

Institution: University of East Anglia		
Unit of Assessment: 17 – Business and Management Studies		
Title of case study: Enhancing workplace wellbeing: Using evidence to influence policy and practice		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: June 2015 - December 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Kevin Daniels	Professor Principal investigator	2012 - present
Sara Connolly	Professor Co-investigator	1993 - present
Helen Fitzhugh	Senior Research Associate	2004-05; 2014-16; 2017-present
George Michaelides	Associate Prof. Co-investigator	September 2018 - present
Olga Tregaskis	Professor Co-investigator	September 2011 - present
David Watson	Lecturer Co-investigator	December 2015 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: June 2016 - December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact <p>The annual cost to the UK of working age mental ill-health is significant. The Stevenson/Farmer review of mental health and employment estimated the cost to be GBP74,000,000,000 and GBP99,000,000,000. The scale of the cost, and the commitment of Prime Minister May, who commissioned the review, placed workplace wellbeing high on the policy agenda. UEA research has provided a robust evidence base which has contributed to building a public dialogue and allowed informed policy discussions to take place. UEA research has been used as evidence in Parliamentary debates and policy documents. The research has shaped organisational wellbeing programmes. Beneficiaries include the police nationally, Civil Service and the NHS nationally. The research has influenced Government policy frameworks and internationally-recognised industry standards.</p>		
2. Underpinning research <p>The What Works Centre for Wellbeing (WWCW) was established with funding from across Government departments to provide robust evidence on how to improve wellbeing to decision makers in Government, businesses and civil society. UEA led and conducted most of the research for the Work, Learning and Wellbeing evidence programme, one of the four ESRC funded foundational research programmes of WWCW awarded through competitive tendering.</p> <p>Through engagement with stakeholders, including civil servants, employers, unions, the general public, and students, and by mapping the policy space (R2), UEA addressed stakeholder priorities and produced rigorously-conducted systematic reviews and analyses of large-scale data sets. The programme evolved to include evaluations of workplace interventions funded by Innovate UK (with the College of Policing, R4) and ESRC (currently with the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care).</p> <p>The team's research has focused on actions to improve wellbeing. The multidisciplinary research includes perspectives from work psychology, economics, employment relations, education and political science amongst others, and the team has developed methods for synthesising evidence on wellbeing (R5).</p> <p>Mapping stakeholder priorities (R2). UEA researchers adopted the perspective that wellbeing can be a contested concept, as argued in some areas of sociology and political science. The research found that stakeholder conceptions of workplace wellbeing largely converge with definitions developed in psychology and used widely in economics. Stakeholder priorities include job quality (addressed in R1), targeting interventions at those with health conditions (addressed in R3), and access to learning (addressed in R6).</p> <p>Improving job quality (R1). The research found the most promising interventions involved either training workers to make small scale and individual-initiated changes to how work is performed,</p>		

or extensive, systemic improvements to job design and supporting employment practices (e.g. training).

Interventions for those with health conditions (R3). The research looked at return to work without subsequent relapse for those with common health conditions. As well as substantiating the critical role of employer support, the research indicated employer support can have another effect through improving returnees' attitudes to work.

Workplace learning (R6). UEA research found that training interventions focused on wellbeing skills had beneficial effects, regardless of the form of training. It also indicated the importance of social (group) elements of training and that the evidence base on professional skills training and wellbeing, although positive, is limited.

Workplace interventions in the police (R4). Further work on wellbeing skills included a large randomised control trial in five police forces. The study indicated the wellbeing benefits of two different forms of mindfulness apps at 24-week follow-up.

As well as receiving funding from grants that have undergone stringent peer-review (ESRC and Innovate UK) and publications of papers in peer-reviewed journals, further quality assurance on the research is provided through **external peer-review** of research published through WWCW or College of Policing (briefing reports developed from **R1** and **R6**, full reports **R4**, **R5**).

