

Institution: Manchester Metropolitan University		
Unit of Assessment: C17 Business and Management		
Title of case study: Changing Employment Policy and Practice in Adult Social Care in England and Wales		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2008-2020		
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:
Carol Atkinson	Professor of Human Resource Management	2000-2008; 2012-present
Rosemary Lucas	Professor of Employment Relations	1984-2014
Sarah Crozier	Senior Lecturer, Centre for Decent Work and Productivity	2008-present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2014 - 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Manchester Metropolitan University research explored the relationship between the <i>terms and conditions of employment</i> of the adult social care (ASC) workforce and <i>quality</i> of domiciliary care. Findings showed that insecure and poorly-paid employment impacted negatively upon care quality. The Welsh Government used evidence from the research to change employment regulations in the sector and, as a direct result, in April 2018, introduced legislation that curbs zero-hour contracts for domiciliary care workers, and ensures that travel and care times are clearly identified on scheduled rotas. This has directly affected the employment conditions of 19,500 workers and, indirectly, the care provided to 23,000 people. The research has subsequently underpinned further policy work, including a technical report in 2019 for Greater Manchester's Independent Prosperity Review (which informed its local Industrial Strategy), and, in 2019, a GBP1,000,000 ESRC-funded project on Good Employment, with a dedicated 'ASC Good Employment Learning' Lab.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>For over a decade Atkinson and colleagues have consistently undertaken high-quality and impactful research in the field of employment in ASC [1-4]. The research base was originally built in England and informed a REF 2014 impact case study that evidenced impact on Skills for Care's recruitment and retention strategy, and wider policy and practice in English ASC. The REF 2021 impact case study is based on research that extends this highly-regarded body of work. Between 2015 and 2018, Atkinson and Crozier researched relationships between employment terms and conditions of one group of ASC workers, namely, domiciliary care workers, and their recruitment and retention, and care quality outcomes.</p> <p>Demographic change and an ageing population in the UK means that demand for domiciliary care, i.e. personal care and support delivered in the home, will continue to grow over the coming decades. In Wales, there are approximately 19,500 domiciliary care workers delivering around 260,000 hours of care per week to 23,000 people [5]. Many of these workers, in Wales, the UK and internationally, experience poor employment terms and conditions, including zero-hour contracts, low rates of pay, limited training and inadequate travel/scheduled visit time, which in turn has led to difficulties with recruitment and retention. Concerned about providing high-quality, sustainable care, the Welsh Government commissioned Manchester Metropolitan University to conduct research exploring terms and conditions of employment and their relationships to recruitment and retention, and care quality. The aim was to generate an evidence base that directly addressed workforce issues and thus, indirectly, improved care quality. Care quality was measured using user-defined aspects that included its continuity, reliability and flexibility. In-depth research was conducted via focus groups and interviews comprising 120 participants across all regions in Wales and involved care commissioners, independent and statutory sector domiciliary care providers, and domiciliary care workers. The research evidenced that a fair pay, good training, secure employment and appropriate working patterns are needed to recruit and retain the skilled care workers necessary for the delivery of high-quality care [5, 6]. Yet the findings provided stark evidence of the prevalence of poor employment terms and conditions</p>		

with the majority of workers employed on insecure, zero-hour contracts with low pay. In fact, the research showed that as many as 80% of domiciliary care workers were on zero-hour contracts. They often had insufficient time to deliver the care specified in care plans, because of poor call scheduling and inadequate travel time between calls. Resulting insecurity and strain, and an associated crisis in care worker recruitment and retention, created difficulties in delivering training and career development. Whilst these findings are not new, and were reflected in the REF 2014 case study, this project crucially demonstrated what had only previously been hinted at: i.e. that these issues impacted negatively upon levels of care quality. Poor terms and conditions created workforce instability and reduced care quality, according to user-defined measures, by compromising its continuity, reliability and flexibility. The report outlined a series of recommendations that the Welsh Government adopted in public consultations and enacted in subsequent employment regulation (see Section 4 for details).

