Welcome to the latest issue of the iROWE newsletter, in which we share with you our research and activities within the world of organisations, work and employment.

iROWE’s staff continue to be awarded funding to carry out their research, and within this newsletter members share their findings on: the impact of ‘lean’; domestic violence in the workplace; entrepreneurship; conflict management.

Our evening seminar series has had some very interesting events, with a collaboration with artists and sociologists to explore workplace complaints in November. Absence management and the new regulations were explained to us by employment lawyers in December. Then we had a discussion on mental health in the workplace, led by the TUC, in February. More details are inside.

Our next seminar will be on the findings of our focus groups on workplace conflict, in particular social media. Full details are available on the back page. Please book your space now!

We would like to congratulate iROWE staff Dr Adrian Wright for recently being awarded his PhD. Adrian completed his PhD at Alliance Manchester Business School. His research was on enterprise and entrepreneurial activity in the digital games sector.

Congratulations are also due to Judi Morgan, Steve Willcocks and Gemma Wibberley for their award winning publications! More details inside

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http://bit.ly/1FKZvSn
iROWE publications

(N.B academic journals typically require subscription for access, or visit Uclan’s repository for alternative access – http://clok.uclan.ac.uk/)

Richard Saundry, Duncan Adam, Ian Ashman, Chris Forde, Gemma Wibberley and Sally Wright (2016) ‘Managing individual conflict in the contemporary British workplace’ Acas Research Paper, Ref: 02/16


Steve Willcocks (forthcoming) ‘Exploring leadership in the context of dentistry in the UK’, Leadership in Health Services


Saundry, R., Latreille, P. and Ashman, I., (forthcoming) Reframing Resolution - Innovation and Change in the Management of Workplace Conflict, (eds.) Palgrave Macmillan

Issue 12, May 2016
Conferences/ Presentations

Gemma Wibberley ‘The voice of the disputants’, The Complaining Body, November


Gemma Wibberley, ‘The experiences of employees’, Cycle of Conferences, University of Coimbra, Portugal, December 2015


Alison Hollinrake and Gemma Wibberley ‘Quid quo pro! Our experience of working with union colleagues on research projects.’ Unionlearn Regional Conference February 2016, Southport

Gemma Wibberley, Responding to Domestic Violence in the Workplace - The Role of Trade Union Representatives in Supporting Members, BSA Violence Against Women Study Group, Chester University, March 2016

Emma Thirkell and Frank Worthington (Newcastle University) ‘Managed Participation in Lean Organizations: A Qualitative Case Analysis’, 34th International Labour Process Conference, Berlin, Germany, April 2016


FORTHCOMING:

Ruth Slater and Jayne Pook (Kepak Convenience Foods ) ‘A collaborative study using action research to identify core values to underpin organisational mission and vision statements’ at The 17th International Conference on Human Resource Development Research and Practice across Europe at Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, June 2016

Alison Hollinrake and Gemma Wibberley ‘The role of trade unions in supporting victims of domestic violence in the workplace’ British Universities Industrial Relations Conference at the University of Leeds 29 June to 1 July 2016

Domestic abuse in the workplace

Recent iROWE research exploring the role that trade unions have in supporting victims of domestic violence in the workplace, found that representatives can have a crucial role to play in an employee being able to keep their job and access organisational support if experiencing domestic abuse.

The findings from this study have been shared widely with presentations at the TUC Women's Committee, BSA Violence Against Women event, union learn regional conference, ETUC women’s committee, and NW universities conflict conference. The report for the TUC has been widely circulated to members within the UK and internationally, and has generated interest from European bodies and MEPs.

We have also worked with the TUC to provide resources for their training courses on domestic abuse and the workplace; and the United Road Transport Union who have written an article in their magazine and created resources on their website for their members.

Our forthcoming presentations and book chapter will help us share our findings further. The chapter is in the United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education book *Gender Equality as a Challenge for Business and Management Education*, and we look forward to its publication. More details in future newsletters.

Digital gamers—enterprise vs exploitation

IROWE member, Dr Adrian Wright recently completed his PhD at Alliance Manchester Business School. The research was concerned with enterprise and entrepreneurial activity in the digital games sector. It examined the experiences of a group of digital game developers in a sector that is seen as creatively empowered and entrepreneurial.

In contrast to developers citing notions of freedom, autonomy and their ability to become masters of their own destiny when deciding to start their own business, the research found that hostile market and regional sectoral conditions influenced entrepreneurial activity and, in some ways, led to developers becoming forced into self-employment.

