

Institution: University of Bradford		
Unit of Assessment: C17 Business and Management Studies		
Title of case study: The Forgotten Workers – Protecting and Representing Precarious Workers		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: June 2015 to 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:
Dr Andrew Smith	Reader in HRM and Employment Relations	January 2011 - Present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: June 2016 to 31 December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>This research project is the first UK study to critically investigate the working lives and work-life balance complexities of low-paid workers who need to have more than one job in order to make ends meet. Kirklees Council passed a motion based on our research recommendations and have developed policies around low-pay, in-work poverty, and staff benefits packages. Leeds City Council have also utilised our research to expand working hours for part-time staff, enhanced skills training, and financial well-being. The Trades Union Congress and USDAW union have developed practices and campaigns around low-pay and guaranteed working hours to protect precarious workers.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The Forgotten Workers is a research project led by Dr Andrew Smith (University of Bradford) and Prof Jo McBride (Durham University). The project commenced in 2015 and is on-going. We conducted detailed qualitative research fieldwork from June 2015 into low-paid workers in multiple employment. We have interviewed 50 workers, 9 trade union officials and representatives, 6 senior managers and 2 foodbank organisers. We have published two separate articles on (a) low-paid employment and in-work poverty (1) and (2) the challenges and complexities of work-life 'balance' of low-paid workers with multiple jobs (2), and a book chapter on emotions in research and accessing 'hard to reach groups' (3). In November 2018 we launched our research report (4), with Lord Sawyer as the guest speaker, and were also featured in 'The Conversation' (5), which was the springboard for impact. We have worked closely with a range of key stakeholders, namely: Kirklees Councillors, the Member of Parliament for Bradford South, the Head of Human Resources at Leeds City Council, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and USDAW the Shopworkers Union, to develop policies and practices to improve the lives of low-paid and precarious workers.</p> <p>The key findings from the research relate to issues around low-pay and insufficient working hours. There has been the dual fragmentation of employment and working time, therefore, some low-paid workers need to have multiple jobs in order to attempt to make ends meet (4). This unique social phenomenon is also related to low-pay and limited job availability, with the proliferation of part-time, agency, temporary, seasonal, casual and zero hours contracts (1). Whilst there have been increases in both the National Minimum Wage and the National Living Wage, many workers we interviewed had their hours cut by their employers and actually ended up worse off, with some even experiencing in- work poverty (1). Most prominent were issues around zero hours contracts, highly variable working hours, resulting in unstable and unpredictable incomes, together with subsequent work-life 'balance' complexities (2). There are also issues around dignity and fair treatment at work, with many of these workers being excluded from training and development opportunities (4). Moreover, in terms of work- life</p>		

balance practices, many of these workers are regarded as ‘peripheral’ staff by line managers in multiple workplaces and excluded from organisational policies, meaning that they are further marginalised (2). All of the participants we interviewed worked complex, long, and fragmented working times. They all had an amalgamation of jobs spread across different workplace locations and temporalities, which creates work extensification (2). Due to financial pressures and elongated working schedules, many faced well-being issues of stress, exhaustion and some suffered from depression (3).

Dr Smith has been employed at the University of Bradford since January 2011.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. McBride, J., Smith, A. and Mbala, M. (2018) ‘You end up with nothing’: the experience of being a statistic of ‘in work poverty’ in the UK’, *Work, Employment and Society*, 32, 1: 210-218. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017017728614>
2. Smith, A. and McBride, J. (2020) ‘Working to live, not living to work’: Low-paid multiple employment and work-life articulation’, *Work, Employment and Society* (first published online 9th September 2020) <https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017020942645>
3. Smith, A. and McBride, J. (2019) Accessing ‘Hard to Reach Groups’ and Emotions in the Research Process: ‘Work an Honest Day and Get the Usual Raw Deal’, in D. Wheatley (ed.) *Handbook of research methods on the quality of working lives*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, pp. 95-108 <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788118774.00013>
4. McBride, J. and Smith, A. (2018) ‘The Forgotten Workers’: Final Report’, Durham University. <https://www.dur.ac.uk/business/research/research-centres/forgotten-workers/>
5. Smith, A. and McBride, J. (2018) ‘The rise of the low-pay workforce – when seven jobs just isn’t enough’, *The Conversation* - <http://theconversation.com/the-rise-of-the-low-pay-workforce-when-seven-jobs-just-isnt-enough-106979>
6. McBride, J. and Smith, A. (2020) ‘From ‘forgotten’ to ‘key’ workers: Protecting the precariously employed’, *Personnel Today* - <https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/from-forgotten-to-key-workers-protecting-the-precariously-employed/>

