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The Employment Studies newsletter reports on IES research on labour market and employment policy and practice in the UK and abroad. It is aimed at those interested in research to inform the development and implementation of public policy. Two other publications, *Network News* and *HR Insight*, provide briefings on IES employer-related work.



Segmenting the self-employed workforce

Andrea Broughton, IES Principal Research Fellow

Self-employment has grown considerably in the UK over the past 15 years, now totalling around 4.8 million workers, or 15 per cent of the workforce. There is a debate about the extent to which this growth in self-employment is a positive development: some believe that it is a positive feature of an entrepreneurial and flexible economy, while others fear that it is increasing levels of precariousness. This is a difficult issue to address as there is great heterogeneity among the self-employed workforce. In order to shed light on this, IES undertook research for the Centre for Research on Self-Employment (CRSE) to divide the self-employed workforce into segments.

continued on pages 2 and 3



The policy debate on self-employment has often been carried out on the assumption that there is some homogeneity among the self-employed workforce. However, this is far from the case, and it could be argued that diversity is increasing due to the growth of the so-called gig economy. In order to help clarify the debate, IES undertook research for the CRSE that aimed to achieve greater clarity in terms of the size and nature of the different segments of the self-employed workforce. The aim is that if the sector is better segmented, this will help policymakers to avoid taking a broad-brush approach to the treatment of self-employed workers.

Methodology

The research comprised two parts: a review of the available literature on the subject of segmenting the self-employed workforce; and analysis of three datasets: the Labour Force Survey, the Family Resources Survey and Understanding Society. In order to create a framework for segmenting different types of self-employment, key indicators from across the three datasets were selected, relating to:

- **Economic wellbeing.** Hourly earnings were used to standardise across different working patterns and help to segment the self-employed into different categories of economic wellbeing.
- **Whether the work is independent or dependent.** In order to build a picture of their overall independence, we examined indicators such as the degree of autonomy/control of work, number of clients, whether the self-employed person views themselves as having a job or a business, as well as whether they have separate bank or business accounts. This dimension also addresses the debate about false self-employment.
- **The extent to which the work is secure or insecure.** This is linked to the debate about the working conditions and job quality of the self-employed. We looked at indicators such as whether individuals are looking for alternative work, which are useful measures of the extent to which the individual is self-employed by choice and whether the work provides long-term security.

The segments

Overall, our research identified nine segments of solo self-employed people, based on the three groups of indicators above. The segments range from low-paid, dependent and insecure, through to high-paid, independent and secure. We have illustrated each segment with typical occupations, below.

Low pay, dependent, insecure. People in this segment are generally less qualified than other groups. It has the highest proportion of people who became self-employed because they could not find other employment (13% compared with 6% across all segments). They report lower than average levels of autonomy and control over their work. The average hourly earnings are below other segments and their employed equivalents. Typical occupations in this segment are drivers and cleaners.

Low pay, independent, insecure. This segment is highly qualified (35% are graduates, compared with the 29% average across all segments) and only 7% have no qualifications at all. Self-employment was an overwhelming choice for this group, with only 3 per cent doing so because they could not find other employment. They have lower than average earnings. Typical occupations in this sector are shopkeepers, artistic occupations and car mechanics.

Low pay, independent, secure. This is a predominantly male segment with a below-average proportion of those with a degree. This group exhibits a relatively high degree of autonomy and control over their work. Median hourly earnings of this segment are close to the average across all segments, but once qualifications, type of self-employment and other factors are controlled for, their earnings are below average. They are also below the average for employees in comparable jobs. Typical occupations in this sector are farm workers, builders, traders and tutors.

Mid pay, dependent, insecure. Only 14 per cent of people in this segment are graduates and there is an above average proportion that became self-employed because they could not find other work. They have below average levels of autonomy, particularly relating to work manner and hours. This group has the lowest median hourly earnings, but once other factors such as qualifications and type of self-employment are controlled for, the earnings differences are not statistically

significant. Only 12 per cent have a private pension. However, the people in this segment report the highest levels of job satisfaction. Typical occupations in this sector are childminders and carers, and building labourers.

Mid pay, dependent, secure. Workers in this group have low qualification levels (16% with above A-levels, compared with the 39% average across all segments). They report below-average autonomy for many aspects of work and earn above average compared to other segments, but less than their employed counterparts. Job satisfaction is close to the average across all segments but higher than among employees in similar roles. Typical occupations in this sector are building operatives/drivers.

Mid pay, independent, secure. There is a relatively high proportion of graduates (36%) in this segment. This group reports the highest levels of autonomy relating to job task, work pace, task order and work hours. Median earnings are similar to the average across all segments, but much lower than employees in similar roles. The people in this segment have higher job satisfaction than both the average across all segments and employed counterparts. Typical occupations in this sector are trainers and coaches, IT and related professionals, financial advisers, business associate professionals, manufacturing managers, hair and beauty workers, skilled makers, gardeners, and restaurant and B&B owners.

High pay, regulated, secure. This is a highly qualified segment (87% with degrees) with only two per cent becoming self-employed due to a lack of employment opportunities. The highest proportion (36%) became self-employed because of the nature of their job. This group is likely to have low levels of control and autonomy due to regulatory processes and practice hours. Median hourly earnings are significantly higher than the average across all segments, but similar to employees. The people in this segment have greater levels of job and life satisfaction than employees in similar roles. Those in this segment are medical professionals.