Adrian also sought to understand the lived experienced of these entrepreneurs revealing examples of self-exploitation as developers sought to maintain their position, or establish themselves in the sector. Additionally, the research found that the occupational community promoted values of altruism, sociality and an ethos of enterprise. The unintended consequences of this was the normalisation of self-exploitative practices such as working for free or encouraging developers to work well beyond the realms of a ‘working week’ in order to increase developers chances of success in the future.

**Employment law seminar**

Absence management and the new ‘Fit For Work’ government scheme was the subject for discussion at iROWE’s December seminar. Caroline Rayner, a Solicitor in the Employment Department of Baines Wilson LLP kindly came to talk to iROWE staff and associates about this new process.

She explained how ‘Fit For Work’ will impact upon organisations and employees, and outlined the steps that employers should undertake to ensure they are compliant with the new government sickness absence scheme. This could include revising internal absence procedures and ensuring line managers are informed.

The audience were keen to discuss this new scheme and their experiences of it. They were also interested in how it would interact with occupational health services. The seminar also wondered how widely known the ‘Fit For Work’ scheme was, including whether health care professionals were fully aware of the changes.

iROWE thanks Caroline and her colleagues for discussing this important topic.

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**Kevin Ruck awarded his PhD**

Part-time PhD Student Kevin Ruck has completed his PhD studies. After a successful viva in November Kevin has completed final amendments to his thesis entitled - Informed employee voice: The synthesis of internal corporate communication and employee voice and the associations with organisational engagement.

Kevin’s Director of Studies, Dr Mary Welch said: 'Kevin has achieved his doctorate while balancing his busy career and home life with the rigours of PhD level study. Doctoral studies demand a contribution to knowledge and Kevin has achieved this with an impressive study involving primary research into internal communication in five organisations.' You can read Kevin's blog with his reflections on his PhD studies at:

http://www.exploringinternalcommunication.com/reflections-on-an-internal-communication-phd/

This research was supported by a UCLan Arnoux part-time PhD bursary won by Dr Welch in 2009 to support internal communication research. The bursary was named in honour of Mrs Arnoux, an exceptional Head of School at the Harris Institute in the 1880s. The Harris Institute evolved to become today’s Uclan.
Workplace conflict focus groups report – now out

Thank you to all the iROWE associates and contacts who took part in the workplace conflict focus groups last year, and the findings are now published in an Acas report.


This was a major piece of research with conducted across four universities, and funded by Acas. It was led by Professor Richard Saundry from Plymouth Graduate School of Management and conducted with Chris Forde (Leeds), Gemma Wibberley and Ian Ashman (iROWE) and Duncan Adam and Sally Wright (Warwick).

Project lead Professor Richard Saundry describes the project as “Based on focus groups and interviews involving over 150 managers, HR practitioners, union representatives and employment lawyers, the research argues that tensions over the management of performance have become the main focus of workplace conflict. In addition, while conflict can have damaging effects on employee well-being and productivity, the report questions whether front-line managers have the skills and confidence to resolve difficult HR issues effectively and at an early stage.”

Staff experiences of ‘Lean’ in new settings

iROWE’s Dr Emma Thirkell has been working with Dr Frank Worthington from Newcastle University on why workers ‘consent’ to their exploitation in Lean organisations. In April they presented their research at the International Labour Process Theory Conference (ILPC) in Berlin.

The study shows that transferring Lean Thinking to non-manufacturing settings does not automatically result in high levels of control and surveillance, nor impact on employee subjectivity and identity to the extent suggested in early accounts within the literature. Using academics as an illustration they show that such employees often can, and will, distance themselves from the implementation of Lean and therefore may be less controlled than their colleagues.

This research will help organisations understand that different approaches to performance improvement are required for different types of workers, and shows that the traditional method of high control/low autonomy are not working in knowledge based organisations, such as Universities. The data from this paper will appear in the forthcoming text by Knights & Willmott: Introducing Organizational Behaviour and Management. More details will be in the next newsletter.
iROWE teamed up with artists, sociologists and other researchers to explore workplace conflict, and how it impacts upon the workers and their bodies.

This was a really unusual event co-hosted by Manual Labours (Department of Film, Media and Cultural Studies, Birkbeck University), In Certain Places (School of Art, Design and Fashion, Uclan), and iROWE.

