

<p>Institution: University of Bedfordshire</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 3 - Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy</p>
<p>Title of case study: Improving employee well-being through diagnosis, intervention and evaluation of policy and practice</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p>
<p>Work-related stress and work-life conflict are the biggest health and safety challenges in the UK with considerable costs to the economy as well as employees and their families. Research conducted by Professor Kinman over the last 15 years has made a significant contribution to enhancing knowledge of the mechanisms underpinning work-related well-being and ways in which this can be enhanced. In recognition of the unique nature of Kinman’s work, the UoB is widely recognised as a centre of excellence in this field. Kinman has advised organisations, predominantly in the public sector, on ways to manage stress and enhance work-life balance and resilience. The significance and reach of this work has been demonstrated, most notably with academic employees and social workers. It has been used to develop interventions and informed changes to policy and practice at a national level in these sectors.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p>
<p>Professor Kinman started working at the UoB in 1996; she was appointed as a Reader in 2007 and awarded a Professorship in 2009. During this time, Kinman has built an international reputation for her research on work-related stress and wellbeing (e.g. 3.1). She is particularly well known for her research in the higher education (HE) sector. Her work has made a unique contribution to understanding of the wellbeing of staff and the factors that underpin this. Kinman has been commissioned by professional bodies to conduct six national surveys on work-related wellbeing in HE and post-compulsory education more generally (in 1996, 1998, 2004, 2008, 2012 and 2013, see 5.1). Previous work in the sector was fragmented and limited to small scale cross-sectional studies (primarily of single institutions), but Kinman’s body of research has facilitated a longitudinal analysis of the working conditions underpinning the wellbeing of academic staff at a national level, their responses to ongoing change in the sector, and the implications for employees and HE institutions (3.2). The surveys have yielded substantial response rates, with 24K participants in the most recent wave (2012). Findings have highlighted increasing demands and negative perceptions of change management, whilst levels of control have continued to exceed national benchmarks. A further unique contribution is Kinman’s work on academics’ experiences of the work-home interface whereby they have been found to be particularly at risk of work-life conflict and poor recovery due to a combination of external demands and individual coping strategies (3.3). Published work that has tested models of stress in the sector has also shed light on the role played by working conditions in underpinning wellbeing, particularly the need for professional esteem and respect and the role played by individual differences (3.4 and 3.5).</p>
<p>Since 2009, Kinman has also published a considerable body of work focusing on work-related stress in general and the emotional experiences of helping and service professionals more specifically. Her inter-disciplinary research (with Louise Grant, Senior Lecturer in Social Work at the University of Bedfordshire since 2007) on enhancing resilience and wellbeing in social workers has had considerable impact. It is generally agreed that social work is a satisfying but emotionally demanding profession with high sickness rates and turnover. Social workers are now required to demonstrate that they have the emotional resilience to manage the demands of their work. Prior to Kinman’s research (3.6), there was no evidence-based information on perceptions of resilience in trainee and qualified staff and how this may be enhanced. Moreover, the extent to which resilience and self care issues more generally are currently included in the social work curriculum in the UK and educators attitudes towards this issue were unknown. Such information is essential in order to inform interventions to enhance the wellbeing of social workers and the service they provide. Since 2011, several journal articles have been published which have outlined the factors that underpin resilience and ways in which this might be enhanced in trainee and qualified staff. Research has also explored social work educators’ views of resilience and the acceptability of a national evidence-based emotional curriculum has also been conducted and disseminated widely.</p>

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Kinman is also recognised nationally and internationally for her work on work-life balance. Her research on work-life balance in academic employees has been highlighted above. In recognition of her national standing in this field, in 2009 Kinman was commissioned by the British Psychological Society to form a national working group on work-life balance to disseminate evidence-based practice to academics, practitioners and organisations. This group has organised several events nationally and internationally and published a series of evidence-based fact sheets which are currently being evaluated by practitioners and end users. Kinman has also conducted studies of work-life balance and wellbeing in two large English police forces since 2008 and is currently working with several fire services (including Bedfordshire) to investigate work-life balance and its relationship with wellbeing and performance and make recommendations for policy and practice.