High pay, mid-independence, secure. This group is highly qualified, though a relatively large proportion became self-employed following redundancy. Most professions in this segment have average levels of control and autonomy,



Briefings

Research study on the articulation between the EU level and national levels of social dialogue

IES and WMP Consult, Hamburg, have been commissioned to examine the articulation of social dialogue between the EU level – cross-sector and sector – and the national level in EU Member States, in order to ascertain how well the EU social dialogue is functioning. The project comprises a literature review, interviews with experts at EU level and 10 case studies of individual sectors and agreements.

IES contact: Andrea Broughton

Casual work – characteristics, regulatory frameworks, spread and implications in selected Member States

This study explores the characteristics, regulatory frameworks, incidence and implications of casual work in 10 European Union Member States. Its specific aims are to explore which forms of casual work are regulated by legislation or collective agreements and what drives employers and employees to opt for casual work.

It will also consider how prevalent/widespread casual work is; what the characteristics of employers and employees engaged in casual work are; and what the implications of casual work are on working conditions and the labour market.

IES contact: Kari Hadjivassiliou

Evaluation of the Healthy Working Wales Programme – In-work support operation

IES is collaborating with Old Bell 3 to deliver the evaluation of In-Work Support under the Healthy Working Wales Programme. IES will develop a theory of change through leading policymaker interviews and a targeted literature review. To build consensus on the draft model of how the programme should operate, IES will lead a workshop with policymakers.

The Theory of Change assumptions and hypotheses will be tested as part of evaluation activities. These will include exploring the views of employers, individuals, GPs and others, as well as analysing management information on the numbers of people receiving support through the programme and their outcomes.

IES contact: Annette Cox

although this depends on the regulatory processes of each profession. People in this segment earn above the average of other segments, but less than their employed counterparts. They are more likely to have a private pension and report higher levels of job satisfaction than employees. Typical occupations in this sector are functional managers, construction and property managers, book-keepers, and TV/film technical roles.

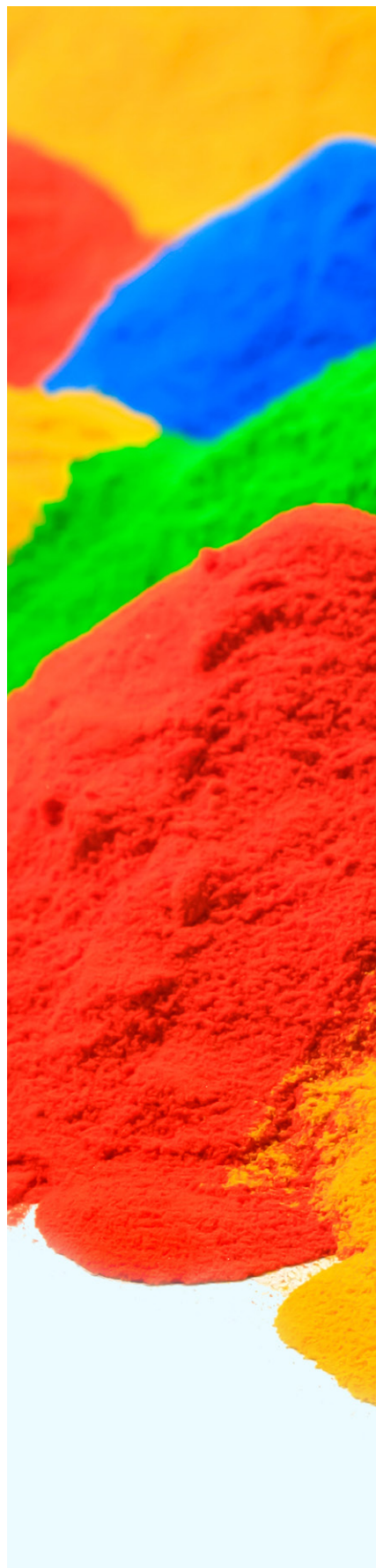
High pay, independent, secure. This segment is highly qualified and 24 per cent became self-employed for better working conditions or job satisfaction. This group shows relatively high levels of autonomy and control. It is the highest paid segment, and is more likely to have private pension provision. They are also more satisfied than employees in similar professions. Those in this segment are legal and business professionals.

Recommendations

The research makes a number of recommendations for policymakers. Firstly, it states that although it is important to improve the position of dependent and insecure workers, it is also essential that the independence, autonomy and job satisfaction enjoyed by many self-employed people is safeguarded. Improving access to training and professional development opportunities would help to foster self-employment as a positive career choice. Clarifying the status of self-employed would also help to ensure that those who are genuinely self-employed maintain their independence.

It also notes that those who have only a limited amount of security urgently need support through incentives for pension uptake and reforms to the welfare system. Finally, those whose earnings are limited could be supported by the development of improved access to training and skills development opportunities. This may help to increase pay and would also enable the less autonomous self-employed either to move into more independent roles or build themselves a broader base of clients.

