lead to the reconfiguration of NFRS’ services across both the city and county. Stages one and two developed the evidence base for the review and outlined a preferred option for reconfiguration of the community.

One significant output from the project that is already benefiting NFRS is Tom’s authoring of an information sharing guidance document for NFRS staff. This offers an easy to understand guidance to key legislation, such as the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act, explaining that these Acts are not a barrier to the sharing of information when it is in the interests of public safety and protection of the vulnerable. This document is already easing the sharing of information between NFRS and its partner organisations and is likely to have a significant impact on the safety of the communities that NFRS serves.

To find out more about this project, or to discuss establishing a new Knowledge Transfer Partnership with ESRU, please contact us on esru@ntu.ac.uk.

Research focus

The current government have announced a strategic review of the National Fire and Rescue Framework and Pete Murphy and Kirsten Greenhalgh have researched the potential components that should be included within the new framework.
ESRU members have recently agreed to act in various editorial roles for the publication Resilience, which is the quarterly distributed publication of the Emergency Planning Society. It features articles not only on emergency planning per se but on any aspects of emergencies and disaster, including emergency service working.

Resilience welcomes contributions from those working in the field of emergencies, as well as from academic researchers and student contributors.

• James Houston has become the Book Reviews Editor. As well as reviewing texts himself, James will be facilitating the reviews of others. If you are interested in reviewing a book related to any aspect of emergencies or disaster, or if you wish to recommend a book for others to review, please contact James at james.houston@ntu.ac.uk.

• Jeff Goatcher has become the Research Digest Editor. In this role Jeff will be reviewing a range of recent journal articles that may be of interest to readers, summarising their salient points and framing these in ways that are accessible to lay readers. If you have suggestions for recent publications to include in the digest please contact Jeff at jeffrey.goatcher@ntu.ac.uk.

• Viv Brunsden has become Research Methods Series Editor. If you wish to write an article (generally around 1,500 words) about any aspect of research methods or methodology please contact Viv who will be happy to send you the Guide for Contributors as well as assisting you with preparing your article. Alternatively, please contact Viv if you have suggestions for suitable topics that the series could address. She can be contacted at vivienne.brunsden@ntu.ac.uk.

• ESRU members acted as consultative group members for a project entitled Developing Community Resilience Through Schools, funded by the then Department for Children Schools and Families.

• Pete Murphy was appointed a Non-Executive Director and Board Member of Nottinghamshire County Primary Care Trust in July 2011. He has been a Non-Executive Director and Board Member of Nottingham City Primary Care Trust since 2007 where he chairs the Risk and Assurance Sub-Committee, and is the designated Non-Executive Board Member for Emergency Planning.

• Viv Brunsden sat on the expert panel of the ‘Fire & Rescue Services’ (NB scroll down to find the section titled ‘Fire & Rescue Services’).In order to facilitate the firefighter role; relatives’ perception of risk (physical and emotional) to their firefighter; the management of their firefighter’s reactions to their job and the use of the victim’s family structure formed by firefighters’ peer groups at work (which Rowena has termed the ‘FIRS family’) to facilitate coping and normalisation of these experiences. The theoretical model resulting from this analysis will be tested using structural equation modelling. She is about to collect data for the second study and the Firefighters Charity are kindly assisting with this distribution of questionnaires. It is hoped that this research will make a significant contribution to the quality of life of FIRS relatives.

PhD focus

Rowena Hill is currently completing a part-time PhD despite her other ESRU commitments. Her study is entitled ‘Investigating occupational consequences for relatives of firefighters.’

The aim of this project is to establish the effects of the role of firefighter on the relatives of FIRS personnel. In her research Rowena is using a sequential mixed method design, with an initial qualitative study followed by a quantitative study. The qualitative study involved interviews with the relatives of firefighters and when subjected to a grounded theory analysis revealed a number of key issues. These are: the sacrifices that families are making in order to facilitate the firefighter role; relatives’ perception of risk (physical and emotional) to their firefighter; the management of their firefighter’s reactions to their job and the use of the victim’s family structure formed by firefighters’ peer groups at work (which Rowena has termed the ‘FIRS family’) to facilitate coping and normalisation of these experiences. The theoretical model resulting from this analysis will be tested using structural equation modelling. She is about to collect data for the second study and the Firefighters Charity are kindly assisting with this distribution of questionnaires. It is hoped that this research will make a significant contribution to the quality of life of FIRS relatives.

ESRU members received funding for a SIS project with Rural Development Initiatives to evaluate wildfire prevention initiatives. The project used a mix of questionnaire-based measures and environmental ethnography.