3. References to the research

- 3.1 Kinman, G. & Jones, F. (2005). Lay representations of workplace stress: What do people really mean when they say they are stressed?. *Work & Stress*, 19(2), 101-120.
doi:10.1080/02678370500144831
- 3.2 Kinman, G., Jones, F. & Kinman, R. (2006). The Wellbeing of the UK Academy. *Quality in Higher Education*, 12, 1, 15-27.
- 3.3 Flaxman, P. E., Ménard, J., Bond, F. W., & Kinman, G. (2012). Academics' experiences of a respite from work: Effects of self-critical perfectionism and perseverative cognition on postrespite well-being. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 97(4), 854-865.
doi:10.1037/a0028055
- 3.4 Kinman, G. & Jones, F. (2008). Job-related efforts, rewards and over-commitment: Predicting strain in academic employees. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 15, 4, 381-395.
- 3.5 Kinman, G. (2008). Sense of coherence, work stressors and health outcomes in UK academic employees, *Educational Psychology*, 28, 7, 823-835.
- 3.6 Kinman, G. & Grant, L. (2011) Predicting stress resilience in trainee social workers: the role of emotional competencies. *British Journal of Social Work*, 41, 2, 261-275.

4. Details of the impact

Kinman's work has enhanced understanding of the wellbeing of HE staff and the factors that underpin this, and also resulted in changes to national policy and practice. Several reports have been published (e.g. 5.1). The results of this research have been widely publicised in the sector, and have been used as evidence by the House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee on the future sustainability of the HE sector and to inform the development of workload management models and approaches to change management at a national level (5.2). The research was also quoted extensively in a report commissioned by Universities UK on the extent and impact of the changes experienced in the academic profession in recent years (5.3) and cited in international working papers for reform in the sector (5.4). Kinman has advised HE professional bodies, such as the Universities and College Union (UCU), which has enabled them to raise awareness of stress in post-16 education via conferences, reports and inform national campaign materials to improve terms and conditions for members (5.5).

Over the REF assessment period, Kinman's longitudinal research in the HE sector has applied the UK Health and Safety Executive Management Standards approach in several waves to allow the UCU and institutions to monitor the wellbeing of employees and the extent to which short and longer term targets to improve this are being adhered to. The research has gained substantial coverage in the media, for example it was featured in a leader in the Times Higher Education Supplement and in other newspapers such as the Guardian, and also stimulated public debate..

In 2009, with Dr. Almuth McDowall of the University of Surrey, Kinman founded and now co-chairs the British Psychological Society's Working Group on Work-Life Balance, sponsored by the Division of Occupational Psychology. This working group aims to raise awareness amongst practitioners, organisations and employees of the role played by evidenced based psychological research in enhancing the work-life balance and wellbeing of employees and the profitability of

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organisations. She has organised two conferences to promote knowledge and best practice in this area focusing on organisational aspects (2010) and diversity and difference (2011). Several other events (such as breakfast meetings and seminars) have also been organised addressing issues of contemporary concern such as the role of the recession on work-life balance initiatives. These events have been attended by a wide range of stakeholders such as HR managers, management consultants, company directors, and officials from trade unions and professional associations. In terms of outputs, Kinman has led the development of three evidence-based factsheets on work-life balance that are tailored to different audiences: individuals, organisations and life coaches (5.8). These have been well received by the business community and developed and updated consultants' skills in order to help individuals and organisations enhance their work-life balance and wellbeing.

In terms of international activities, in 2012 Kinman coordinated a summit at the inaugural Work-Family Network Conference in New York to debate international concerns about key issues with experts from 15 countries – this work continued with an invited panel discussion of academics, practitioners, employers and representatives of the not-for-profit sector at the BPS Division of Occupational Psychology conference in January, 2013 which she led. The events have enhanced knowledge and experience of attendees.