Read the full report:
<http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/resource/true-diversity-self-employment>



Conducting a detailed workforce analysis for Cancer Research UK

Matthew Williams, IES Senior Research Fellow, and **Clare Huxley**, IES Research Fellow



Cancer Research UK (CRUK) recently published its report on the UK's non-surgical oncology workforce which, for the first time, gives an overview of the current workforce delivering non-surgical treatments for cancer across the UK and provides projections for what this workforce may look like in five years' time.

IES' contribution to this project drew on our expertise in workforce research, such as our analysis of the UK's nursing workforce on behalf of the Migration Advisory Committee in 2016. This research on behalf of CRUK identified the current and future size of the key workforce groups within non-surgical oncology; highlighted the need for improved workforce data collection for several key professions; and identified the role of skills mix in addressing current and future needs around staffing and treatments.

IES worked in partnership with 2020 Delivery to create treatment scenarios and model the future workforce for key roles in the

non-surgical oncology workforce. The roles we considered were consultant oncologists (clinical, medical and paediatric); therapeutic radiographers; clinical scientists (radiotherapy physics); dosimetrists/clinical technologists; nurses (radiotherapy, chemotherapy, stem cell and clinical nurse specialists); and pharmacists.

The starting point for the project was to estimate the current size of the workforce in the different roles. However, this was not straightforward, due to the number of different data sources and limitations with some sources. NHS Digital publishes workforce data for the whole NHS

workforce, although coding of staff to the different job titles and work areas is undertaken by individual trusts, and practice seems to vary considerably between trusts. Most of the professional bodies that cover the role that we were investigating publish workforce data, based either on surveys or on membership data, with considerable variation between bodies in the information collected. In many instances there were discrepancies between the NHS Digital data and those from professional bodies, and in discussion with stakeholders it was agreed that data from the professional bodies would be treated as the more accurate source. Previous reports



exploring the cancer workforce, created by the National Chemotherapy Advisory Group (NCAG)¹ and the National Radiotherapy Advisory Group (NRAG)², were also reviewed, and insights from stakeholders were incorporated.

This information was used to create a best estimate of current workforce numbers for each of the main professional groups. These estimates were then presented to relevant stakeholders participating in the clinical panel or advisory group and revised in accordance with their advice and evidence.

The next stage of the research identified likely levels of inflow and outflow to and from the workforce between 2017 and 2022. Inflows from the training pipeline were calculated from predicted training places based on published plans, where available, or current training places. Outflows included factors such as projected retirement based on population age and likely rates of attrition estimated using current available data on leavers in the workforce groups of interest. As with the current workforce data, insight and evidence from expert stakeholders were incorporated into the analysis to refine estimates.

Alongside the development of workforce projections, a best practice activity-based modelling of cancer treatment need was undertaken. This exercise incorporated cancer incidence projections developed by CRUK, and treatment pathways based on NICE recommendations for current practice as well as expected changes in treatment (eg more complex, targeted radiotherapy treatments). These treatment pathways were then translated into specific knowledge and skills required for the procedures which was then mapped to roles within the workforce that either currently undertake this activity or have the competence to do so.

Cancer treatment models were created for six cancer types/sites (breast, prostate, bowel, lung, head and neck cancer, and non-Hodgkin lymphoma) chosen to represent a combination of commonly occurring cancers and different treatment approaches. Treatment demand for other cancer types was then extrapolated from these core models. The treatment pathways were developed through case studies with cancer centres, expert interviews and reviews of current best practice clinical guidance on treatments. Experts from the clinical panel and advisory group had key roles in selecting and developing these models.

A key element in developing the treatment need was to identify which activities currently undertaken by consultant oncologists could be allocated to other members of the team (therapeutic radiographers, or clinical scientists) using a 'skill mix' approach. Adopting skill mix could reduce the need for consultant oncologists, but would increase the need for staff in these other roles, while maintaining the same or similar level of service.

The results of the best practice modelling were then combined with the workforce model projections to quantify the likely shortfall in staff against patient need for the various staff groups.

The research found that the number of clinical and medical consultant oncologists is expected to increase from 1,315 in 2015 to 1,710 in 2022, based on workers retiring at 65 and on current numbers in the training pipeline. However, the current oncology workforce is substantially below the number needed to provide treatment according to the best practice model. This model estimates that the oncology workforce should be at least double the current size. Further use of skill mix approaches, where other members of the workforce are trained to take on additional responsibilities, could reduce the oncologist shortfall to around 22 per cent in 2022, rather than the current 50 per cent shortfall.

The projected shortfalls for therapeutic radiographers and clinical technologists against the best practice numbers in 2022 are much smaller than for oncologists, although, if skill mix approaches are adopted this will further increase the projected shortfalls for these staff groups. However, the shorter training pathways for these groups, in comparison with oncologists, should allow providers to respond more quickly to better match workforce resources to patient need.

The research will now inform CRUK's policy development as well as their evidence and recommendations to Health Education England's ongoing review of the cancer workforce. It will also provide valuable insights for healthcare providers and professional organisations to inform their workforce and training plans.

Read the full report: <http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/CRUK17>

- 1 NCAG (2009), *Chemotherapy Services in England: Ensuring quality and safety*, National Chemotherapy Advisory Group
- 2 NRAG (2007), *Radiotherapy: developing a world class service for England*, National Radiotherapy Advisory Group



Briefings

Good practices in social dialogue

IES supported the Ecorys UK project team in drafting a section on freedom of association and fundamental principle and rights at work for an ILO report on social dialogue. Using the ILO documents provided, IES drafted a section on what type of ILO interventions were observed for the thematic area; a section on what worked and why; and a section about the case of Egypt. IES also edited and quality-assured the overall draft report.