3. References to the research

- [1]. Atkinson, C. and Lucas, R. (2009) Employment Practices and Performance, *Skills for Care* <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Document-library/NMDS-SC,-workforce-intelligence-and-innovation/Research/Research-Reports/Rewards-and-incentives/Rewards-and-Incentives-Phase-2-CaseStudies.pdf>
- [2]. Atkinson, C. and Lucas, R. (2013) Worker responses to HR practice in adult social care in England, *Human Resource Management Journal*, 23, (3): 296-312, DOI: [10.1111/j.1748-8583.2012.00203.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1748-8583.2012.00203.x)
- [3]. Atkinson, C. and Lucas, R. (2013) Policy and gender in adult social care work, *Public Administration*, 91, (1):159-173, DOI: [10.1111/j.1467-9299.2012.02040.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9299.2012.02040.x)
- [4]. Atkinson, C., Crozier, S. and Lucas, R. (2018) Workforce policy and care quality in English long-term elder care, *Public Performance & Management Review*, 41, (4), 859-884, DOI: [10.1080/15309576.2018.1473784](https://doi.org/10.1080/15309576.2018.1473784)
- [5]. Atkinson, C. and Crozier, S. (March 2016) Final report into factors that affect the recruitment and retention of domiciliary care workers and the extent to which these factors impact upon the quality of domiciliary care, *Welsh Government Publications* ISBN 978-1-4734-6295-3 <https://gov.wales/factors-affect-recruitment-and-retention-domiciliary-care-workers-final-report>
- [6]. Atkinson, C. and Crozier, S. (2020) Fragmented time and domiciliary social care, *Employee Relations*, 42, (1): 35-51, DOI: [10.1108/ER-05-2018-0142/full/html](https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-05-2018-0142/full/html)

Funding and Indicators of research quality:

- G1.HR Practices and Outcomes in the Care Sector, Skills for Care (Sector Skills Council), 2007-2009 (GBP99,000) (PI: Atkinson)
- G2.Recruitment and Retention in Welsh Domiciliary Care, Care Council Wales, 2015-2016 (GBP24,670) (PI: Atkinson)
- G3.Greater Manchester Independent Prosperity Review (Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), 2018 (GBP10,000) (PI: Atkinson)
- G4.The Good Employment Learning Lab Project, Economic Social and Research Council, 2020, (ES/T014857/1 / GBP1,000,000) (Co-I: Atkinson)
- Welsh Government project shortlisted for the Educate North Awards ‘Research Project of the Year’ (2016)

4. Details of the impact

Atkinson and Crozier’s research has been instrumental in shaping Welsh Government legislation. Their research provided evidence that underpinned two Government consultations on workforce regulation. This led to new legislation that curbs the use of zero-hour contracts and ensures that travel and care times are clearly and transparently identified on scheduling rotas. The research findings have influenced efforts by the Welsh Government to create more stable employment and working patterns, and ultimately facilitate the delivery of high-quality care that offers continuity, reliability and, and enables people to continue to live independently with a good quality of life.

Evidence for Change

In 2015, the Welsh Government began to develop legislation to support its Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014; this included the proposed Regulation and Inspection of Social

Care (Wales) Act 2016, on which the Government undertook a Phase 1 Consultation. As highlighted by Mark Drakeford, the (then) Minister for Health and Social Services, this consultation drew on Manchester Metropolitan findings [5] that established a clear relationship between the terms and conditions of domiciliary care workers, their recruitment and retention, and the quality of the care delivered: The findings of the research have been used to develop the policy ideas, which we have set out later in this document [A]. An analysis of 108 consultation responses was published in November 2016 alongside a written Ministerial statement. This cited the importance of Manchester Metropolitan's research and outlined a number of actions that the Welsh Government would take forward. These included recommendations from the research, particularly a commitment to limit the use of zero-hour contracts for domiciliary care workers and to identify, clearly, travel and care times on their scheduling rotas: *"I have asked the Care Council for Wales to consider and use this report in the development of their five-year strategy for domiciliary care in Wales."* (Rebecca Evans, MP) [B]. The Care Inspectorate for Wales also described Manchester Metropolitan's research as *"both powerful and detailed"* in their 2016 National Review [B].