The workshop discussed the processes of complaining: from making to managing to mellowing. Focusing on new research into workplace complaining. It featured presentations from:

- Manual Labours - a practice based research project, by Jenny Richards (independent curator/artist/writer) and Sophie Hope (Department of Film, Media and Cultural Studies, Birkbeck) who discussed our inability to complain with Sweta Rajan-Rankin, lecturer in Social Policy at Brunel University, London.
- iROWE’s Gemma Wibberley shared recent research into workplace mediation and the participants' experience.
- Choreographer Hamish MacPherson presented ideas stemming from a series of workshops with a London based complaints team.
- Preston-based artist Steph Fletcher connected work based complaints to the freelance, flexible structures of precarious work.

More information about Manual Labours and their research is available from: http://www.manuallabours.co.uk/about/

With information also about Hamish MacPherson
http://www.manuallabours.co.uk/todo/commissions/hamish-macpherson/

Sweta Rajan-Rankin’s research is outlined at:
http://www.brunel.ac.uk/people/sweta-rajan-rankin

In Certain Places is described:
http://incertainplaces.org/about/

With information also about Steph Fletcher
http://incertainplaces.org/artists/steph-fletcher/
The dark side of leadership development

iROWE’s Judi Morgan has written a chapter on the dark side of leadership development and coaching. Judi and former iROWE colleague Pete Thomas’s chapter featured in award-winning book ‘Realising Critical HRD’.

An edited introduction to their chapter explains “Leader development and coaching in organisations is largely regarded in positive terms and is increasingly seen as an important part of contemporary management, supporting individual, team and corporate development. At its best, coaching is thought to offer improvements in organisational performance as participants develop heightened self-awareness, self-belief and motivation. Further, the nature of coaching suggests that it is, at the very least, a benign mode of development intervention.

However, a more critical reading of coaching in particular as an activity in support of leadership development would highlight the darker aspects of a process geared towards “privileging the economic aims of the organisational over the needs of its people (Rigg, Stewart, and Trehan 2007, 3), and patronising the "little people (Berglas 2002) in attempts to regulate identity, thereby producing the “appropriate individual (Alvesson and Willmott 2002).

In this chapter we explore this darker side of leadership development and coaching by examining the experiences of participants on a leadership development programme in a large UK bank.”

Emerald Awards for Excellence - 2016

iROWE’s Steve Willcocks and Gemma Wibberley are very proud to achieve the ‘Outstanding Paper in the 2016 Emerald Literati Network Awards for Excellence’.

Their paper “Exploring a shared leadership perspective for NHS doctors” published in Leadership in Health Services was selected by the journal’s editorial team for the winning paper. The journal editors have also decided to make the paper publically available for a year online: http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/LHS-08-2014-0060

The paper explores involving doctors in shared leadership. It suggests that the shared-leadership approach for doctors has potential given the nature of clinical practice, the inherently collaborative nature of healthcare and the demands of new healthcare organisations. Health policy reform, generally, will mean that all doctors need to be engaged with leadership, albeit, perhaps, at different levels, and with different degrees of formality. Leadership will remain an important precondition for the success of the reforms.

Full details of the Emerald publishers award scheme and other papers are available: www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/authors/literati/index.htm
CIPD Research Conference at the Shard

The first ‘CIPD Applied Research Conference’ took place in December at the Shard in London. iROWE’s Gemma Wibberley was very happy that her paper with Richard Saundy (Plymouth University) was one of the few accepted for the conference.

They presented their research findings on workplace mediation, and discussed to what extent it is transforming the culture of conflict management. Their research suggests that the transformative powers of mediation proposed by the Government are less evident, and appear to be influenced by the way mediation is introduced and a range of organisational factors.

Gemma found it very surreal to be presenting from inside the Shard, and looking over London’s landmarks. It was a very interesting conference, with speakers from both academia and practice.

This presentation paper will also be published by the CIPD as part of their series of papers on the shifting landscape of work and working lives.

Mental health at the workplace seminar

iROWE hosted a seminar on mental health at the workplace in February. With Guest Speaker Dave Eva, Delivery Manager, Unionlearn, TUC.

Dave presented some sobering statistics about the negative impacts of mental health issues upon individuals and organisations. Highlighting that it’s now one of the main reasons for absence.

However, it is not an issue generally handled well. Employees fear the ‘stigma’ of telling anyone at work. Whilst employers and unions rarely have the capacity to deal with mental health problems. Nor is it seen as a workplace issue.