IES contact: Kari Hadjivassiliou

Creating a culture of innovation

IES has been commissioned by NHS Improvement to update course materials on introducing and embedding a culture of innovation. The team will conduct a review of both the academic and 'grey' literature and design a conceptual model and accompanying exercises to help senior leader course participants apply their learning to create cultures of innovation back in their own organisations.

IES contact: Alison Carter

Refugees into Sustainable Employment Evaluation

IES is supporting Renaisi's internal evaluation of their refugee employment programme, RISE. IES will help validate Renaisi's internal findings, create a baseline and benchmark from which to measure project impact, create online content to report on their work and contribute to joint learning events.

IES Contact: Rachel Marangozov

Evaluating Mind's Blue Light initiative for new emergency services recruits

IES is evaluating Mind's latest Blue Light initiative which involves mental health and wellbeing training for new recruits in the emergency services. The work involves training observations, qualitative interviewing, focus groups and a census-type survey. The work will explore issues specific to new recruits in order that Mind can tailor its training to this cohort.

IES contact: Clare Huxley

Developing inclusive approaches to supporting disabled students in higher education

Emma Pollard, IES Principal Research Fellow



IES, working in partnership with colleagues at REAP (Researching Access, Equity and Participation, Lancaster University), has continued to build on its work exploring how higher education (HE) providers in England support disabled students with a new study commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)¹. This forms part of our wider body of work focused on equality and diversity in the workforce and in education.

The new study focused on inclusive models of support. It investigated what is meant by inclusive teaching and learning; explored how institutions provide this and wider inclusive support and the challenges they face in doing so; and assessed levels of support and the progress being made towards becoming fully inclusive. The increased focus on inclusive support has in part been driven by changing funding arrangements for disabled students. In 2016/17 the government reformed one of the key funding mechanisms, the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). The changes placed further responsibilities on HE providers – making them responsible for the provision of certain levels of medical help, specialist accommodation and costs for some computer accessories – and required a shift from the medical (or 'deficit')

model of support, to the social model of support. The latter assumes that barriers to individual success in HE are a result of institutional processes and therefore promotes the development of inclusive learning and teaching practices. This was further encouraged by the Government, which identified inclusive approaches as a priority in its 2016 grant letter to HEFCE, and was supported by increased funding from HEFCE to help HE providers move towards inclusive models of support.

The new study updates our previous research for HEFCE² which considered institutional support for students with mental health problems and/or other impairments with high cost and intensive support needs. A mainstay of support for disabled students has tended to be

provided through making individual 'reasonable adjustments' to learning support, assessment arrangements, and accommodation (which can include provision of specialist accommodation). These reasonable adjustments are an equality duty placed on all public sector bodies, including HE providers, under the Equality Act 2010. Our original 2015 study found that institutions were starting to develop inclusive curricula. Institutions believed this would help them to provide more support using fewer resources, which was seen as particularly important at the time, in the light of proposed changes to DSA and growing numbers of disabled students. It was recognised that making large numbers of individual adjustments could be inefficient, particularly if they are duplicated multiple times across an

institution. Instead, global changes could prove more effective (ensuring accessibility for all regardless of characteristics).

Our new research involved a baseline online survey including factual questions about the nature of provision and also open questions to describe key aspects and characteristics of provision, and to capture views on progress. It was designed so that it could be repeated in 12 to 18 months' time, in order to measure progress over time at an individual institution level and a wider, sector level. The survey gathered responses from 105 HE providers. In addition, 13 provider case studies were undertaken to allow for more detailed insights to be gathered into the issues surrounding the development of inclusive provision. Case studies were chosen to be representative of the range of providers and their experiences across the sector, and included both further- and higher-education provision, specialist institutions and those offering a wider portfolio of subjects. Case studies consisted of a mix of face-to-face and virtual visits and involved discussions with 59 individuals.

What is inclusive support?

Inclusive learning has been defined as that which is 'meaningful, relevant and accessible [in both content and delivery] to all', and is 'enriched by the varied experiences of students'³.

A key aspect of this new study was to explore how providers understand inclusivity and the ways in which it is manifested. Most commonly, an inclusive model of disability support – ensuring teaching, materials and resources are fully accessible – was associated with pedagogical changes to teaching, curriculum and assessment/examination, and with assistive technology. Staff talked about using a diverse range of approaches to teaching and assessment to support different learning styles; having course materials available online (often through institutions' Virtual Learning Environments); providing lecture notes in advance; providing course materials in a variety of formats; considering inclusion right from the start to embed inclusive learning into module and programme development and evaluation; and providing access for all students to a wide range of assistive technology.

One form of assistive technology is lecture capture – the audio or video recording of lectures and workshops – and 78 per cent of responding HE providers used lecture capture for at least some lectures. Other forms of assistive technology include: software for mind-mapping; document-reading; document conversion; speech

recognition; and note-taking/recording. Assistive technology (generally digital) was felt to have a key role in moving towards greater inclusivity and accessibility for all students. Technology can increase accessibility, by providing material in a format the students can read or engage with, and can aid inclusivity as it may involve thinking about the programme content and examples used, as well as providing content in different forms.