3. References to the research

- R1.** Job design, employment practices and well-being: A systematic review of intervention studies.
Daniels, K., Gedikli, C., Watson, D., Semkina, A., Vaughn, O.
Ergonomics, **2017**, 60(9), pp. 1177-1196. DOI:10.1080/00140139.2017.1303085.
- R2.** Democratisation of wellbeing: Stakeholder perspectives on policy priorities for improving national wellbeing through paid employment and adult learning.
Daniels, K., Connolly, S., Ogbonnaya, C., Tregaskis, O., Bryan, M.L., Robinson-Pant, A., Street, J.
British Journal of Guidance and Counselling, **2018**, 46(4), pp. 492-511.
DOI:10.1080/03069885.2017.1408776.
- R3.** Sustainable return to work: A systematic review focusing on personal and social factors.
Etuknwa, A., Daniels, K., Eib, C.
Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation, **2019**, 29, pp. 679-700.
DOI: 10.1007/s10926-019-09832-7.
- R4.** Mindfulness in policing: A randomized controlled trial of two online mindfulness resources across five forces in England and Wales.
Fitzhugh, H., **Michaelides, G., Connolly, S., Daniels, K.**
Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Coventry: College of Policing, **2019**. (Held on file at UEA)
- R5.** What Works Wellbeing: A Guide to our Evidence Review Methods.
Snape, D., Meads, C., Bagnall, A-M., **Tregaskis, O.**, Mansfield, L., (2016 1st edition).
Snape, D., Meads, C., Bagnall, A-M., **Tregaskis, O.**, Mansfield, L., MacLennan, S., Brunetti, S. ([2019 2nd edition](#)).
London: What Works for Wellbeing Centre, **2016/2019**. (Held on file at UEA)
- R6.** Well-being through learning: A systematic review of learning interventions in the workplace and their impact on well-being.
Watson, D., Tregaskis, O., Gedikli, C., Vaughn, O., Semkina, A.
European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, **2018**, 27(2), pp. 247-268.
DOI:10.1080/1359432X.2018.1435529.

Underpinning research grants:

- G.1 Work Learning and Wellbeing.** (PI) Daniels, K. and 20 co-investigators. Funder: Economic and Social Research Council. Amount: GBP923,532. Date: June 2015 – August 2021 (original award plus two extensions).

G.2 Supporting the development and evaluation of a wellbeing strategy for UK police.

(PIs) Daniels, K., Connolly, S. Funder: Innovate UK (50% funded, 50% matched by the College of Policing). Amount: GBP184,118. Dates: May 2018 – May 2020.

4. Details of the impact

The What Works Centre for Wellbeing (WWCW) was established to inform policies to improve wellbeing. WWCW marked a shift in Government thinking in how to evaluate policies across all departments from using purely monetary metrics to incorporating wellbeing outcomes as a measure of social impact. As a foundational programme of WWCW, the UEA Work and Learning team, led by Daniels, have *'...been instrumental in consolidating and ensuring the sustainability of the Centre, its place in the What Works network and as an influencer of policy at all levels of government, the third sector and employers'* (**S1**, Executive Director of WWCW).

UEA's research has **shaped new national policy frameworks; led to changes in organisational practices; and influenced standards and professional practice:**

1) By providing a robust evidence base, the research has contributed to **building a public dialogue** and allowed informed policy discussions. As a foundational programme of WWCW, UEA's research has *'...raised public and policy awareness of wellbeing and related issues such as the importance of the workplace as a source of social connections and resilience, and the contribution of wellbeing to organisational performance'* (**S1**). As well as reach through WWCW *'...engagement with over 12k people per month through our [the WWCW] website, of which 75% are across the regions of the UK and 25% are overseas; 13k followers on Twitter; courses delivered by WWCW staff have attracted over 4000 attendees; there have been over 18k of downloads of WWCW products'* (**S1**), the UEA team's direct reach into non-academic dialogue is by over 130 citations to UEA led research in policy reports, the professional and popular press (**S2**).

UEA research has identified gaps in Government departments' evidence. The Lead Analyst at the Employers, Health & Inclusive Employment division of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) reported that a *"...significant element of the work has been to help us identify gaps in the evidence base, specifically around return to work, which informs our own research and has been cited in a DWP consultation."* (**S3**). Writing to Daniels, Economic Adviser at the Labour Market Directorate, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) stated that that *"...I wanted to comment on the value of your research relative to BEIS's current policy priorities... As a result of the Taylor Review of Modern Employment Practices and the Good Work Plan, BEIS now places equal importance on the quality as well as the quantity of work. Wellbeing is closely linked to job quality, the WWC states that 'having a job is good and having a good quality job is miles better'. Your research has helped to inform our evidence base in this area."* (**S4**).

