

Institution: University of Leeds
Unit of Assessment: 22 Social Work and Social Policy
Title of case study: Challenging and informing policy on working age carers
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Research led by Professor Sue Yeandle at Leeds on working age carers has focused policymakers' attention on carers' contributions to society, their role in the health and social care system, and the issues they confront in reconciling paid work with unpaid care. The research findings have: (a) provided a vital evidence base, shaping policy work of the national charity, Carers UK, (b) influenced Government policy formation and evaluation, including playing a direct role in shaping the Government's National Care Strategy in 2008, and (c) informed wider policy and parliamentary debate supporting carers of working age.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>In the early 2000s, knowledge of the numbers, characteristics and employment circumstances of carers of working age was limited. However, a new question on unpaid care of older, sick or disabled people in the 2001 Census, and a European Commission decision to recognise carers' labour market disadvantage, provided an opportunity to address this knowledge gap.</p> <p>Subsequent research was undertaken by Yeandle (University of Leeds, 2006-present) and her research team, positioning them as the leading experts in this field. While the origins of this expertise lie in previous work by Yeandle at Sheffield Hallam University, the research examined here, from 2006 onwards, was led by Yeandle and the Centre for International Research on Care, Labour & Equalities (CIRCLE).</p> <p>The <i>Carers, Employment and Services (CES)</i> study (2006-7), resourced through £790,000 of European Social Fund funding through the <i>Action for Carers and Employment</i> award to the charity Carers UK, remains the most comprehensive investigation of the circumstances of carers of working age yet undertaken [1,2].</p> <p><i>CES</i> comprised multi-method empirical research: a purposive sample survey of c2,000 carers of working age, via an innovative employer-focused participant recruitment strategy; qualitative interviews, conducted by University of Leeds' researchers Fry, Harris, Price and Rodney with a sub-sample of survey participants, exploring attitudes, experiences and aspirations re care, employment and support services; and stakeholder interviews / desk research in ten UK local authority districts to map developments in carer support, undertaken by Fry and Bennett (University of Leeds, Senior Research Fellow 2006- 2010). In parallel, extensive statistical analysis of the Census 2001, including Census SARs and other datasets was undertaken by Buckner (University of Leeds, Senior Research Fellow from 2006, Lecturer from 2011).</p> <p>The research findings were published by Carers UK in a 'report series' of 14 policy-oriented outputs designed to maximise impact. The overarching policy-oriented report on the <i>CES</i> study [1] set out key principles and strategies for a modern caring society (referred to as a <i>new Social Contract for Care</i>). This was underpinned by the study findings on: incidence and geographical distribution of caring among people of working age; household, employment, and health circumstances; experiences of employment and public services; extent of social exclusion; and occupational and industrial distribution. These identified support, services and technology carers may need; training needs of paid care workers; impact of caring arrangements on those who receive care; and issues employers/managers encounter when workers have care responsibilities.</p> <p>Examples of findings included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Over 40% of 'new' carers supported someone whose needs had not been assessed, with no support from any service; this identified 'hidden' carers (people who care for sick/disabled family members without support) and GPs' and hospitals' roles in supporting carers and developing new services to improve carers' access to information</i> • <i>Flexibility at work was crucial, but inadequate; however inflexible and unresponsive services were the key barrier to combining work and care; this identified the potential benefits of extending the legal right to request flexible working to carers of adults and identified working carers as a target for local authorities' allocations of their DH 'carers' grant'.</i>

- 66% of male and 32% of female carers of working age held FT jobs and many such carers struggled to cope; this identified the need for extending carer support to male, working age and ethnic minority carers.

Following the CES study, the research team received 15 further research awards, totalling over £3.25 million, to pursue additional research on carers of working age, caring and employment and support and services for carers. The CES findings were disseminated via 15 high-profile events in the UK and presentations in five other European states.

Also of note, in addition to CES, **Yeandle** and CIRCLE evaluated two Department of Health (DH) programmes, 'Caring with Confidence' [3] and the 'Carers Strategy Demonstrator Sites' [4], which were part of the implementation of the 2008 National Carers Strategy, which set out a 10-year programme and vision for the Government. With international policy debate about work and care previously focused on childcare, the findings also informed UK contributions to further research on international experiences of working age carers, and the changing welfare and labour policies shaping lives of working carers in Finland, Sweden, Australia, Japan, Taiwan and the UK [5].