Inclusive models were also associated with accessible 'estates' (eg campuses). Institutions were more likely to report having almost fully accessible social and recreational spaces (47%) than teaching and learning facilities (38%) or residential accommodation (19%).

For institutions, inclusive models could therefore be understood as a whole-institution approach, involving thinking about the design and delivery of courses and services; the physical and virtual space that students engage with; and proactively anticipating the needs of the whole student body. Inclusive approaches meant having invisible practices; support that students are not specifically aware of or that that doesn't appear different or special; and support that could reduce (but not entirely remove) the need for specific adjustments for individual disabled students.

Moving forward with inclusive models of support

The research found strong support for inclusivity: 60 per cent of providers rated themselves as at least halfway towards being fully inclusive and all providers reported that they are moving forward with an inclusive support agenda. However, providers felt that more could and should be done to move towards a fully inclusive model. Specifically, providers reported that they needed greater staff engagement with training, further adjustments to estates and technology (ie greater adoption of assistive technology), and more work on creating inclusive assessment, teaching and learning approaches.

Institutional culture appeared to be a key stumbling block, as there may not yet be a widespread commitment to, or awareness of, inclusive support within institutions. Indeed, our research identified a high degree of variability in the implementation of inclusive models within institutions, which leads to patchy and inconsistent practice. Providers felt that they needed greater buy-in from academic staff for inclusivity in curriculum design and delivery, and that there needed to be cultural change in order to move to greater inclusion.

The survey and case study feedback highlighted how shifting the culture was felt to be about helping and enabling all staff to think more broadly about inclusive practice, to think beyond making individual reasonable adjustments for individual students and to think about accessibility for all. Shifting the culture is about recognising that all staff have a part to play, that inclusive practice is not just a technical issue that needs to be dealt with by someone else, and that changes can be small but yet still make a big difference. It is also about overcoming individual staff fears and worries that inclusive practice means a complete overhaul in a teaching style perfected over years.

Staff training across the institution is important in shifting the culture as it raises awareness, provides practical information, guidance and support, and encourages action. Staff training also ensures a shared understanding and commitment, and indicates an investment on the behalf of the institution. The research found that institutions offered a range of training to staff but that this tended to be voluntary, focused on general disability awareness or on supporting specific conditions rather than on inclusive practices. Training was also found to be directed at certain staff groups rather than at all staff (academic staff, library staff and those in teaching support roles). Institutions therefore felt that they needed more help and support in furthering staff understanding of inclusive practices.

It is clear that HE providers are passionate about inclusive teaching and learning, and inclusive models more broadly. Some institutions have had a commitment to adopting an inclusive agenda for some time and have made significant progress, but others are new to this. All institutions do recognise, however, that they still have a way to go and will need funding to continue to move in the right direction and to trial proactive, anticipatory approaches to support the whole of their student body. If a second, follow-up survey is commissioned under the new Office for Students, this will provide an excellent opportunity to track progress made.

- 1 Williams M, Pollard E, Langley J, Houghton A-M, Zozimo J (2017), *Models of support for students with disabilities*, Higher Education Council for England (HEFCE)
- 2 Williams M, Coare P, Marvell R, Pollard E, Houghton A-M, Anderson J (2015), *Understanding provision for students with mental health problems and intensive support needs*, Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)
- 3 Disabled Student Leadership Group (2017), *Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Higher Education as a route to Excellence*, Department for Education

Are compassionate organisations a possibility?

Kate Spiegelhalter, IES Research Officer



Compassion as a concept is on the rise as a way of improving employee wellbeing, increasing productivity, and creating wider impacts on organisational culture. However, there are issues around the definition of compassion and questions around how to apply it in a workplace setting. This article examines the debate and gives an overview of IES' work in this area.

Compassion is gaining increasing weight as a way of dealing with interactions between people in a variety of settings. The first issue of the International Journal for Mindfulness and Compassion at Work¹ (IJMC) was launched this year, and 2017 also saw the first International Summit for Mindfulness and Compassion at Work, which aimed to 'explore innovative and evidence-based ways to foster and co-create healthy, resilient, happy organisations in which all can flourish'².

However, questions remain as to whether this enthusiasm can be translated effectively to the business world, where 'while some

managers fear showing too much kindness could be perceived as weakness, others think pressure is the only way to keep employees productive'³.

Conceptually, compassion also remains challenging to define: its value in our lives is clear, yet we may find it difficult to apply in our organisations, or even not believe it to be relevant. Compassion involves the ability to notice, feel, or perceive another person's pain, and to be with them or take action to alleviate that person's suffering⁴. This can take place on both the level of individual relationships and on an interpersonal level within organisations. Self-compassion is an

integral element, as the act of being kind to oneself allow people to be kind to others, enabling us to find the courage to change our behaviour and focus on what matters⁵. It has been argued that compassion stems from the techniques of mindfulness, through which we can 'gradually awaken from the movies of our minds'⁶. Similar to mindfulness however, compassion is a word that can attract particular labels such as 'cuddly nonsense'⁷.