• Jeff Goatcher, Rowena Hill and James Houston received funding from the Higher Education Innovation Fund to facilitate knowledge transfer from NTU’s School of Social Sciences to the ‘real’ world, so that research findings can be put to good use by red world organisations. They are looking for external organisations interested in benefiting from the scheme. If you have organisational issues that would benefit from academic input then please contact Jeff Goatcher to find out more about this exciting initiative. He can be emailed at jeffrey.goatcher@ntu.ac.uk.

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• Jeff Goatcher received funding from the Economics and Social Research Council to run an event as part of its annual Festival of Social Science. The event focused on environmental sociology, arising from Jeff’s interest in the sociological impact of the Grenfell disaster.

• The Centre for Applied Psychological Research at the University of Huddersfield hosted a presentation on the activities of the Emergency Services Research Unit.

• Viv Brunsden has acted, for the fourth year running, as member of the Advisory Panel for the joint Institute of Fire Engineers and Fire Service College Annual Conference ‘Fire Related Research and Developments (RE10).’

• Jeff Goatcher visited schools and FE colleges giving presentations on the Bhopal disaster in relation to corporate responsibility and barriers to community recovery.

• ESRU members completed a SIS project to facilitate the development of ethical leadership and organisational values within emergency services organisations. The project developed a toolkit to be used in house by organisations. However, a key finding from the toolkit’s pilot project was that the toolkit was considered less useful than the facilitation activities of ESRU members. The toolkit is therefore being made available as part of a consultancy service delivered by ESRU members rather than as a self-applied tool.

ESRU films

ESRU members are committed to getting their work outside of the University and academic world and into the ‘real’ world where it can do some good.

Because of this commitment we sometimes disseminate in ways that academics don’t traditionally use. This includes giving filmed interviews or even making short films ourselves. If you are interested in watching rather than reading about the work of ESRU then the following films are available to view online:

• Beck Bell, Hox Coll. available at: http://tinyurl.com/hwv7q/5k

• Firefighter Attacks, available at: http://tinyurl.com/colception1

• Psychology and the Fire & Rescue Service, available at: http://tinyurl.com/d06fdcot

(These are films that ‘Fire & Rescue Services’)

Related to this she also held a role as a Scientific and Technical Advisor to CLG’s Emergency Room which is activated in the case of a major emergency or disaster and draws upon academic expertise as is needed for, and appropriate to, the specific incident.

• ESRU members contributed to a Skills for Justice working party developing Vocational Qualifications in Civil Contingencies.

• The Centre for Applied Psychological Research at the University of Huddersfield hosted a presentation on the activities of the Emergency Services Research Unit.

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Editorial activities

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Teaching focus

ESRU is unique in running the only module in the UK on Psychology and the Emergency Services. The module is an option available to third year students studying BSc (Hons) Psychology.

The module uses real world enquiries to explore a diverse variety of psychological issues involved in emergency services working. This year students have focused on such issues as violence towards emergency service workers; crowd behaviour at emergencies; media representations of the emergency services; relatives’ reactions following serious injury to emergency service personnel at emergency events; psychological reactions to traumatic exposure; public disorder and rioting; and police dog training.

Students on the module engage robustly with evidence from practice and with the academic literature. This year students had the chance to write a short digest on a piece of current research. Their work has been collated and will be published in the journal Resilience, across two separate issues. Producing such high quality work to a publishable standard is a significant achievement on the part of undergraduates in psychology.

The module always includes external speakers from the emergency services who generously share their experiences with the students. It also includes field trips; for example, this year the students visited the control room at Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service. Past years have visited places such as Nottinghamshire Police Service’s Dog and Equine Training Centre. Wherever possible students feedback their research findings to the emergency services, either directly to personnel or through conference presentations and journal article submissions. Past work has been so well received that it has even led to policy changes at those services who work closely with the module. The realization that their work can have such a real world impact is incredibly meaningful for students who invest heavily in the module. Former students have subsequently made applications to work with the police and fire services following graduation.

A new Emergency Management Conference

Planning is under way for a new annual conference titled Emergency Management: Themes in Emergency Planning, Response and Recovery.

The conference will focus on all issues relating to emergency management and the emergency services more broadly. The new conference will be held on Tuesday 13 November 2012 at Nottingham Conference Centre. Keynote speakers will include expert names from within emergency services research, including a number of international speakers. It is hoped that the event will bring together researchers and practitioners for their mutual benefit. A call for papers is available at www.ntu.ac.uk/s3conferences.