The continuing impact of Manchester Metropolitan's research is evident in its subsequent citation in the Welsh Government's Phase 2 Consultation Document (November 2017), which announced that plans for new proposals around advancing social care reform were developed in response to concerns raised by Atkinson and Crozier's research [C]. The research is directly cited and/or quoted 12 times in the November 2017 Regulatory Impact Assessment's Explanatory Memorandum, laid before the National Assembly for Wales, that provides a narrative assessment of the costs and benefits of the proposed legislation [D]. The research is explicitly used to support the proposed regulatory changes in respect of curbing the use of zero-hour contracts and the scheduling of adequate care and travel time on worker rotas. Findings from the research around zero-hour contracts are also cited in the Welsh Government's policy paper: 'Brexit and Fair Movement of People' (2017), confirming further its significance [E]. UNISON and Community Care both praised the Welsh Government's 'crackdown on zero-hour contracts' as an important step in *"dealing with the complex issue of precarious employment"* as a result of the research findings [E]. UNISON used the evidence as part of their ongoing lobbying of local authorities to sign up to its *Ethical Care Charter*, which seeks to improve care worker terms and conditions of employment via the procurement and commissioning of care. The Charter forms part of UNISON's 'Save Care Now' campaign, and 17 local authorities have pledged their commitment so far.

Legislative Reform:

Manchester Metropolitan's research findings evidenced a compelling link between the prevalence of zero-hour contracts, low pay, lack of training, poor work scheduling and reduced quality of care. When the 2016 Act came into force in April 2018 [F], the Welsh Government directly cited the research when they introduced new regulations that required employers to give domiciliary care workers the right to request guaranteed-hours contracts after three months of employment. This improves employment security and conditions by reducing the use of zero-hour contracts [F]. This same legislation also required employers to include travel and call times in the rotas for their staff in line with another key recommendation of the research. This delivers both direct improvements to employment conditions for care workers, and indirectly impacts on the quality of care delivered by supporting it to be more continuous, flexible and reliable. Legislative change has been powerful. At the point of the submission of this case study, latest workforce data were available only to the end of 2018 (publication delayed from November 2020 until early 2021 due to COVID-19), so quantification of the full extent of contractual changes is not yet possible.

Reach and Significance:

The legislation implemented in April 2018 improved the working lives of approximately 19,500 domiciliary workers and safeguarded the overall quality of care delivered to around 23,000 vulnerable people [F]. Evidence from Manchester Metropolitan's research also informed wider changes implemented by Local Authorities and care providers. For example, the research was cited in Flintshire County Council's 'Strategic Review of the Care Sector' [G] and its changes to

care worker terms and conditions. The CEO of *Abacare*, a large care-providing organisation, endorsed the findings saying: “*We wholeheartedly agree with all these recommendations*” [G] and pledged their commitment to improving the image of working in the sector.

Since 2018, evidence from Atkinson’s research [4, 5] on workforce policy and care quality has underpinned several key documents, including the *Report to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Adult Social Care* in July 2019 [H]. It has thus influenced ongoing attempts across the UK to establish a cross-party consensus on much-needed national reform of the ASC system. Further impact has occurred at regional levels. In 2018, Atkinson secured GBP10,000 from GMCA to produce a technical report, based on her body of ASC research, for its Independent Prosperity Review [I]. Since publication in 2019, the Review [I] has informed the design and implementation of the Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy, jointly signed off by the UK Government and GMCA. A Testimonial from the Head of Research at GMCA [I] states that the technical report has: “*informed GM’s plan for increasing the productivity of big sectors in the ‘foundational economy’, including social care; accelerated the pace of health and care system transformation; and supported GM’s Good Employment Charter that will engage Greater Manchester’s employers, improving productivity, wages and job quality in all sectors.*” In 2020, an updated Independent Prosperity Review reviewed the impacts of the pandemic across the region and drew again on Atkinson’s technical report in respect of the ASC sector. The updated Review calls for greater investment to develop secure employment, including in ASC. In 2020, in recognition of her reputation in the field, Atkinson was invited to join the advisory board of the *Good Employment Charter*, which aims to improve employment conditions across all Greater Manchester employers, including a specific focus on the ASC sector.