Evidence base

Where then is the wider evidence that compassion can not only improve

Publications

Capturing school-to-work transitions with longitudinal data sources

Pollard E, Williams M, Huxley C, Green M, Martin A, Gray H (2017), Report 512, Institute for Employment Studies

There are a variety of data sources that capture the school-to-work transition from a range of perspectives, and a number of studies that utilise these sources. This IES report identifies and scopes the existing large-scale datasets to highlight which have the potential to support the work of various stakeholders, such as the Careers & Enterprise Company.

The report offers details of the available datasets in three broad categories: true longitudinal data or panel data; repeated cross-sectional data or cohort studies; and administrative data. In doing so, it identifies how these datasets relate and might be combined in future studies.

Involving young people in volunteering: What works?

Williams J (2017), Careers & Enterprise Company

This paper, authored by IES research fellow, Joy Williams, on behalf of the Careers & Enterprise Company, considers the benefits of involving young people in volunteering. The paper draws out the lessons from the existing evidence on 'what works' in involving young people in volunteering, in order that schools, colleges and providers of careers and enterprise programmes can effectively support young people with volunteering.

The research highlights that the benefits of volunteering are widespread and that young people should be encouraged to volunteer for as long a period as possible. Evidence suggests that volunteering can have a significant and observable impact on skill development and career readiness.

The research involved a review of the relevant literature, such as programme evaluation reports and other literature reviews, and also offers a helpful definition of what is meant by 'volunteering'.

workplace culture and employee wellbeing, but can also help an organisation's bottom line? There is a body of work that shows that positive social interactions also lead to both physical and mental health benefits⁸. Physiologically, just a few minutes spent mingling with co-workers daily has been shown to lower heart rate, blood pressure, and decrease psychological distress.

There is also evidence that compassion breeds compassion: cooperative behaviour can cascade in human networks, with those treated kindly wanting to extend generosity towards others⁹. Those who experience compassionate leadership at work are more likely to report affective commitment to their organisation and to talk about it in positive terms. Line managers who perceive that their organisation values their wellbeing may also be more likely to show supportive behaviour towards the people they manage. Employees who believe that their superiors care about their wellbeing can also be more satisfied with their jobs and show higher organisational commitment.

Finally, research shows that if managers seek loyal employees, they should choose kindness and compassion over toughness¹⁰. Evidence exists that employees like and trust managers who show kindness rather than anger when resolving conflict, which in turn can boost performance, retention, and levels of trust. Qui *et al*¹¹ argue that feelings of warmth and positive relationships at work can also have a greater say over employee loyalty than the size of their pay packet. International leadership institute Roffey Park has also developed a compassion at work psychometric tool and has produced research highlighting the benefits of developing compassionate workplaces including boosted staff retention.

IES research

IES has been investigating the impact of mindfulness and compassion on teams, and is currently carrying out a randomised controlled trial with a large public sector organisation, comparing the effects of an individual- versus team-based 'mental fitness' intervention for organisational and strategic change. This study builds on previous work focusing on the underexplored links between the impacts of mindfulness on both the individual and the collective levels, with a focus on strategic and organisational change. In 2015, IES carried out a systematic review of mindfulness in support of organisational

change. We have also published a briefing paper, held an HR workshop on the pros and cons of mindfulness at work, and recently held an event on 'Integrating mindfulness and compassion'¹².

As a further contribution to this body of research, IES is planning to develop a series of case studies to develop the UK evidence base for the efficacy and applicability of compassion. Please get in touch if you are interested in taking part.

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- 2 International Journal of Mindfulness and Compassion at Work (2017), 'The 1st International Summit for Mindfulness and Compassion at Work', *International Journal of Mindfulness and Compassion at Work* [Online]. Available at: <https://www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?EventID=1963823>
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- 12 Institute for Employment Studies (2017), 'Integrating mindfulness and compassion', *Institute for Employment Studies* [Online]. Available at: <http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/2017/integrating-mindfulness-and-compassion>

Preparing for technical education routes in England

Joy Williams, IES Research Fellow



IES is at the forefront of policy research providing important evidence on the impact of technical education policy reforms. Here we examine some of our recent research in this area.

Recent policy developments

Published in 2016, the Post-16 Skills Plan¹ built on successive reviews to reform and strengthen the provision of technical education in England. These reviews have aimed to ensure that technical education provides the knowledge, skills and behaviour that employers require, thereby making 'T-Levels' (the new qualifications, being introduced from 2020) a more valuable route for young people to pursue.

The line of reviews that trace to the current reforms arguably began with the Wolf Report² which identified shortcomings in the education system for 16-19 year olds and recommended the removal of low-quality vocational qualifications from the education and training system. This was followed by the Richard Review,³ which recommended a route and branch review of apprenticeships and identified the mechanisms to reform apprenticeships.

Since then, employer ownership has become a central theme of apprenticeship policy in England and is viewed as the means to achieve a more robust linkage between the skills required by the labour market and the content of apprenticeships. Apprenticeship Trailblazers were phased in from October 2013, creating an employer-

owned set of new Apprenticeship Standards. Subsequently, the Apprenticeship Levy was announced in the 2015 Summer Budget and introduced in April 2017.

