

Impact case study (REF3b)

<p>Institution: Robert Gordon University</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: Politics and International Studies (21)</p>
<p>Title of case study: Social Security Policy</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) This case study describes contribution to public knowledge, discussion and debate about social security policy, including contributions to policy development. It is a process where research develops through from engagement and interaction, and engagement and interaction in turn prompts the production of research. This research engagement with the field and authority has prompted a recent change in legislation affecting Scotland.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Professor Spicker's key outputs in this field include</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Poverty and social security</i> (Routledge, 1993) <i>Poverty and the welfare state</i> (Catalyst Foundation, 2002) <i>The idea of poverty</i> (Policy Press, 2007), and <i>How social security works: an introduction to benefits in Britain</i>, (Policy Press 2011)</p> <p>This case study is based on an incremental process in which research, practice and engagement in policy interact, a process involving regular visits to social security offices, group discussions with welfare rights officers and claimants, and negotiations with official bodies. A key example involves Professor Spicker's work as a Special Adviser to the House of Commons Select Committee on Work and Pensions (2007) for their report on the Simplification of social security benefits (see http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmworpen/463/46304.htm), and his current role as Adviser to the Scottish Parliament's Welfare Reform Committee, documented further in section 4 below.</p>
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>The key output is <i>How social security works: an introduction to benefits in Britain</i>, (Policy Press 2011). Reviews of <i>How social security works</i>:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Professor Jonathan Bradshaw, on the cover: "At last! a good, critical and up to date introduction to social security. It will be of enormous assistance to students, academics and indeed anyone interested in social policy."</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">"Overall the book is extensive, clear, accessible and engaging. It is both thought provoking and informative ..." (Lee Gregory, University of Cardiff, Poverty Press) http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?k=9781847428103</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">D Hirst, <i>Journal of Poverty and Social Justice</i>, 19(3) 2011: "an excellent introduction" C Grover, <i>Journal of Social Policy</i>, 41(2) 2012: "a valuable addition to the literature on social security policy"</p> <p>Other recent papers include:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">P Spicker, Cutting social security, in P Spicker, L Simpson (eds) <i>The cuts</i> Radical Statistics 2010 no 103 Social security, in R Chadwick (ed), <i>Encyclopedia of Applied Ethics</i>, vol. 4, San Diego CA: Academic Press, 2012, pp 167-174 M Danson, R McAlpine, P Spicker, W Sullivan, 2012. The case for universalism, Biggar, Jimmy Reid Foundation, Universal Credit: simplification or personalisation? <i>Local Economy</i> 27(5-6) 496-501.</p>

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Introducing Universal Credit, *Social Policy Review* 2013.

Internet use: From 1.1.2011- 14.12.2012, there were 47,237 page views of Professor Spicker's web-page on social security at <http://www2.rgu.ac.uk/publicpolicy/introduction/socsec.htm>, approximately 1,500 views per month. Details to accompany the book *How Social Security Works* were posted in January 2011 and have been supplemented by a blog at <http://paulspicker.wordpress.com/>, which has about 170 followers on Wordpress, LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter and attracts a further 750 page views per month. Guardian 'Society Daily' article mentions Professor Spicker's blog at <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2012/mar/06/society-daily-email?INTCMP=SRCH>

The pages on social security are part of Professor Spicker's pages on social policy and the welfare state, probably the most used educational site in the field internationally; it attracts more than 2200 page views every day, with users usually coming from more than 150 countries each month. Selected paragraphs drawn from Professor Spicker's web site now head up some sections on the British Library's Social Welfare Portal. <http://socialwelfare.bl.uk/subject-areas/government-issues/social-policy/index.aspx>.

Professor Spicker has commented on social security reform in the media. For the launch of Universal Credit in Parliament on 11th Nov 2010, he gave interviews for BBC Radio 4, The World at One; BBC Radio 4, 6 o'clock News; BBC Radio Wales (again on 21.05.2013), Good evening Wales; BBC World Service, Analysis and BBC News 24. Further appearances in 2011 include a BBC TV Scotland documentary, "100 years on the Broo", BBC Radio Wales and BBC Somerset. In 2012 there were three appearances on BBC2's *Newsnight Scotland*, three further appearances on Radio Scotland's *Good Morning Scotland* and an interview on BBC Scotland's *Politics Show*. In 2013 there have been sessions for Radio Wales and *Good Morning Scotland*. Interviews have been given for reporters for the Aberdeen Press and Journal, and Holyrood Magazine.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Key users or beneficiaries have included

- *Scottish Government.* Professor Spicker has contributed to discussions on their anti-poverty framework and child poverty, giving evidence on child poverty to the Local Government and Communities committee. Public contributions include

- A. Submission to the Parliamentary review of the Welfare Reform (Further Provisions) (Scotland) Act and citations of expertise in Scottish Parliament debates on welfare reform in 2012, http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_Welfare_Reform_Committee/Inquiries/SPICKER_PROFESSOR_PAUL.pdf The Scottish Government statement on Professor Spicker's contribution is at http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_Welfare_Reform_Committee/Inquiries/Scottish_Government_May_2012.pdf and the Committee report on his statement is at <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/50744.aspx>

