

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: Loughborough University		
Unit of Assessment: C17 – Business and Management Studies		
Title of case study: Transforming Policy and Practice Around Dignity and Respect at Work		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2015 to 2017		
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:
Iain Coyne	Senior Lecturer in Organisational Psychology	September 2015 to present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: July 2017 to December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Around 15% of employees are targets of workplace bullying, with the total cost to UK organisations estimated at GBP13.75 billion. Dr Iain Coyne's research on reducing bullying and promoting dignity and fairness at work has 1) increased awareness of how to tackle the issue, 2) influenced and reshaped managers' and practitioners' approaches, and 3) changed organisational policy and culture in promoting dignity and respect at work. These impacts are evidenced in four organisations: Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Kings Lynn NHS Trust; Sheffield Occupational Health Advisory Service; the University and College Union; and Amnesty International, a large charity and campaigning organisation with global operations.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Bullying at work involves persistent abusive behaviour towards an individual or group, resulting in negative impacts on employee wellbeing and organisational performance. Coyne has been researching this issue for 18 years and since arriving at Loughborough he has focused on understanding how scholars and practitioners can develop the effective, evidence-based interventions that are urgently needed. Coyne has promoted fairness as a way of helping establish a culture of dignity and respect within organisations to address problems around workplace bullying.</p> <p>Coyne has specifically identified and shed light on the role of fairness in helping understand individual outcomes of experiencing workplace cyberbullying. Through three linked questionnaire-based studies of UK university employees, he found employee fairness perceptions (violations of dignity) explained why those experiencing workplace cyberbullying tended to be dissatisfied at work [R1]. Individuals experiencing more cyberbullying reported higher levels of dignity violations and higher levels of job dissatisfaction. A sample study of medical students found the relationship between blaming the perpetrator for experiencing cyberbullying and job dissatisfaction could be explained by the extent employees felt unfairly treated [R2].</p> <p>Extending the scope beyond victim experiences, Coyne applied the concept of fairness to explaining bystander behaviour in relation to workplace bullying more generally. Adopting a quasi-experimental approach using vignettes [R3], he hypothesised the importance of fairness perceptions in explaining bystander reactions to scenarios depicting bullying at work. Using a justice framework (Folger and Skarlicki, 2005), Coyne argued bystander behaviour is influenced by perceptions of fairness of an act and who is to 'blame' for the act, through a process of 'would', 'could' and 'should' cognitions. Results illustrated that bystanders responded differently, tending to support perpetrator behaviour more, when</p>		

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behaviour was online and work-related rather than when offline and personal. Coyne suggested the ambiguous and subtle nature of online and work-related acts can impact bystanders' perceptions of how fairly they believe the target in the scenario was treated.

These empirical investigations highlighted the importance of fairness and dignity in bullying victim and bystander perceptions, leading Coyne to promote the need to develop workplace bullying interventions that help enhance fairness perceptions. Coyne has devised practical recommendations for organisations wishing to develop such interventions [R4], arguing that imperative in any prevention strategy is the need to establish a positive climate that fosters mutual respect, dignity, and fairness.

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

R1 Coyne, IJ, Farley, S, Axtell, C, Sprigg, CA, Best, L, and Kwok, O (2017): 'Understanding the relationship between experiencing workplace cyberbullying, employee mental strain and job satisfaction: a dysempowerment approach', *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, volume 28, issue 7, pages 945-972
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2015.1116454>

R2 Farley, S, Coyne, IJ, Sprigg, C, Axtell, C, and Subramanian, G (2015): 'Exploring the impact of workplace cyberbullying on trainee doctors', *Medical Education*, volume 49, issue 4, pages 436-443
<https://doi.org/10.1111/medu.12666>

R3 Coyne, IJ, Gopaul, A-M, Campbell, M, Pankász, A, Garland, R, and Cousans, F (2019): 'Bystander responses to bullying at work: the role of mode, type and relationship to target', *Journal of Business Ethics*, volume 157, issue 3, pages 813-827
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-017-3692-2>

R4 Coyne, IJ, and Campbell, M (2017): 'Preventing bullying in school and work contexts', in Pontell, H (ed), *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, Oxford University Press, pages 1-41
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264079.013.14>

R1, R2 and R3 are published in academic journals with rigorous peer-review and editorial processes, overseen by well-established and widely respected academics in the field. R4 is a thorough analysis and evaluation of the state of play in the field, in the form of an invited chapter as part of a prestigious book series.

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

The main pathway for the impact of Coyne's research is a collaborative network, co-led by Coyne, comprising 27 people representing academia, professional bodies, public sector and independent practitioners, unions and charities/NGOs. The network, Dignity and Respect At Work Intervention Group (DRAWING), was formed in February 2017 and focuses on developing evidence-based interventions for workplace bullying. Below are examples of impact at numerous levels and in diverse settings.

- **Enhanced awareness of bullying and changing policy in public health services**

Coyne's research developed understanding of bullying at work at an NHS Trust by enhancing awareness around how to intervene. Queen Elizabeth Hospital, part of Kings Lynn NHS Trust, is a 500-bed, 28-ward general hospital that has a staff of more than 2,800 and serves a population of over 330,000. An NHS staff survey in 2016 raised concern about bullying among junior doctors at the Trust. Coyne co-delivered an evidence-based intervention to eight senior consultants in July 2017, focusing on fairness as well as bystander intervention aspects of his research.

Attendees rated the workshop very positively [S1], with the hospital's Senior Consultant in Geriatric Medicine reporting: "This workshop helped us immensely to improve awareness and also how to tackle this issue effectively." The Trust also used the session in its reporting to the General Medical Council [S2].