IES evaluations and policy research

IES conducted the process evaluation of the Apprenticeship Trailblazers, looking at the facilitation of employer networks, views on the outgoing Apprenticeship Frameworks and how the new Apprenticeship Standards were created⁴. The research highlighted the possibility that, with a lack of transferability between Standards, there was a risk of apprenticeships becoming too narrow and not supporting movement between job roles and sectors.

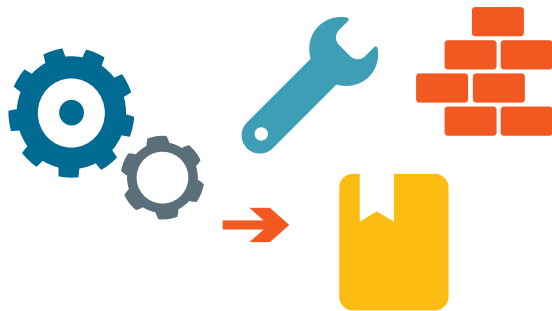
The Sainsbury Review⁵ continued the reforms. Sainsbury had particular concerns for quality, parity of esteem and enabling movement between vocational and academic modes with recommendations including, amongst others, clear routes from levels 2/3 to levels 4/5 and beyond and common frameworks across a total of 15 apprenticeships and college-based routes. The Sainsbury Review recommendations, calling for the simplification of technical education along with integrated standards for both college- and employment-based

delivery modes, represent a dialling-back of some of these reforms.

The response in the Post-16 Skills Plan was to accept these recommendations 'unequivocally' (where that was possible within existing budgets) and to prepare for technical education reforms.

IES supported the Department for Education (DfE) with formative research that helped to set out the occupational routes, mapping the 15 technical routes and pathways. This comprised an exercise to map Apprenticeship Standards, professional qualifications, job content and job titles; involving employers, employer bodies and professional membership organisations. This helped to identify the occupations that routes should cover and provided a more distinct definition than those generated by the Apprenticeship Trailblazers. These will be used by employer panels, working with the new Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education.

IES also explored international occupational standards for DfE to inform developments towards T-Levels⁶. This aimed to understand how other countries configure their qualification standards and particularly the knowledge, skills and behaviours imparted



through the qualifications, in order to help the new employer panels in their work

The Sainsbury Review recommended a 'transition year' and this concept was therefore taken up in the Post-16 Skills Plan. This envisaged that young people not yet ready to start Level 2 qualifications at age 16 could undertake a transition period to prepare them for further study or employment. In 2017, IES conducted research for DfE looking at what works in supporting 16-17 year-olds who do not achieve five GCSE passes at grade A*-C⁷.

For this research, our team conducted case studies with 20 institutions, including general further education colleges, sixth form colleges and other training providers. The report identified how student progress is enabled, by analysing the planning, content and activities that are conducted by institutions. Case studies highlighted a number of lessons for delivery that can be used by 16-19 providers and the government when considering future transition period policy. The main lesson was that post-16 providers should aim to accurately identify young people's needs, interests and level of competence, and provide a flexible curriculum, developing over time through small steps to meet these needs.

Most recently, IES, along with colleagues at the International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGs), is conducting research into another key technical education reform – work placements. The provision of high quality, substantial work placements was an integral part of the reforms in the Post-16 Skills Plan. The new T-Levels will entitle every 16- to 19-year-old learner undertaking a college-based technical education route to a high-quality and substantial work placement – up to 250,000 17-year-olds once rolled out nationally. DfE is piloting an extended work placement scheme with selected providers in England. IES and iCeGs are evaluating the pilot in order to test how work placements work in different contexts and highlight lessons before a full, national roll-out.

The evaluation will assess different ways of sourcing and implementing work placements as well as the model of the placement (for example, block or day

release); the preparation of the learner; and the monitoring and management of the placement. We will also be looking at other factors such as the support model, employer engagement brokerage, and learner background. The resulting evidence will be crucial for the sector as a step-change will need to be made in both the format and the scale of the work placements delivered.

Along with the research for DfE, IES has also recently worked with the Education and Training Foundation to conduct case study research with further education colleges that employ staff in advanced practitioner-type roles (publication forthcoming). This range of case study research with post-16 education providers has provided IES researchers with a great opportunity to see the impacts of recent government policy decisions on the ground. When we have talked to teaching staff and leaders, their passion to support their learners is obvious, as is their commitment to make these reforms work in order to provide the best route into further education and employment. IES is committed to continuing to provide robust, independent research evidence to policy decision-makers during this time of transformation within the post-16 sector. We aim to honestly represent the views of those 'on the ground' who are delivering and being impacted by the changes; be they employers, teaching staff, leaders or learners.

- 1 BIS, DfE (2016), *Post-16 Skills Plan*, Department for Business, Innovation & Skills and Department for Education
- 2 DfE (2011), *Review of Vocational Education – The Wolf report*, Department for Education
- 3 Richard D (2012), *The Richard Review of Apprenticeships*, Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
- 4 Newton B, Miller L, Williams J, Buzzee J, Hinks R (2015), *Process evaluation of the Apprenticeship Trailblazers: Final report*, BIS research paper 256, Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
- 5 BIS, DfE (2016b), *Report of the Independent Panel on Technical Education*, Department for Business, Innovation & Skills and Department for Education
- 6 Newton B, Everett C, Cotton J (2017), *Investigation into post-16 occupational standards in international technical education*, Research Report 691, Department for Education
- 7 Williams J, Hadjivassiliou K, Marvell R, Green M, Newton B (2017), *Effective curriculum practice at below Level 2 for 16/17 year olds*, Department for Education

IES is an independent centre specialising in research, evaluation and consultancy on employment policy and practice. The Institute is a not-for-profit organisation with a mission to help bring about sustainable improvements in employment policy and human resource management by increasing the understanding and improving the practice of key decision-makers in policy bodies and employing organisations.