He explained that unions are trying to raise the profile of mental health at work, and support members to stay in work. Examples of successful initiatives were discussed. However, there are also barriers for unions, and in particular concern that ‘wellbeing’ schemes can place responsibility unfairly on staff for their own mental health and ignore the employer’s responsibilities.

Several of iROWE’s recent research projects have highlighted just how much of an issue mental health in the workplace is, and the challenges staff and organisations are facing in dealing with effectively. Respondents have described high stress levels in organisations, employees feeling unable to disclose mental health problems, and unsupportive absence and performance management policies.
From student research to corporate action

A former student Jayne Pook, taught by iROWE staff, has used their student research project to make an impact upon their organisation’s culture.

Jayne is an established HR practitioner and her research took place at Kepak Convenience Foods in a manufacturer of microwaveable snack foods based here in the Northwest. The purpose of the research was to uncover, through collaborative action research, the extent to which the organisation’s mission and vision were embedded in organisational life, and to identify values which would support the organisation’s mission and vision.

As a result of research among employees, four core values surfaced to be proposed to senior management. Recommendations were also made for further organisational actions to embed the values in a way that would ensure continued meaningfulness and relevance to the organisational members in supporting the mission and vision statements. The style of research, of involving employees in the process, was continued and extended to promote embeddedness, and lessen the chance that employees will become disengaged from the values.

This project demonstrates the value of practitioner-university collaboration and in particular to encourage the design of organisational research using collaborative methods to promote organisational development.

Jayne and her supervisor iROWE’s Dr Ruth Slater, will be presenting this research at this summer's University Forum for HRD at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Engage HEI conference

Ian Ashman, Director of iROWE, has been invited onto the organising committee of the forthcoming 5th Engage HEI conference - 'Engaged Scholarship: Impact, Policy and Practice'.

The Conference provides an opportunity for academics and practitioners interested in understanding knowledge exchange between higher education institutions (HEIs) such as universities, government and industry to share their experiences and inform practice.

Ian will be presenting on how iROWE engages with business and other employment stakeholders to ensure that the Institute’s research agenda and priorities remain relevant and timely and that it continues to produce outputs with significant policy and practice impact.

The Conference will be held at the University of Central Lancashire on 19th and 20th May 2016. It is hosted by the University’s recently established Centre for SME Development. More information and bookings: www.engagehei.org.uk/index.html
Join iROWE on Social Media

We regularly post updates about our research activities and events via social media channels. There is also opportunity for discussion with other people interested in employment issues. If you would like to be connected to iROWE via social media, then please email iROWE at wcseminars@uclan.ac.uk or you can find us on:

- **like – IROWE Seminars**
  The iROWE Facebook has been re-launched to offer a new way to access us and our activities.

- **Follow – iROWE Uclan**
  The iROWE twitter has all the latest information about research, awards and events

- **Join- iROWE**
  The linkedin account has a group where there are regular discussions with other iROWE connections

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**Become an associate member**

iROWE is a research institute located within Lancashire Business School at the University of Central Lancashire. It provides a forum for the development and dissemination of high quality research into organisations, work and employment. Its work has a particular emphasis on policy and practice—in short research that has an impact and makes a difference.

Therefore, iROWE brings together academics, managers, HR professionals, union representatives and policy makers. If you would like to be part of this exciting institute and kept at the forefront of research then become an ASSOCIATE MEMBER. This FREE membership is open to all those with a professional interest in organisations, work or employment. Benefits include: research e-newsletter, regular free seminars by key speakers in the field, consultancy opportunities for your organization, and networking.

To join just email Gemma Wibberley at gwibberley@uclan.ac.uk
Seminar and Audience Discussion

Does Social Media Cause Conflict in the Workplace?

Speakers:
Dr Ian Ashman
Dr Gemma Wibberley

This seminar will reveal the conclusions of the recent Acas focus groups into workplace conflict.

A key finding is worries about how social media influences employment relationships, and its increasing involvement in workplace conflict.

Apart from some well publicised cases in the Press, there is little evidence of how social media really affects our experience of work

Therefore we want to explore, with you, the day to day use of social media at work and the problems it may cause or help resolve.

Thursday May 26th - 5.30 – 7pm

Brook 008, UCLAN

Refreshments available from 5pm
Attendance is free.
To book a place please contact Gemma : gwibberley@uclan.ac.uk