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

The research team have been working with a number of key stakeholders on research impact from the ‘Forgotten Workers’ final report and the ‘Forgotten Workers: Implications for employment policy and practice’ briefing. In November 2018 we held a launch event at Durham University Business School, which was attended by a number of trade unions, the Local MEP, councillors from Yorkshire and the North-East of England, employers, and poverty organisations. There was also a panel discussion involving the research team, a Labour Councillor from Kirklees Council and a USDAW national union officer, who we have engaged with on research impact on low-paid and precarious work.

The research team have worked with 2 local councillors at Kirklees Council and had a motion passed on 18th September 2019, with unanimous cross-party support, that is directly based on our research and the recommendations made in the final report (A, B). The motion called for a commitment from the council to paying a local Living Wage for all staff, along with a commitment that all work that is outsourced is paid at this rate – to protect the terms and conditions of employment of low-paid workers. The motion also goes on to guarantee dignity and fair treatment at work. Finally, the motion called on the relevant officers to report on

potential actions which would ameliorate the immediate impacts of multiple employment, e.g. poor mental health and diet. As a result of the motion being passed, there has been extensive information gathering across the Kirklees area, via the Human Resource Department and trade unions, to find out how many people are currently in low-paid multiple employment, along with the types of jobs, pay, working hours, and terms and conditions. 'The Forgotten Workers' evidence-based report and recommendations were used to bolster the consensus amongst Councillors and the commitment to paying a local Living Wage. This has resulted in a significant increase in apprenticeship pay, along with an employee development package. Furthermore, our research also emphasises that fair pay is not the sole solution to complex issues around precarious work, and Kirklees Council have also developed employee benefits packages including staff discounts and credit unions with affordable loans (A). Our research has also influenced how poverty is understood and conceptualised, revealing the complexities and challenges of in-work poverty, low-pay, and insufficient working hours.

"In short, I would say that the Forgotten Workers report and research have altered the way we consider poverty in Kirklees, both from a political and managerial perspective... We have committed as a council to implementing the recommendations of the report and to go further in looking at what we can and should do to prevent the worst effects of multiple employment and low pay... This applies to us both as an employer of approximately 6,000 staff, but also as a key commissioner, stakeholder, and influencer in the area, as the local public health authority with responsibility for all our residents... More broadly, I would also hope that the report and our initial work on this will support other councils and combined authorities across the country to also accept these recommendations." – Labour Councillor, Kirklees Council (A).

Moreover, our research recommendations have also been included in future Kirklees Council programmes on 'Tackling Poverty' and 'Inclusion and Diversity'. Indeed, Kirklees Council is the first council to implement such policies in the UK and we will continue to work closely with both Councillors with the aim that these new policies and practices can be adopted by other councils and combined authorities in the near future to protect vulnerable low-paid workers (A).