3. References to the research

1. Yeandle, S. and Buckner, L. (2007) *Carers, Employment and Services: time for a new social contract?* London: Carers UK, pp. 61, CES No.6, ISBN 1-873747-42-X.
2. Yeandle, S., Bennett, C., Buckner, L., Fry, G. and Price, C. (2007) *Managing Caring and Employment* London: Carers UK, pp. 34, CES No.2, ISBN 1-873747-38-1.
3. Yeandle, S. and Wigfield, A. (eds.) (2012) *Training and Supporting Carers: the National Evaluation of the Caring with Confidence programme*. CIRCLE, University of Leeds, pp.98, ISBN 978-0-9570900-2-6.
4. Yeandle, S. and Wigfield, A. (eds.) (2011) *New Approaches to Supporting Carers' Health and Well-being: evidence from the National Carers Strategy Demonstrator Sites programme* CIRCLE, University of Leeds, pp. 135, ISBN 978-0-9570900-0-2.
5. Kroger, T. and Yeandle, S. (eds.) (2013) *Combining Paid Work and Family Care: policies and experiences in international perspective*, Bristol: Policy Press. (included in REF2).

4. Details of the impact

The research led care commissioners and policymakers to re-focus priorities in supporting carers. This is evidenced by subsequent policy direction, which relied on the research for evidence, and parliamentary debate, which used the research to recommend and influence service and policy re-design. As well as being used by Carers UK to form vital evidence for their own lobbying, the findings directly influenced and engaged several government departments, such as the Department of Health (DH) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and local authorities across the UK. It also helped shape developments in the European Commission and Parliament.

Impact on national charity, Carers UK

Carers UK, a leading national charity campaigning to improve carer's rights, has made consistent use of the research, which has offered an evidence base to stimulate debate and provided a substantial framework to shape strategies about providing better support for carers in the future.

Evidence of its impact on Carers UK includes the use of research findings directly in its policy work, advice to and lobbying of parliamentarians in both Houses of Parliament, and in its annual publications and events linked to Carers' Rights Day (December) and Carers Week (June). Carers UK's Head of Innovation directly credits **Yeandle** and CIRCLE as enabling the charity to then 'carry a credible case supporting carers in employment or returning to employment, not only in the UK but across Europe and beyond internationally.' [A].

Impact on Government policy

CES shaped the Government's National Carers Strategy (NCS) in 2008, influencing its emphasis on carers and employment, and subsequently, carers of working age were targeted in many service improvements. This impact is evidenced through **Yeandle's** appointment to the Government's Task Force (TF) on *Employment*, as part of its preparation for the NCS, with the aim of giving the TF access to the detailed study findings.

The research [1,2] is extensively cited in the *Employment* TF report [B]. For example, it highlights the *CES* finding that 55% of 751 carers not in work wished to re-enter employment. The research provided an evidential base and rationale for the TF's recommendations for additional DWP support for carers, which were subsequently implemented. *CES* evidence also supported the recommendations of the separate NCS TF reports on *Income* and on *Equalities* [B]. The DH later commissioned further work from **Yeandle** and **Buckner** for its Policy Impact Assessment of the 2008 NCS, helping to secure cross-departmental support for the strategy.

The Government's commitments in the NCS 2008 also included other measures, including new DWP financial support for carers returning to work and new Jobcentre Plus 'Care Partnership Mangers', and as a result of the research establishing **Yeandle** and CIRCLE as experts in this field, the DWP commissioned the team in 2009 to deliver policy workshops to guide implementation of these measures. The DH also commissioned research from **Yeandle** to guide regional planning for carer support and inform health and social care policy implementation.

In 2010, the research again proved vital; this time for the Coalition Government, which used the research in its policy on supporting people to combine work and care, citing the importance of CIRCLE's research and evaluations for DH policy in '*The evidence base for supporting carers in work*' [C]. Specifically, **Yeandle**'s research was used to identify the impact of working carers on employers, and how supportive employers can play a key role in mitigating these issues.

Yeandle et al.'s evaluation of two DH programmes [3,4] also produced evidence used in 2011 by the Department of Health, as corroborated by the then Minister for Care Services, who stated: 'This report on the work undertaken in the Department's Demonstrator Sites programme provides information which should inform and guide decision-making at every level. The findings...will be carefully studied to ensure the learning from this important work feeds into the Department's autumn 2011 engagement exercise on the Future of Care and Support and informs the White Paper on Care and Support.' [D].

A *Carers in Employment Task and Finish Group* was established in 2012 by the Minister for Care Services to develop further evidence on the social and economic case for supporting carers. Co-chaired by the DH and the industry group *Employers for Carers*, the *Task and Finish Group* specifically recruited **Yeandle** so that she could supply research intelligence from her team's work to inform its report on workforce measures and opportunities for job creation in care services, which set out the roles of government, employers and relevant non-governmental agencies in helping carers combine work and care [E].