Other seminar and conference news

• ESRU members presented a symposium at the Alternative Futures II Conference held at Nottingham Trent University on 22 February 2012. Jeff Griston presented Signs of Entitlement: the relationship between leisure, heritage and rights which considers tourist activity in relation to wild fires; Rowena Hill presented The family perspective within the work family interface: the dynamic, monitoring, supporting and protective family which explores FRS families’ situations; Tom Simpson presented Safeguarding pre-service Fire & Rescue Services’ Initiatives; and finally Pete Murphy and Kirsten Greenhalgh presented Nottingham Business School’s Fire and Rescue Services Research Programme.

• Rowena Hill and Viv Brunsden acted as two of the three Chairs at the Institute of Fire Engineers and Fire Service College Annual Conference: Fire Related Research and Developments (FERD) Conference. At the same conference Tom Simpson presented a paper entitled The development of evaluation strategies to measure the impact of NPCs community safety interventions and Pete Murphy and Kirsten Greenhalgh (with Craig Park) presented a paper entitled The Fire Cover Review in Nottinghamshire: Interim findings of Stage 3 of a Fire and Rescue Service Reorganisation.

• Pete Murphy acted as Project Manager for last year’s Public Administration Committee (PAC) Conference (working with foyer kiddle who was head Academia). The conference explored the theme of public administration in times of austerity and included papers on all aspects of public service organisation and delivery. This annual conference has a regular Emergency Services Research panel within it and ESRU members presented at this on topics including performance management for, and ethical leadership within, the emergency services.

• At a recent NTU research event Rowena Hill presented on a number of ESRU projects which have been conducted in partnership with the emergency services. The partnering model of working operated by ESRU is now being rolled out across the School of Social Sciences, and both Rowena and Viv Brunsden will be acting as Partnership Mentors for other staff across the School.

• Viv Brunsden gained funding from the Qualitative Methods in Psychology Section of the British Psychological Society to run a one day seminar on ‘Visual Methods in Psychology’. One of the presentations was given by Joe Robinson, a professional artist who had worked with ESRU on a SIS funded project into violence towards emergency services personnel. Joe presented some of the artwork he had made which had been inspired by ESRU’s research on this topic. The artwork were designed with the intention of being exhibited alongside ESRU’s research in public spaces such as schools, libraries etc. in an attempt to raise awareness of both the attacks and their detrimental impact on staff.

If you are conducting research into emergency services relevant topics, and would be willing to present to ESRU, we would love to hear from you. Please email Viv Brunsden at vivienne.brunsden@ntu.ac.uk.
Relevant Masters courses

A number of Masters degrees are run in the Division of Psychology which, whilst perhaps not relevant to those working in operational areas of the emergency services, may still have relevance for those working in other areas of these organisations (for example, trauma support, occupational health) or in organisations related to the emergency services (for example, prisons, hospitals, charities).

MSc Forensic Mental Health

This course is designed to provide students with the theoretical understandings, applied skills and research skills which are core to working in forensic related health settings. It is suitable for those already working in mental health settings but who wish to gain a wider understanding of forensic psychological issues; or conversely for those already working in forensic settings who wish to expand their understandings of issues relating to psychological well-being and mental health. It is also suitable for those graduates who intend to work in such settings. The course is taught by academics specialising in forensic and clinically related areas. Study can occur on a full time or on a part time basis to enable practitioners to continue working where possible. For further information please see the degree’s website at www.ntu.ac.uk/s3postgraduate or contact the Programme Leader, James Houston, at james.houston@ntu.ac.uk.

MSc Psychological Well-being and Mental Health

This course is aimed at those wishing to learn more about mental health or who are intending to work, or are already employed, in areas related to mental health. A distinctive feature of the course is the emphasis on well-being as opposed to illness. Students leave the course with in-depth theoretical and applied knowledge, as well as professional and research skills. The degree can be taken full-time or on a part-time basis, in order to enable practitioners to continue working wherever possible. Although the normal entry route is through having a first degree we are open to enquiries from those without degrees but who have alternative and professional qualifications. For further information please see the course’s website at www.ntu.ac.uk/s3postgraduate or contact the Programme Leader: james.houston@ntu.ac.uk

MSc Forensic Psychology

This course is designed to provide psychology graduates with the theoretical understandings and practical skills necessary for work in forensic settings. The degree is taught by a team of practicing forensic psychologists and researchers. The degree is accredited by the British Psychological Society and provides Stage 1 of the Society’s Qualification in Forensic Psychology. For further information please see the degree’s website at www.ntu.ac.uk/s3postgraduate or contact the Programme Leader: belinda.winder@ntu.ac.uk.

If you would like to make enquiries about the contents of this newsletter please contact us on esru@ntu.ac.uk.