The research team have also been working closely with the Head of Human Resources and senior managers at Leeds City Council (C). We have presented our evidence-based research findings to Leeds City Council, West Yorkshire Combined Authority, and the National Association of Regional Employers in order to influence employment policies and practices on low-paid employment. Leeds City Council have developed policies based on our recommendations and have increased the working hours of part-time staff and have also revised their staff benefits packages (C), particularly for low-paid staff with accessible shop discounts and options on utility bills. Our research recommendations and presentations have influenced how the Human Resources team understand and conceptualise low-pay and limited working hours. The Head of Human Resources at Leeds City Council summarised his thoughts on the impact of the report across his institution: (C)

"In summary, I think the work has been a powerful catalyst; influencing change in organisations. Often well intended HR initiatives don't always "hit-the-spot" and research can be hard to apply. However using this research opened up new ways of thinking and appreciating the sometimes harsh reality part-time, low paid workers face. Without an appreciation of the "forgotten workers" I think our efforts would have been less effective... As someone who has been at the heart of policy making in this area for the last 5 years, I would want to offer my thanks to Andrew and Jo as I believe this has been a great piece of research that led to tangible changes in policy, practice and culture... Final remarks; a powerful and thought provoking study, that led to some positive changes".

They are guarded in their use of zero hours employment and do not use such practices for low-paid staff, and only utilise such practices with consultants on higher rates of remuneration.

Moreover, the Council have implemented a range of financial well-being initiatives, with staff supports and specialist advice on debt management. The Council have also been active in enhancing skills training and career development opportunities through Union Learn (C). We have made evidence-based presentations to the Trades Union Congress and the USDAW union, and have been working closely with senior officials in the TUC and USDAW on influencing policies and practices on low-paid workers, zero hour contracts and work-life balance initiatives. We have provided evidence to the USDAW union and this was cited in their submission to the Low Pay Commission on 'one-sided flexibility', the underpayment of wages, the impact of the National Living Wage and normal hours contracts in September 2019. Many of the recommendations from our final report contribute further empirical evidence to USDAW's campaigns for better pay, minimum hours contracts and the eradication of zero hours contracts (D). The Yorkshire and Humber TUC have been able to utilise our findings and recommendations to help with campaigns and to inform young trade union activists about contemporary precarious work, low-pay, and zero hours contracts and to try recruit new union members and offer employment protection (E). We had a 2-page feature article in the GMB regional magazine that was published in September 2019 (F).

The research team have also been working with the local MP for Bradford South, and her team on impact from this research, as it reflects the lives of many of her low-paid constituents (G). Our research has been cited both the House of Commons and House of Lords (H, I) in relation to the employment prospects of young people and in the 2018 budget debate on the effects of austerity on precariously employed workers. We will be working with the MP for Bradford South on an article on the forgotten workers and the COVID-19 pandemic. From this we will also be trying to shape future Labour Party employment policy around low-pay, precarious work, and the urgent need for 'good work'.

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

A. Testimonial Letter from a Labour Councillor at Kirklees Council

B. Featured in the Telegraph and Argus newspaper – 24th September 2019 - <https://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/17920416.bradford-academic-highlights-issue-forgotten-workers-council-meeting/>

C. Testimonial Letter from Head of Human Resources at Leeds City Council

D. Testimonial Letter from the Head of Research, USDAW Union

E. Testimonial Letter from the Regional Secretary of Yorkshire and Humber Region TradesUnion Congress

F. Smith, A. and McBride, J. (2019) 'The Forgotten Workers: Low-paid workers in multiple employment', in GMB Union: The Activist, Issue 41, September (pages 4-5).

G. Testimonial Letter from the Member of Parliament for Bradford South

H. 'The Forgotten Workers Research Report' by McBride and Smith was cited in the House of Lords by Lord Sawyer in a debate on young people on 13 December 2018 - <https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2018-12-13/debates/232B7337-E17B-42A0-ADFE-CB1D86C771D4/YoungPeople> (pages 15-16)

I. 'The Forgotten Workers Research Report' by McBride and Smith was cited extensively by the for Bradford South MP in the House of Commons in the Budget day proceedings 29 October 2018 - <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2018-10-29/debates/639BB243-BE5D-42D8-84CB-ED708BFE5468/BudgetResolutions> (pages 57-58).