Impact on Parliamentary and policy debate

As an example of the research informing policy debate, following the publication of the NCS, the *House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee* identified weaknesses in the current system of benefits for carers and the support the DWP provides in enabling carers to combine work and care. The Committee appointed **Yeandle** as a Special Adviser, specifically seeking her guidance on using the *CES* research findings, which were relied upon in the private meetings of the Committee as part of the inquiry into the effectiveness of the DWP's existing approaches to carers. The research was also used in the preparation of its questions to those giving evidence in the public sessions of the Inquiry and cited extensively in the 2008 Inquiry Report and statistical appendix [F], including a direct acknowledgement of the contribution of **Yeandle** and CIRCLE to the work. In December 2008, the Government responded to this Inquiry Report, outlining the next steps for carers' benefit reform, addressing some of the key recommendations raised in the Report, which used CIRCLE's analysis of the census to provide an evidence base [G].

In terms of contributing to and informing wider, cross-party parliamentary debate, the *All-Party Parliamentary Group on Carers* (APPGC) also took evidence from the research in 2008. The APPGC used this in parliamentary debates and in drafting Private Member's Bills [*Carers (Identification & Support) Bill* 2010 and *Social Care (Local Sufficiency) & Identification of Carers Bill* 2012]. In 2012, the Houses Joint Committee on the Draft Care and Support Bill also referenced CIRCLE's research [4] in the official Written Evidence, identifying the effective techniques that the Carers' Strategy Demonstrator sites used in seeking to explore different ways of identifying and engaging with carers [H]. This Written Evidence was reported to both Houses in March 2013.

As an example of how research informed wider European policy debate, the European Parliament

hosted an event with the *MEP Interest Group on Carers*, established following lobbying based on CES findings by *Carers UK* and the supranational carers' organisation *Eurocarers*. By 2013, the MEP group on carers comprised 30 MEPs in 10 member states meeting to debate and initiate EU-level policy actions and it continues to work closely with *Carers UK* and *Eurocarers*. The former President of *Eurocarers* corroborates the role CIRCLE has played, stating that the research 'has been important in informing our work to shape the policy agenda, particularly in a European perspective. The research informed the 2012 report of a 10-country research project on Company Initiatives for Workers with Care Responsibilities. At EU level the research from CIRCLE strongly influenced the development of the work and strategic priorities of Eurocarers, and contributed to debate in the European Parliament.' [1].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- A. Video testimonial from Head of Innovation, Carers UK, www.circle.leeds.ac.uk/projects/completed/supporting-carers/the-carers-employment-and-services-study-ces.
- B. *Prime Minister's New Deal for Carers: Employment Task Force Report* (Waters, C. and Portes, J., 2008), acknowledgement on p.12. 'Equalities' and 'Income' Task Force Reports also available: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130107105354/http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_086585
- C. HM Government (2010) *Recognised, Valued and Supported: next steps for the Carers Strategy*, London: DH. Research is referenced in Annex B, 'The evidence base for supporting carers in work'. The document also references the work of CIRCLE in para.4.8, http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/213804/dh_122393.pdf
- D. Ministerial Foreword to the Report Summary, *New Approaches to Supporting Carers' Health and Well-being: evidence from the National Carers' Strategy Demonstrator Sites programme*, <http://circle.leeds.ac.uk/files/2012/08/151111-circle-newapproaches-report-summary.pdf>
- E. HM Government and Carers UK (2013), "Supporting Working Carers: the benefits to families, business and the economy", final report of the Employers for Carers and Department of Health Task and Finish Group, Carers UK, August 2013. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-working-carers-the-benefits-to-families-business-and-the-economy>
- F. House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee, 'Valuing and Supporting Carers', 4th Report of Session, Aug 2008 (citations of CES research throughout, and acknowledgement of this, p11.) <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmworpen/485/485i.pdf>
- G. December 2008, *Appendix: Government response*, to the Fourth Report of the Work and Pensions Select Committee on valuing and support carers <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmworpen/105/10504.htm>
- H. January 2013, House of Lords and House of Commons, Joint Committee on Draft Care and Support Bill, *Draft Care and Support Bill, Written Evidence* www.parliament.uk/documents/joint-committees/Draft%20Care%20and%20Support%20Bill/Draft%20Written%20evidence%20volume%20with%20formatting.pdf.
- I. Letter received from former President of Eurocarers (10 September 2013).