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.

We are delighted to announce that iROWE research has been classified as one of the “very best examples of ‘impact’ coming from business schools across the UK.” We are very proud that our work makes a difference to the real world, and thank you, our associates, for your on-going support in helping us achieve this. For more information see page 2.

iROWE’s staff continue to be awarded funding to carry out their research, and within this newsletter members share their findings on: lean working, age diversity, internal communications and professional standards.

Our ever popular evening seminar series has seen some lively debates. In November, Helen Bailey from Pinna Ltd ran a seminar on workplace coaching, and how this can be utilised more effectively in organisations. See page 6 for details. Pete Monaghan, Area Director of ACAS in the Northwest discussed age diversity in the workplace. He highlighted the importance of this growing issue, as outlined in page 6.

Our next seminar will be on workplace conflict, on June 3rd, by Richard Saundry. Full details are available on the back page.

We would like to congratulate Dr Douglas Martin for achieving his PhD “The Impact of Lean on the UK Civil Service and the Trade Union Response”, from the University of Strathclyde.
iROWE staff were incredibly proud to be told that their research had been classed as some of most useful for practitioners and policymakers. The Association of Business Schools (ABS) chose 11 case studies from the 432 examples submitted by UK Business Schools for REF2014* that universities believed demonstrated their best impact. iROWE was one of the top 11, and the only study within the field of HR/employee relations, chosen by ABS to demonstrate the positive and transformational effects university research can have upon businesses and policies.

The research featured was our work with Acas. iROWE worked closely with policymakers at Acas to develop a programme of research that provided new evidence on workplace conflict management and downsizing. This has been central in re-shaping Acas’s strategic priorities to include explicit reference to conflict management for the first time. It also informed Acas’s response to government over proposed employment reform and has been used to develop new guidance on redundancy handling, representation and workplace mediation.

Many staff were involved in this research, but particular credit must go to Richard Saundry and Ian Ashman for leading the projects into conflict management and downsizing respectively. Then ensuring that the findings were useful, relevant and shared widely with the community through an array of presentations, reports, social media and press activity. Richard is now at Plymouth University, but still works closely with iROWE.

We would also like to thank Acas for their on-going support with our research. They have been fundamental in providing resources, advice and opportunities to conduct these studies. Collaborative efforts have enabled results to be transformed into resources that can help businesses with everyday people management practices.

Thanks must also go to all of the participants from the research projects, whose anonymous contributions on their workplace experiences enabled these studies to assess what is really happening in organisations. iROWE are also grateful to our advisory board, associates and academic colleagues for supporting and engaging with our research.

Our case study on working with Acas is available here: http://results.ref.ac.uk/Submissions/Impact/691


*REF2014 is the latest assessment of university research in the UK
Conference presentations


Richard Saundry and Gemma Wibberley ‘Bridging the resolution gap? Dispute resolution and the management of individual conflict’ Acas CIWM (Certificate in Internal Workplace Mediation) Tutors Workshop 3-4 December in Birmingham

Ruth Slater ‘The role of professional standards in the creation and regulation of identities - the case of the personnel/human resources practitioner and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)’ at ESRC Seminar Series ‘The Regulation of Work and Employment: Towards a Multi-Disciplinary, Multilevel Framework at ESRC Seminar 4: Regulation and the individual experience of work 12-13 February 2015

Gemma Wibberley ‘Managing workplace conflict - Approaches to dispute’, CIPD Lancashire Branch seminars, 4 March 2015

FORTHCOMING:
Louise McArdle, and Pete Thomas ‘Fifty is the new sixty: The competing discourses of age in the English firefighters’ pensions dispute’ 31st EGOS Colloquium in Athens in July.

A not very ‘common’ event

Ian Ashman and Gemma Wibberley were invited to attend the Acas Annual Reception earlier this year. The event was held at the House of Commons, and provided an opportunity to see inside this historic building.

The reception was a great chance to meet other academics and Acas policy makers. There were also speeches from Baroness Rita Donaghy and Sir Brendan Barber, Chair of Acas. These outlined Acas’ future plans and highlighted their recent successes.
REF2014 success !!!

iROWE was very proud of their success in REF2014, announced in December. Several of their staff were entered into the REF because they had published good work, and iROWE’s research was assessed as having ‘outstanding’ impact.

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) assesses the quality of research in UK universities, and takes place every six years. It judges universities based on various factors such as the number and quality of academic publications their staff produce; the ‘impact’ their research has upon the real world; and the ‘environment’ that the research is conducted in, such as the number of staff who are conducting research and PhD students completing in a timely manner.

UCLan selected iROWE staff Ian Ashman, Tony Bennett and Gemma Wibberley to enter their academic journal papers into the assessment of Business and Management research. Steve Willcocks was selected for the healthcare sector assessment research sector, as his publications have focused on health care sector professionals. Their individual results are never announced but just being selected to represent their field is a great achievement.

iROWE research with Acas into downsizing and conflict management was chosen to represent the successful impact that university research has upon policy and practice. Richard Saundry and Ian Ashman took the lead on these projects and preparing the case study that demonstrated their significance.

The research results informed the work of Acas, which plays a pivotal role in shaping British employment relations, and have had significant influences on both wider practice and policy.