Both the Welsh Government and GMCA research underpinned a successful GBP1,000,000 ESRC [Good Employment Learning Lab](#) award in 2020, designed to improve management practice, employee engagement and productivity. One of the three streams in the project is: ‘The Adult Social Care Learning Lab’, led by Atkinson, which is trialling a series of employment interventions, informed by findings from the Welsh Government research, to improve worker and organisational outcomes. Early impact from the ASC Learning Lab has included the co-production of knowledge about good employment in ASC and the co-design of the interventions delivered by Atkinson working with stakeholders, including ACAS, CIPD, Skills for Care, Greater Manchester’s Health and Social Care Partnership, Manchester City Council, and practitioners.

Since 2014, Atkinson has shared her research findings across Welsh Government policy fora (e.g. *Next steps for Social Care in Wales*, Cardiff, July 2016) and CIPD conferences in London and Manchester (December 2016). Findings have also been disseminated by several professional bodies including Care Forum Wales, Community Care, and the National Association for Welsh Research and Social Care Wales [J] reaching key stakeholders from social care, local authorities, Central Government and education. Atkinson’s 2017 article: ‘Creating the skilled, stable workforce needed to delivery high quality social care’ in *Public Sector Focus* reached over 50,000 digital edition subscribers and website viewers, with 40,000 senior contacts from across the public sector. Media coverage has also been widespread [K], particularly across BBC radio and television reaching an estimated audience of 32,000,000. Her case study, featuring interviews with care home workers in Greater Manchester, was selected to be part of the award-winning Chartered Association of Business Schools’ Research Exhibition (Edinburgh, 2019) and featured in their 2020 national promotional campaign.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[A] 1. Ministerial Statement from Mark Drakeford (former Minister for Health and Social Services) confirming the significance of the Manchester research: *Consultation Document Improving the recruitment and retention of Domiciliary Care workers in Wales* (January 2016, p6); 2. Confirmation of research underpinning policy development: *Consultation Document* (as above p9)

[B] 1. Ministerial Statement from Rebecca Evans (Minister for Social Services and Public Health) confirming the significance of the Manchester research: *Written Statement - Welsh Government Consultation: Domiciliary Care Workforce – improving the recruitment and retention of domiciliary care workers in Wales* (November 2016, p2); 2. National Review of Domiciliary

Care in Wales (Care and Social Services Inspectorate 2016, p46) *Above and Beyond: National review of domiciliary care in Wales*

[C] Welsh Government Consultation – summary of responses (November 2017, p2)

[D] Explanatory Memorandum to: The Regulated Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2017, from the Minister for Children and Social Care, prepared by the Health and Social Services Department and laid before the National Assembly for Wales (pp85, 87-88, 99-103)

[E] 1. Fair Movement of People: Securing Wales' Future (2017: p90); 2. UNISON: Welsh Government Cracks Zero-Hour Contracts (April 2018)

[F] 1. Welsh Government Statutory Regulations (2017); 2. Huw Irranca-Davies (the Minister for Children, Older People and Social Care) cites importance of Atkinson's research in Press Release: New requirements to ensure care workers are treated fairly come into force (2 April 2018); 3. Huw Irranca-Davies (as above)

[G] 1. Flintshire County Council Strategic Review (2017, p14); 2. Caring UK: CEO of Abacare endorses Manchester Met findings (2017)

[H] Hayes *et al.* (July 2019) Report to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Adult Social Care: (pp10, 12, 20-21, 24-25, 27-28)

[I] 1. Atkinson, C. and Crozier, S. (2019) Greater Manchester Independent Prosperity Review: Adult Social Care Technical Report; 2. Greater Manchester Independent Prosperity Review (March 2019); 3. Testimonial from Head of Research, GMCA (March 2020) citing significance of Atkinson's research

[J] Evidence confirming significance of Atkinson's research: Care Forum Wales, Community Care, National Association for Welsh Research, Social Care Wales

[K] *Media Coverage:*

BBC Wales: Plan to restrict zero-hour contracts for home carers (19 January 2016, reach 10.5m)

ITV News: Plans to curb zero-hour contracts for people working in social care (12 June 2017, reach 4.19m)

BBC News: The Welsh Government announces new proposals as a direct result of the research (12 June 2017, reach 6.51m)

BBC Wales: Curb on zero-hour care worker contracts and 'call clipping' (2 April 2018, reach 10.9m)