

Institution: Brunel University London		
Unit of Assessment: 23 Education		
Title of case study: Education, training and welfare provision: informing the work of housing associations		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014 – 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 Emma Wainwright	Reader (then, Senior Lecturer)	12/2003 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2016 – 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		

1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

As a result of Dr Wainwright's research on the geographies and sociologies of education, training and welfare, 3 housing associations in London (A2Dominion; Catalyst Housing; East Thames (now L&Q)) have improved their service provision for residents. A2Dominion used the research to create 5 new frontline delivery posts which directly benefitted 65,000 residents. Catalyst expanded service provision and provided more advice and support services for 65,000 residents. L&Q identified the best elements of service to concentrate their provision for 250,000 people. Together with Catalyst, A2Dominion used the research to gain funding (GBP500,000) to upscale their DOSH (Debts, Overdrafts, Savings Help) programme to DOSH Plus, to aid more vulnerable residents. Between 2019 and 2020, A2Dominion helped 6,230 residents with wellbeing and debt advice. Dr Wainwright's research has also been used in the wider social housing sector. Yarlinton Housing (Somerset) used it to increase its investment in training for 80,000 residents and Northwards Housing (Manchester) amended its business planning and invested an additional GBP30,000 to extend service provision to hard-to-reach residents.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

Dr Wainwright's research concentrates on the sociologies and geographies of education, training and welfare in relation to social housing, welfare provision and financial inclusion (Ref. 1; Ref. 2; Grant 1; Grant 2; Report 1; Report 2; Report 3). Between 2014 and 2017, Dr Wainwright collaborated with 3 housing associations in London and the South East (A2Dominion; Catalyst Housing; East Thames (now L&Q)) to conduct 3 research projects which address challenges in the social housing sector. The rationale for this was to extend knowledge of a range of contemporary socio-economic concerns and provide effective solutions to them.

A2Dominion manages over 37,000 homes in London and the South East; Catalyst Housing has over 32,000 homes in London and the home counties; and East Thames had over 14,000 homes in East London at the time the research was conducted. In 2016, East Thames merged with L&Q and they now house approximately 250,000 people in over 105,000 homes in London and the South East. All 3 housing associations are members of 'G15', the group of the largest housing associations in Greater London which, collectively, manages over 600,000 homes.

In the first project (Report 1), Dr Wainwright investigated new landscapes of training for work and the extended role of housing associations. Focusing on alternate spaces of education and

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training, this study concentrated on understanding better the contemporary role housing associations can play in offering training for work. It provided insight into the impacts of current policy interventions intended to engender social inclusion through welfare to work. The research showed that housing associations are perceived as a welcoming space, because staff members offer hope to residents participating in training programmes by utilising an approach which allows barriers among individuals to be understood and addressed.

In the second project (Report 2, Grant 1), Dr Wainwright explored the multiple services (health, employment, financial advice, training, digital inclusion) that housing associations offer to residents and the new and necessary forms of engaging residents. The research demonstrated that the remit of housing associations has grown in recent years to include a wider variety of services, however knowledge of these services remains sparse. Residents still perceive housing associations as mostly providing housing and repairs and lack perception of the wider remit involving extended welfare and service provision.

In the third project (Report 3, Grant 2), Dr Wainwright evaluated the DOSH (Debts, Overdrafts and Savings Helps) programme run by A2Dominion across Ealing, Spelthorne and Oxford to support residents with their finances through one-to-one mentoring. Through the Money Advice Service's (MAS) 'What Works Fund', A2Dominion expanded DOSH delivery to Oxford and Spelthorne and developed a new financial capability application ("Ask David") to work alongside the mentoring. The research findings showed that therapeutic mentoring is key to improving the financial capability of A2Dominion residents. Alongside the use of the application, therapeutic mentoring increases residents' ability to keep up with their financial commitments, and it improves their financial literacy and self-perception of well-being.