The Institute has over 40 staff and associates, skilled in the full range of social research methodologies for data collection and analysis. Techniques employed include: quantitative surveys (using face-to-face, telephone and postal methods); expert and informant interviews; case studies; qualitative interviews; and focus groups.

Clients include major public agencies involved in the development, design and delivery of public employment policy at local, sectoral, regional, national and international level.

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Tackling gender, disability and ethnicity pay gaps: a progress review

Brown D, Rickard C, Broughton A (2017), Equality and Human Rights Commission

This report, produced by IES on behalf of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, offers the latest evidence on 'what works' in reducing pay gaps. The report contains the findings of a literature review and discussions with employers and stakeholders throughout several workshops. It examines the effectiveness of interventions aimed at tackling the gender, disability and ethnicity pay gaps in the UK.

It found that, while much research exists on the problems of achieving gender pay parity, which are wide-ranging and complex, there is much less evidence on what actually contributes to closing/removing those gaps. The review also found very little evidence of specific interventions, or evaluations of such interventions, in relation to ethnicity and disability pay gaps.

IES looked globally at what seems to be influential, and found that a number of studies highlight individual factors that have a positive impact. For example, openness and disclosure of information: the more transparent the pay system, the lesser the gaps. Hence the importance of the new gender pay reporting requirements, as well as wider employer transparency on pay arrangements – one of the reasons why the overall gender pay gap is lower in the public compared to the private sector. Other factors included training and development, for example, studying STEM subjects at A-level boosts pay for girls by age 25, and flexible working opportunities, which the EHRC is promoting.

However, to make significant progress, evidence shows that multiple initiatives must be pursued over a sustained time period and with co-operation between all key stakeholders, including employers, government, employees and unions, and experts/academics.

Supporting trans employees in the workplace

Marvell R, Broughton A, Breese E, Tyler E (2017), Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas)

This report, produced by IES on behalf of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration

Service (Acas), collates the evidence from IES research on managing gender identity in the workplace. The research aimed to provide relevant insights for managers and employees in order to establish what good practice looks like with regards to supporting trans or intersex employees in the workplace.

The research involved an evidence review to identify research published since the introduction of the Equality Act 2010 in terms of terminology, good practice and barriers. Qualitative fieldwork was also undertaken to identify good practice employers and involved interviews with these employers and key stakeholders. The stakeholders represented both trans and LGBTQIA advocacy groups and organisations with expertise in equality and diversity, employment rights, and working conditions. Three organisational-level case studies were also conducted.

The report brings together the findings from the evidence review and qualitative fieldwork and offers insights on:

- terminology used;
- the employment landscape for trans workers in the UK;
- what 'good practice' employers do, including their flexible and tailored approach to managing gender identity in the workplace; and
- the barriers, challenges and suggestions for change, including the lack of knowledge amongst employers with regards to the experiences of non-binary or otherwise gender non-conforming people as well as intersex people.

Accelerated degrees in higher education: Literature review

Pollard E, Huxley C, Hadjivassiliou K, Swift S, Green M (2017), Department for Education

IES was commissioned by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to conduct research into undergraduate accelerated degrees. The research aimed to establish whether such degrees are an alternative to, and more flexible mode of study than, traditional degrees. Two reports were published by the Department for Education (due to the transfer of policy responsibility) and include case study report, presenting how accelerated degrees

are currently being delivered in the UK, and a literature review of the subject.

In the UK, there are currently only a modest number of modern universities offering undergraduate accelerated degrees. These tend to focus on widening participation and a more innovative approach to delivery. By contrast, in the USA the adoption of this form of degree is far more widespread.

The case study report offers insights on various aspects of accelerated degrees and their current delivery in the UK; from the variation and commonalities between teaching provision, to the market for and awareness of accelerated degrees; or from how these courses are designed and delivered, to the benefits and challenges that HE providers face when delivering these courses.

Effective curriculum practice below level 2 for 16- to 17-year-olds

Williams J, Hadjivassiliou K, Marvell R, Green M, Newton B (2017), Department for Education

In order to understand current, effective provision and delivery for students not yet ready for Level 2 courses in post-16 institutions, the Department for Education commissioned two research projects, with the aim of informing policy developments around the forthcoming transition year.

This report provides an analysis of course content and curriculum that most effectively supports the progression of students participating in below Level 2 programmes at the age of 16 (defined as those without 5 A*-C grade GCSEs and who are not yet in a position to succeed at Level 2).

The study gathered case studies, which provided rich, contextualised data from selected institutions. These case studies are presented in an annex report. The main report helps to understand:

- how course choice and curriculum content interact with young people's progression from Level 1 at age 16 to successful outcomes (such as Level 2, Apprenticeship, Traineeship or employment) at age 17; and
- what good practice looks like with regards to supporting progression of students participating in below Level 2 programmes.