The same underpinning research was used to address understanding of bullying at work and to change policy at Sheffield Occupational Health Advisory Service (SOHAS). SOHAS works with around 1,800 clients a year, with 60% reporting they would have lost their job without its support. With respect to enhancing awareness, SOHAS's manager said in April 2019: "I have found the DRAWING group to be useful in providing a wider perspective to the issues around bullying and harassment, and we have used the outcomes of the meetings to inform SOHAS advisers about the latest thinking in this area." [S3]

As a direct result of working with Coyne, SOHAS changed its own policy on dignity and respect and created a new policy statement for the organisation. SOHAS's manager reported: "We have used the dignity and respect statement, and it is included in the recruitment pack that goes out to prospective new employees. We think that it is useful in making it clear to people who are thinking about applying for a job at SOHAS what is acceptable behaviour within the organisation" [S3]. SOHAS continues to use the statement as a way of communicating organisational expectations to new recruits and to take a different approach to addressing issues within the organisation [S4].

• ***Influenced a senior trade union negotiator's work to protect employees and improve organisational practice***

Coyne's research has improved the practice of a University and College Union (UCU) bargaining and negotiations official in tackling bullying at work. UCU represents approximately 100,000 academic and related staff in UK higher education. Having joined DRAWING in 2017, the official engaged with 20 major employers and represented more than 4,000 employees by April 2020, when she reported: "Iain Coyne's research on... bullying and creating dignity and respect at work and his discussion on primary, secondary and tertiary bullying interventions have influenced my practice as a TU official." [S5]

The official credited Coyne's research with reshaping practice both at a representational level and at an institutional level – the former by "seeking alternatives to grievance and disciplinary procedures and addressing problems in a more holistic way", the latter through "representations with employers regarding addressing broader cultural changes... as part of collective negotiations (e.g., cultural audits, Health & Safety inspections, changes to grievance/dignity-at-work procedures)." [S5]

• ***Transformed 'dignity at work' policy and practice at Amnesty International globally***

Coyne's research helped revolutionise Amnesty International's global approach to policy on dignity at work. In October 2019, the organisation's Head of Internal Communications and People Engagement stated: "This work is an important part of a new and innovative employee experience plan... to transform Amnesty into a healthier, kinder and more trusting working environment." [S6].

The plan, known as 'Empowered, engaged, valued', has become a major driver for Amnesty. It followed the organisation's own concerns about negative workplace behaviours and an independent report, prepared by the Washington KonTerra Group, highlighting cases of bullying at Amnesty over the course of several decades.

Coyne's research has influenced Amnesty's practices via the charity's Senior Advisor Organisational Development and Conflict Management, who stated: "Iain's input and support has contributed significantly to my work and development... I have renewed and changed my

focus, emphasising fairness and justice in all the conflict procedures and training [throughout Amnesty]" [S7]. This change of individual practice led to "... (i) development of revised international board procedures, (ii) development of a conflict and dispute resolution policy in Amnesty Portugal and (iii) improved induction for senior staff in Taiwan, Uruguay, New Zealand, South Korea and Japan in conflict/dispute resolution – and also their roles as leaders and shaping the culture in the organisation." [S7]

Amnesty has indicated that the impact of Coyne's work has endured. For example, at the end of 2020 the Senior Advisor Organisational Development and Conflict Management noted that Amnesty Portugal "continues to enjoy constructive relations" and that "the International Board procedures are still in place and are robust, fair and clear, thanks to Iain's guidance on fairness and justice." [S7].

To ensure policy translated into practice on the ground, Coyne also developed a training intervention for all Amnesty employees and volunteers – approximately 650 people across 18 countries (the USA, the UK, Mexico, Peru, France, Spain, Belgium, Switzerland, Russia, South Africa, Kenya, Senegal, Israel, Tunisia, Lebanon, Hong Kong, Thailand and Sri Lanka) – as well as new employees. This fundamentally changed Amnesty's approach to enhancing dignity and fairness within the organisation. Drawing heavily on Coyne's research on fairness and bullying in R1, R2 and R3, and consisting of online training [S9] and face-to-face workshops, the intervention was a key component of a new cultural change initiative and is detailed in Amnesty's 2019 global cultural change plan [S8]. It challenged employees to reflect on their behaviour and use the 'would', 'could' and 'should' approach to explore how they might have approached an interaction with another employee differently.

The online training blends the dissemination of evidence-based information on conflict, bias and fairness with acted scenarios designed to map experiences that might occur at Amnesty. Trainees are required not only to understand the information but to reflect on its meaning and apply those reflections to questions arising from the scenarios. A successful trial of the training was completed in June 2020 and received positive feedback, and a second successful trial took place five months later. Pre-post analysis showed substantial increases in self-reported understanding of the diversity of behaviour and perspectives held by other people, especially in conflict situations [S10]. An evaluation framework has also been devised [S6].

Policies and processes based on Coyne's work are well-established in Amnesty, as described above, although the plans outlined for the trialling and mass roll-out of training [S8] have been substantially delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic. An Amnesty statement to this effect has been submitted.

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

S1 Evaluation of training at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Kings Lynn NHS Trust, July 2017

S2 Testimonials from Senior Consultant in Geriatric Medicine, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Kings Lynn NHS Trust, September 2017 and April 2019

S3 Testimonial from SOHAS manager, April 2019

S4 Testimonial from SOHAS manager, October 2020

S5 Testimonial from UCU official, April 2020

S6 Testimonials from Head of Internal Communications and People Engagement, Amnesty International, July 2019 and December 2020

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S7 Testimonials from Senior Advisor Organisational Development and Conflict Management, Amnesty International, October 2018, July 2019 and December 2020

S8 Amnesty International cultural change plan, January 2019 (see page 9)

S9 Link to Amnesty International online training (confidential but can be shared on request)

S10 Briefing report on Amnesty training evaluation data, November 2020