Using qualitative (in-depth narrative interviews and focus groups) and quantitative (control and intervention group surveys) methods, these projects have extended knowledge of residents' life histories, needs and experiences, and evidenced what works for financial inclusion. Dr Wainwright's research has encouraged and supported housing associations to improve their service offer and tailored support to residents, including:

- As drivers of welfare to work through the provision of programmes aimed at up-skilling residents and ensuring they are 'work ready'
- As a response to state rollback and austerity through taking on new and wider roles of governance and welfare support
- In response to the roll-out of Universal Credit through finding new ways to ensure residents are financially literate, stable and capable

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

Outputs:

Ref. 1 Wainwright, E., Marandet, E., and McHugh, E. (2020) Spatiality and auto/biographies of encounter in social housing, in J. Parsons and A. Chappell (eds), *Palgrave Handbook of Auto/biography*. London, Palgrave [10.1007/978-3-030-31974-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-31974-8)

Ref. 2 Wainwright, E. and Marandet, E. (2019) 'Housing Associations as institutional space: care and control in tenant welfare and training for work'. *Area* 51: 216-224 [10.1111/area.12468](https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12468)

Impact case study (REF3)Grants:

Grant 1 Emma Wainwright (PI) British Academy / Leverhulme (SG152101), 2016 – 2017, *Social housing and new forms of tenant engagement: welfare, governance and active citizenship*, GBP10,000

Grant 2 Emma Wainwright (PI), Kenneth Gilhooly (CI), Laura Hills (CI) A2 Dominion, 2017 – 2018, *What works? Evaluation of the DOSH financial capability programme*, GBP30,000

Reports:

Report 1 Wainwright, E. and Marandet, E. (2016) *'Investigating new landscapes of training for work: the extended role of housing associations. Report of Findings'*. London, Brunel University London. [10.13140/RG.2.1.3495.3201](https://www.fincap.org.uk/en/evaluations/evaluation-of-the-dosh-financial-capability-programme)

Report 2 Wainwright, E. and Marandet, E. (2017) *'Social housing and new forms of tenant engagement: welfare, governance and active citizenship. Report of Findings'*. London, Brunel University London. [10.13140/RG.2.2.15219.63522](https://www.fincap.org.uk/en/evaluations/evaluation-of-the-dosh-financial-capability-programme)

Report 3 Wainwright, E., McHugh, E., Gilhooly, K. and Hills, L. (2018) *'What works? Evaluation of the DOSH financial capability programme'*. London, Brunel University London
<https://www.fincap.org.uk/en/evaluations/evaluation-of-the-dosh-financial-capability-programme>

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)**1. Impact on Housing Associations and Social Housing Residents, including those financially vulnerable and at risk****A2Dominion:**

The research has increased A2Dominion's knowledge and evidence base and, in turn, has impacted their strategy and operations. The findings of all 3 projects have shaped A2Dominion's strategic goals with a focus on developing the scope and depth of its employment, training, enterprise, welfare and tenant well-being programmes. Drawing on the research findings and recommendations, A2Dominion have made substantial operational changes to their service delivery (E4).

Positive findings and recommendations from projects 1 and 2 were used as an evidence-base to shape and inform future work in the field of training for work and welfare support. A2Dominion's Partnership and Fundraising Manager confirms that Dr Wainwright's research has "highlighted the extended role housing associations could play in communities, financial capability and resident engagement" and "we have used it to enable residents to maximise their benefits" (E4). In particular, A2Dominion "have created five new frontline-delivery posts" as a result of the research to respond to "the growing demand for employment and training, health and wellbeing, digital inclusion and welfare advice services" (E4).

This has directly benefitted A2Dominion's most vulnerable residents, such as those struggling with debt. As a result of the research, A2Dominion reports, "we helped 2115 customers with benefit and debts advice and engaged a 1000 in health and wellbeing activities" in 2019 alone (E4). Between 2019 and 2020, A2Dominion have helped approximately 6,230 residents. This research-informed service provision has contributed to A2Dominion having been shortlisted for Socially Responsible Corporate of the Year at the West London Business Awards in 2020.

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On the publication of the DOSH evaluation report onto the Money Advice Service's evidence hub, Dr Wainwright's A2Dominion partner commented on the wide ranging impact of her work, which included raising awareness of the role of research in understanding their work: "The project as a whole has raised the profile of financial capability, just had a visit from one of the trustees at the Heathrow Fund in regards to a capital and revenue bid for Advice Plus at the Lido. Presented community investment achievements to my EMT and Board last week, off the back of that had a request from the Chair of the Board to visit Advice Plus and see a Dosh Mentor and the type of advice they give in action. Can't be going any better, really" (E7).