Kinman's research on the factors that underpin resilience and how this might be enhanced has had impact in terms of reach and significance. It has received considerable attention in the UK and Europe (5.9). This work has been utilised by national social work bodies to illustrate how emotional reactions to practice can impact on wellbeing and service provision: for example, Skills for Care and the National Skills Academy, who support employers to develop the skills of the nearly 1.6 million social care workers, and the British Association of Social Workers (5.7 and 5.10). The broad impact of the research findings on the social work community is illustrated by the journal article mentioned above (3.6) having been distributed to all managers in the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire regions by senior management. The research has also been presented at the national Health and Wellbeing at Work 2013 conference which is attended by 3,000 health and safety professionals.

The research has also informed the development of interventions that have been disseminated nationally via reports, websites and training. The Higher Education Academy (HEA) has also commissioned Kinman to develop a resource guide on how to enhance resilience and wellbeing in health and social care (5.6). In 2012, the HEA commissioned a national study of social work departments with a view to developing an "emotional curriculum" based on Kinman's work. This identified the extent to which resilience and self care was included in the curriculum and educators' attitudes towards the inclusion of the strategies emerging from Kinman's previous research.

In 2012, Kinman and Grant were commissioned by Community Care (the major information source for social care professionals working with children and families) to write an online resource and interactive quiz on resilience in social workers. The work has been exceptionally popular in the social work community. To date, almost one third of the social workers that subscribe to the service have viewed the resource and participated in the quiz in order to help them develop their emotional resilience within practice. A live "advice clinic" has been replayed more than 1,300 times. Social work practitioners from several countries have contacted Community Care to provide feedback on the usefulness of the tool for enhancing insight in their personal strengths and areas for development and improving their wellbeing and professional practice. In 2012, Kinman was also invited to participate in an online debate hosted by The Guardian on tackling stress in social care. Moreover, a training package developed by Kinman from this research has been delivered to more than 400 trainee social workers and qualified staff from several local authorities (including East Kilbride and Oxford) and social care charities with demonstrable effectiveness. There is evidence that trainee social workers levels of psychological wellbeing improved following the training.

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5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- 5.1 UCU 2013 Report on Higher Education Stress Survey.
www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/4/5/HE_stress_report_July_2013.pdf
- 5.2 Memorandum submitted to the Education and Skills Commons Select Committee by the University and College Union (UCU).
www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmeduski/285/285we53.htm
- 5.3 Management of Academic Workloads report for HEFCE (2009).
[www.research.salford.ac.uk/maw/cms/resources/uploadsbarrettfinalsept09\(2\).pdf](http://www.research.salford.ac.uk/maw/cms/resources/uploadsbarrettfinalsept09(2).pdf)
- 5.4 Danish School of Education Report.
halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/docs/00/30/86/31/PDF/Wright2008.pdf
- 5.5 UCU Report on Tackling Stress in Higher Education (2008).
www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/8/a/ucu_hestress_dec08.pdf
- 5.6 HEA Social Work and Social Policy Resource Sheet on developing resilience skills.
www.mhhe.heacademy.ac.uk/silo/files/resilience-resource-sheet-for-mhhe-web.pdf
- 5.7 Presentation from British Association of Social Workers Student Conference (2011).
cdn.basw.co.uk/upload/basw_21644-6.pdf
- 5.8 British Psychological Society work-life balance factsheets www.bps.org.uk/news/society-publishes-work-life-balance-factsheets
- 5.9 Development of Social and Youth Workers Cultural Competence website.
www.emotionalsocialwork.com/publications.html
- 5.10 Documents supporting development of resilience skills on Skills for Care national website
www.skillsforcare.org.uk/socialwork/l_and_m_framework/Emotionalimpactofpractice.aspx