2) Informed by the research, the UEA team, and WWCW more broadly, have worked with **policy and practice groups on standards, guidance and practice**. UEA team members *'...have been responsive to requests for information by central Government departments, including the Cabinet Office and No.10'* (**S1**). Key stakeholders benefit from consultations that draw on UEA research (e.g. Public Health England, DWP, BEIS, Department of Education {Teacher & Leader Wellbeing Advisory Group}, All Party Parliamentary Group on Wellbeing Economics; Federation for Small Business, Royal Society of Arts/Carnegie Trust Short Life Working Group on Measuring Job Quality, Chartered Institute of Personnel, Society of Occupational Medicine, **S1**).

Shaping New National Policy Frameworks in Key Government Departments.

The UEA team has helped make the case for policies to promote wellbeing through enhancing the quality of employment (**S3** DWP; **S4** BEIS; **S1** WWCW; research **R1;R2;R3;R6**) and informed BEIS and DWP's own policy research (**S3**; **S4**): *'The Work and Learning team have helped shift policy debates around employment, wellbeing and mental health so that there is an increasing focus on the quality of jobs as determinants of wellbeing and health rather than treating employment/unemployment as a binary contributor to health and wellbeing'* (**S3**).

These policy debates have been translated into action based upon recommendations of the research. For example, the UEA team's findings have been referenced in answers from MPs and Lords in response to Parliamentary questions:

'The What Works Centre for Wellbeing has found that being in a job is good for wellbeing, when measured by life satisfaction, but being in a good quality job is even better. We are creating fairer, inclusive and flexible workplaces so everyone has the chance to succeed as well as balance work and home life' (Nadhim Zahawi MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, **S2** p4 entry 1, relates to **R1**) and

'The What Works Centre for Wellbeing has found that mindfulness training can have a positive impact on wellbeing' and attached a link to the WWCW briefing report from **R6** (Lord O'Shaughnessy, Department of Health and Social Care, **S2**, p4, entry 2).

Examples of significant impact include:

Stevenson-Farmer recommendations for workplace mental health (**S2**, p4, entry 3). **R1** informed WWCW *"advice to the Stevenson-Farmer Review"* (**S1**, **S10**). Specific reference to UEA research is made on p31, p49 and the features of good work (p69). The Prime Minister and Cabinet Secretary accepted the recommendations of Stevenson-Farmer for the Civil Service as an employer, as did the NHS. Office of National Statistics data indicates the recommendations apply to over 2.2 million workers employed in these institutions. *'Civil service organisations and the NHS have agreed to follow the recommendations of Stevenson-Farmer in respect of the management of workplace mental health'* (**S1**)

Influence on Department of Work and Pensions' (DWP) new reporting standards and guidance (**S2**, p5, entry 4), through influence on Stevenson-Farmer and WWCW recommendations (**S3**; **S1**): *'The work of the team has been influential on DWP recommendations for reporting standards for disability, mental health and wellbeing and our guidance for Disability Confident leaders'* (**S3**). According to DWP statistics posted on DWP's website, over 19000 workplaces have signed up for the Disability Confident Leaders scheme.

Evidencing the case for statutory guidance on why employer support for employees returning to work after sickness absence is important for reducing long-term sickness absence (**S3**; **R3** cited on p22 of DWP's Health is Everyone's Business consultation, **S5**).