As a result of the Brunel research, A2Dominion have been able to upscale its DOSH programme and expand the DOSH partnership group to include other housing associations. The research helped secure GBP500,000 additional funding in partnership with Catalyst to deliver DOSH plus in Ealing, Spelthorne and Brent. This has helped increase the profile of DOSH in London, "which has provided much needed financial support for those who need it the most" (E4). This, in turn, has had a huge impact on the 65,000 vulnerable residents A2Dominion supports and enabled them to manage their finances and take back control of their lives. Furthermore, the research informed the expansion of the Advice Plus model in Ealing which "now provides a multi-agency advice for residents struggling with benefits and debt, which enables us to help more vulnerable people than before" (E4).

Catalyst Housing

Catalyst used the findings to develop their evidence base, expand their existing model and develop new strategies to allow for improvements in service delivery. Driven by research findings, "the new strategies have proven successful" with expansion of services and provision of more advice and support for those residents needing it the most (E5). As a result of the research, Catalyst "now see increased numbers or *[sic]* our customers benefiting from our services. In 2019/2020, we delivered £3.5million societal benefit...through our community investment activity" and to our 32,000 homes in London and the South East" (E5).

East Thames (now part of L&Q) Housing:

At East Thames housing, involvement in the research and the subsequent findings were used to continue the support they were giving their residents: "It was good to have the opportunity to reflect on the work that we were doing at that time. It certainly enabled us to identify the elements of service that worked well and concentrate our efforts in that direction. In many ways it was an endorsement of what we were already doing and justified the approach we were taking" (E6).

2. Impact on decision-making frameworks at other Housing Associations

Dr Wainwright's research findings have been widely used to reinforce evidence-based decision-making frameworks across the nation. The Director of Communities at Social Squared (formerly Head of Communities at the Housing Association Charitable Trust) reinforced the importance of the DOSH evaluation for informing the evidence base of the social housing sector, with the findings "shared widely to provide a useful insight to other organisations looking to provide similar services" (E3). In addition, unsolicited enquiries received from housing associations engaged in training-to-work programmes but who were lacking an evidence base led to further details on impact of the research:

Impact case study (REF3)**Northwards Housing (Manchester):**

The Head of Regeneration at Northwards Housing reflected on the use of the report as it provided an evidence base of similar case studies to their own work: “I sit on the board of ‘Yes’ (Northwards Housing’ community interest company) so the report drew out some interesting parallels with the work we do across north Manchester and gave us some opportunities to reflect, draw upon best practice and amend the delivery of our employment and training offer” (E2). Engaging with Dr Wainwright’s findings on the impact of housing associations training-to-work programmes led to the development of a “client group to create dialogue and feedback from service users; the board uses this feedback as part of our strategy review and business planning process” (E2). Northwards Housing subsequently used the research to create “a £30,000 grant fund for new businesses in our communities and we are tailoring specific provision at hard-to-reach groups (e.g. single men over 50)” (E2).

Yarlington Housing (Somerset):

The Head of Inspired to Achieve at Yarlington Housing reported, “The research has provided a useful evidence base to support the work that we are doing at Inspired to Achieve. The report formed a key part of the evidence we used to successfully put a case to our Chief Executive and Senior Management Team for continued support for our employment support programmes...the research from Brunel confirmed the importance of close and holistic one-to-one work with residents which supports our own efforts. Our investment in training programmes is especially important given cuts to the Adult Education Budget, and it is vital that housing associations like ours can use research-informed evidence as intelligence on which to make service provision decisions” (E1).

Dr Wainwright’s research has had significant impact, with beneficiaries including frontline service providers, those relying on service provision and requiring personalised support (residents), those who design, manage and run service provision, and those at management level who have responsibility for ensuring residents are supported and tenancies sustained. The evidence presented here also recognises the potential for wider and ongoing impact as the research continues to be used in the social housing sector. For example, Dr Wainwright has been commissioned to write a report “Beyond Housing” for Catalyst Housing (2020) and has partnered with Notting Hill Genesis housing for a research funding bid on low-income households’ experiences of home-schooling during the Covid-19 pandemic (Dec 2020).

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

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- E1** Corroborating letter from Yarlington Housing, 6 March 2019
 - E2** Corroborating letter from Northwards Housing, 15 March 2019
 - E3** Corroborating email from Social Squared, 18 September 2020
 - E4** Corroborating letter from A2Dominion, 12 October 2020
 - E5** Corroborating letter from Catalyst Housing, 10 December 2020
 - E6** Corroborating email from L&Q Housing, 4 March 2019
 - E7** Corroborating email from A2Dominion, 10 October 2018