Direct confirmation of the effect of the submission: "*To re-examine the evidence provided in a submission by Professor Paul Spicker and to advise Committee of the SG's position on that submission, with particular reference to the SG's approach to putting in place successor arrangements for those elements of the discretionary Social Fund, for which responsibility will be devolved*"

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_Welfare_Reform_Committee/Inquiries/Scottish_Government_May_2012.pdf

Professor Spicker's response is also mentioned on page 41 of this document: http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_Welfare_Reform_Committee/Meeting%20Papers/papers_20120501.pdf

And on page 59 (9) of this document:

[www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4 Welfare Reform Committee/Meeting Papers/papers_20120515.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_Welfare_Reform_Committee/Meeting_Papers/papers_20120515.pdf)

Professor Spicker's evidence is also referred to on page 158 (148); again on page 205 (195) of this document:

[http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4 Bills/Welfare%20Reform%20%28Further%20Provision%29%20%28Scotland%29%20Bill/BBV_179_final.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_Bills/Welfare%20Reform%20%28Further%20Provision%29%20%28Scotland%29%20Bill/BBV_179_final.pdf)

Following Professor Spicker's submissions on welfare reform, a section 30(2) amendment to the Scotland Act 1998 was introduced in the UK Parliament on 7th November 2012. If the administration of the Social Fund and its replacement provisions had been disrupted in Scotland, the people potentially affected would have been those applying for Community Care awards and crisis loans (77,400 applications in 2011-2012), of whom 34,130 received awards to the total value of £20,036,400. Crisis Loans 477,680 applications in 2011-2012, of whom 374,930 received awards to the total value of £61,927,400. See <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/local-authority-staff/social-fund-reform/localisation-data/>.

- B. Taking forward the Government's Economic Strategy: response to the discussion paper, 2008, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/241165/0066973.pdf>.
- C. Child Poverty, Scottish Parliament, 2008. Written evidence is available at <http://archive.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/lgc/inquiries/Childpoverty/ProfPaulSpicker.pdf>, while a transcript of oral evidence can be found at <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=2545&i=12156>. Oral evidence from 26 November is in paragraph 31 at <http://archive.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/lgc/reports-09/lgr09-10-vol1.htm#ftn22>, and para 58 and 77 mentions the written evidence.
- D. Submission to the Scottish Government's Expert Working Group on welfare reform and contribution to their consultative process.
- E. Professor Spicker contributor to SFHA annual conference (both academics and non-academics speaking and attending) 7-8 June, 2012, Glasgow. His role as a keynote speaker is identified at <http://www.sfha.co.uk/hst/housing-articles/sfha-annual-conference-2012-out-of-the-labyrinth-which-way/menu-id-20.html>, and on May 4th 2011 at SFHA welfare reform conference at <http://www.sfha.co.uk/hst/archive/welfare-reform-conference-highlights-stark-facts-of-change/menu-id-24.html>
- F. Submission to "Social Housing Allocations: A Practice Guide" was name-checked in the analysis document by the Scottish Government in part 2 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/01/25144519/2>, as well as several times in part 5, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/01/25144519/5>, twice in part 7 (under local factors and other comments) <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/01/25144519/7> and again in part 15 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/01/25144519/15>
- G. Appointment as Budget Adviser to the Scottish Parliament's Welfare Reform Committee for its review of the Scottish Government Budget.
- *Voluntary and third sector groups in Scotland.*
- A. Professor Spicker is frequently invited to talk with third sector groups and has contributed a series of sessions in particular for *Citizens Advice Scotland* and the *Scottish Federation of Housing Associations*, along with individual sessions e.g. for the Scottish Children's Services Forum, Aberdeen Civic Forum and Langstone Housing Association.

- B. He is on the Policy Committee of *One Parent Families Scotland*.
- C. The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations has retained Professor Spicker formally as an associate and he advises on the implications of benefit change and related stakeholder research.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Preceding sections have provided item specific weblinks. Most of the BBC radio interviews have been recorded and are available on request. Press references are

- Myths of absenteeism mask the true issues to be addressed on incapacity, *Scotsman* 27th November 2007, pp 50-1.
- Welfare reform has the makings of a nightmare as jobs disappear, *Scotsman* 15.1.2009 pp 38-39.
- Benefits have far wider role than helping the jobless, *Scotsman* 8th October 2009 p 45.
- The Universal Credit, *Holyrood* 2010 no 243, p 2
- Universal Credit will not simplify benefits, *The Guardian* 19th January 2011, Society Guardian section, page 4
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/joepublic/2011/jan/19/universal-credit-half-baked?INTCMP=SRCH>
- Articles for *Housing Scotland*, including: Changing Housing Benefit, Sept 2012, p 5; More cuts?, Nov 2012, p 5
- 'Can we afford to support older people?', *The Herald*, 18th December.
http://www.heraldscotland.com/mobile/news/home-news/can-we-afford-to-support-older-people.19707602?_2ec22303caffe3c4a2a675a85aa5bde87da43c8a
- *Valor Economico* (Brazil): the last is reported at
<http://www.valor.com.br/arquivo/833601/bem-estar-sob-ataque>