Evidence-based Changes to Organisational Practice

The UEA team helped effect nationwide changes in police forces in England and Wales and contributed to the development of a new police wellbeing service, 'Oscar Kilo', through work on grant **G2** (**S6**, College of Policing). More specifically, findings from **R4** led to the adoption of a mindfulness app across all forces: *'As a result of the evaluation, one of the apps (MindFit Cop) has been made available to over 120,000 officers and 68,000 staff in England and Wales through the National Police Wellbeing Service. The process evaluation also informed amendments to the design of MindFit Cop and provided evidence to inform purchasing decisions of the other commercially available and well-established app Headspace. 'We estimate savings of £1127 per year to policing for each person using the app'* (Knowledge Research and Practice Lead, College of Policing, **S6**)

The UEA team were involved in developing national guidelines for officers with line management responsibilities, that drew upon UEA expertise in review methods (**R5**) and informed the College of Policing's research underpinning the framework (**S6**). The national guidelines include: *'...for the first time, guidelines on supervisory practices that protect and enhance line reports' wellbeing. The UEA team contributed their expertise in systematic review processes and roll-out of new guidelines during the review. The new guidelines will apply to around 115,000 first line supervisors in the police'* (**S6**)

Daniels was the academic consultant for the WWCW wellbeing assessment tool, ensuring a wider set of indicators of employment practices were included than in traditional risk assessment approaches (**R1**; **R2**). DWP, Department of Transport and Ministry of Defence (MoD) (**S1**) have used the tool. The tool informed OFSTED's research on teacher wellbeing. Page 11 of the Ofsted report (**S2**, p5, entry 6) states: *'We adopted the conceptual well-being framework from the What Works Centre for Wellbeing for this study. It informed our development of data collection*

instruments (see Appendix 4). This assessment tool is also used in employer reporting standards: *'DWP have incorporated a short-form of our workplace wellbeing indicators in the reporting standards for disability, mental health and wellbeing'* (**S1**).

The WWCW briefing developed from **R1** is included as a resource in NHS Employers' guidance on developing wellbeing strategies: *'The What Works Centre for Wellbeing have summarised the range and quality of evidence demonstrating a link between high quality roles and better workforce wellbeing. Read the full report to find out more about the evidence relating to each of these elements of job design'* (**S2**, p5, entry 5).

The UEA team have developed an evidence-based approach to working with a significant business unit in the MoD (**S7**), advising on implementing and evaluating wellbeing related initiatives (drawing on **R1;R4;R6**), which included *'launching wellbeing related research projects conducted by staff in Defence Intelligence ... evaluating cost-effectiveness as part of our large-scale Mental Health First Aid Training Programme'* and; *'identifying a suitable evaluation framework for our Mindfulness Programme and alignment with the methodology used by UEA in a high-profile randomised control trial at the College of Policing'* (Defence Intelligence Head of Wellbeing, Diversity and Inclusion, MoD, **S7**)

Influence on Standards and Professional Practice

Daniels is a member of the British Standards Institute (BSI) committee that developed the latest guidance on managing occupational health for **International Standard 45001 (S8)**. The UEA team's research informed the standard's definition of wellbeing (p2, **R2**) and elements related to management (**R1**) and risks (**R1**). The bibliography includes the WWCW website. The UEA team's research is also cited in a BSI Publicly Available Specification (**S9**, drawing on **R1**, p iii, **R1**, **R6** p5, WWCW listed as a resource on p23) that provides guidance on evidence-informed actions on improving workplace health and wellbeing.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- S1** Letter from the Executive Director, What Works Centre for Wellbeing. (28.02.20)
- S2** Citations of Work, Learning and Wellbeing Research.
- S3** Letter from Lead Analyst Employers, Health & Inclusive Employment Department of Work & Pensions and Joint Health and Work Committee. (24.04.20)
- S4** Letter from Economic Advisor, Labour Market EU and Strategy Analysis, Labour Market Directorate, BEIS). (16.01.20)
- S5** Department of Work and Pensions. (2019). Health is everyone's business: Proposals to reduce ill health-related job loss.
- S6** Letter from Knowledge Research and Practice Lead, College of Policing. (24.04.20)
- S7** Letter from Defence Intelligence Head of Wellbeing, Diversity and Inclusion, Ministry of Defence. (13.02.20)
- S8** British Standards Institute. (2018). *BS 45002-1:2018. Occupational health and safety management systems. General guidelines for the application of ISO 45001. Guidance on managing occupational health.*
- S9** British Standards Institute. (2018). *Code of practice on improving health and wellbeing within an organization PAS 3002.*
- S10** Thriving at work, *The Stevenson Farmer review of mental health and employers*, October 2017.