


Interviewee:	Professor Juliet Cheetham	
Dates:	27 th February	
Role(s):	Director of Social Work Research Centre	

Interview summary:

<i>Summary of content; with time (min:secs)</i>
Start 0.11 - Description of director role created using collaborative funding, for study of social work.
01.30 - Cheetham was lecturer in applied social studies in Oxford University, then worked as probation officer. Cites Margaret Thatcher's government cuts as reason for taking job in Stirling Uni; also Scotland's wider social services capabilities. Describes relocation as complicated but overall worth it due to Stirling's campus.
04.30 - Discusses move from well-respected Oxford Uni to young Stirling Uni, stating others were against it. Cheetham recognised some departments were weak; claims lecturers lacked confidence. But states it was full of opportunities.
06.30 - Recalls fears over government control over research in social work department due to funding origins.
07.05 - Description of role as director of social work centre; to set up department, find staff and create useful research to use practically. Discussion of centre's purpose to evaluate efficacy of social services.
09.09 - Description of research methods. Themes were selected and researched in Scottish regions; results compared within Scotland and England. Contacts in Edinburgh and Glasgow Universities used to understand background.
12.32 - Role included appointing researchers to main and sub-projects, based on interest and skills.
14.16 - Discussing a lack of obstacles and support from Stirling Uni; acknowledges inexperience of Uni regarding social work research. Policy makers helped research.
16.00 - Addressing weakness in social work department and tensions between staff.
17.25 - Department strengthened when prestigious staff joined Stirling, and more funding grants allowing for more research. Cites Stirling-based conferences as reason for more national attention; led to beginnings of new areas including Dementia Research Faculty on campus. Describes Stirling as uniquely open for opportunities.
19.41 - Stirling described as distinct in specific social work department, focusing on social policy unlike other institutions; links back to Scotland's interest in social policy. Growing staff and external contacts allowed for usable research, describes growing outside interest and growing funding for new areas.

23.47 - Discussion of centre's success, including use of methodological pluralism in a time of methodological uncertainty. Helped strengthen argument for criminal justice being effective when supporting offenders.
29.08 - Discussion of policy work for care homes; department identified areas for cost and quality improvement.
30.11 - Discussion of practical use for social workers, aided by Practitioner Research Programme to provide training in research and paper-writing. Describes this as valuable in dissemination of research, but claims practical applications struggled nonetheless.
31.29 - Describes success in policy making regarding community care for former psychiatric patients in Scotland versus England. States all successes reported on every 4/8 years.
34.22 - Discussion of mutually beneficial relationship between department and Stirling Uni, helped by Principals Kenneth Alexander and John Forty and Senior Deputy Principal Michael Jackson. and Finance department. For example, £800,000 acquired in research grants, resulting in more research capacity. Stirling benefitted and strengthened.
36.32 - Discussion of less collaborative relationships within department; states students and teaching staff could have been more involved.
38.00 - Discussion of department's achievements in Scottish policy making, particularly criminal justice, community service and discharge of psychiatric patients. Suggests centre kickstarted future research in learning disabilities.
39.50 - Describes positive practical relationship with practitioners by involving them in research. States information dissemination key in relations. Lists academic papers, comics, magazines, conferences and videos aided communication of findings.
43.38 - Emphasises again methodological pluralism as key in centre's success and building reputation.
44.50 - Suggests careers were supported and advanced by Stirling's centre due to freedom of opportunities. Claims 30 – 40 staff passed through to build their career. Suggests centre boosted Stirling Uni's overall reputation.
46.36 - Discusses what could've been done differently; suggests greater initial focus on specific areas, argues the department was still successful. For example, methods practiced in Stirling now used widely.
50.00 - States with hindsight the department's achievements were significant and provided unusual ability to contact practitioners and researchers.
End – 53.40

Interview No:	SURSA OH / 103	<p style="text-align: center;"> SURSA University of Stirling Stirling FK9 4LA info@sursa.org.uk www.sursa.org.uk </p>	<p style="text-align: center;"> SURSA  Oral History </p>
Interviewed by:	Kate Skinner		
Date of interview:	27 th February		
Summary completed by:	Violet Cooke		
Date:	5 th February 2025		