The REF judges whether academic research has ‘impact’ based on how far and wide it ‘reaches’ the community, and the ‘significance’ of the research’s influence upon stakeholders.

iROWE were delighted to be told that their research into conflict management and downsizing was deemed to have 4* impact, which is the highest ranking possible. Research at this level is classed as making ‘Outstanding impacts in terms of their reach and significance.’ Our case study on working with Acas is available here: http://results.ref.ac.uk/Submissions/Impact/691

We are now busy working on our new research and dissemination activities to ensure that we continue to produce high quality and impactful work.
Recent iROWE publications

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


Willcocks S G (2015) Exploring the use of Strategic Frameworks in Dental Practice, British Dental Journal,


Saundry, R., Jones, C. and Wibberley. G (forthcoming), 'The challenge of managing informally', Employee Relations


Here’s a link to the book's page on the Amazon website: http://www.amazon.co.uk/Exploring-Internal-Communication-Kevin-Ruck/dp/1472430670/ref=oosr
In November Helen Bailey, Head of Coaching, PINNA Ltd gave an iROWE seminar on coaching. It was very different to our usual style of seminar, with lots of group work. However, as you can see from the picture it was a really buzzing evening that everyone got a lot out of.

Helen’s session acknowledged that ‘coaching’ has become a bit of a buzz word. It is talked about and has been introduced in many organisations. However, as Helen highlighted and many of the audience agreed, there is still little understanding as to what coaching actually means. Furthermore, where it exists in organisations it is often not used to its full potential.

Helen proposed that there is so much more still to be gained from coaching and that coaching has a key place in Leadership for the future. She helped the audience to consider where next for coaching. In particular to take practical steps to use coaching activities to make a real difference in our own work and organisations.

Peter Monaghan, Area Director of ACAS NW came to talk to iROWE staff, students and associates. His seminar ‘Managing the Generations’ in December, focused on the challenges and benefits of age diversity in the workforce.

The growing diversity and changing demographics of employees suggests that certain groups may be experiencing different psychological contracts. For younger staff work is likely to be more flexible, but this may not fit with their desire to get on the housing market. Older staff may find themselves working longer than expected, which may not align with their retirement plans. A perhaps neglected age group are those in the middle, balancing work and home, and negotiating an array of changed expectations.

Employers should take these issues into account in their people management strategies to ensure psychological contracts are fulfilled from both sides.

Thanks to the learning and teaching fund this event was filmed, and is now available on the irowe website. Under ‘events’ and scroll down for the seminar http://www.uclan.ac.uk/research/explore/groups/institute_research_organisations_work_employment_irowe.php

A bigger picture for coaching

Age diversity in the workforce

Issue 10, May
Tensions between age and pensions

Louise McArdle and Pete Thomas (formerly of iROWE, now Lancaster University) will be presenting ‘The competing discourses of age in the English firefighters’ pensions dispute at the 31st EGOS Colloquium in Athens in July.

It has been argued that age has become an issue in some organizations as increasing longevity can create problems for pension schemes, particularly in the public sector.

In their paper they examine the ways in which age is characterised in organizations affected by pensions disputes, and particularly at the ways in which age can be disputed by both pension ‘reformers’ and those resisting the erosion of their pension rights.

They specifically examine English firefighters’ pension dispute as it allows them to examine a number of issues that have been seen as significant in research on age and ageing in organizations. Firstly, the case raises some interesting questions about embodiment and ageing, and using the firefighters case they consider the complex relationship between work, age and physical capability. The notion of age representing decline, or a limiting condition on activity, is very evident in the arguments that have arisen in the dispute.

This then links to their second issue, the use of the decline argument as a resource by firefighters which reverses the usual construction (and perhaps denial) of ageing. In this case ageing is not seen in terms of a ‘spectre of uselessness’ but rather as the justification for the retention of their current pension rights.

Finally, they address the links made by firefighters between their ageing (and vulnerability) and risk to others, particularly the general public who they argue might be put at risk by older firefighters.

Lean production: in the UK Civil Service

Douglas Martin was recently invited to address Newcastle University Business School’s Human Resource Management, Work and Employment research institute. At the seminar on November 26 2014, Douglas presented his research findings on the impact of Lean working in the Civil Service.

Douglas’s research showed that rather than being implemented in a consistent fashion, Lean was implemented in a number of different ways, each related to the type of work done and performance objectives required by Civil Service management. The seminar opened up debate on the meaning of Lean in one specific part of the public sector.
HR professionalism and the CIPD

In February Ruth Slater delivered a well-received paper, based on her PhD research, to the fourth in a series of ESRC seminars on Regulation and the individual experience of work held at Newcastle University Business School. She presented the same paper to iROWE colleagues in April.

Her study explores the history of the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD) from its first Intentions to seek a Royal Charter in 1968, through its acquisition in 2000, to present day successes and the Institute’s mission of ‘championing better work and better working lives’. Ruth’s analysis examines what it means to be an HR professional and how the CIPD influences a sense of purpose and identity.

Her evaluation of the past raises many questions for now and the future of the CIPD and the occupation it represents, including whether HR professionals can or should be held accountable in the same way as doctors and lawyers? Whether occupational closure is desirable or attainable – that is, whether it is right that one must be a CIPD member to practice HRM and that the CIPD should be able to bar individuals that do not reach a certain standard practising – and the role of the CIPD in controlling and shaping CPD and the professional agenda?

Ruth continues to develop and expand her study and anybody that is interested in finding out more can contact her on RESlater@uclan.ac.uk

Working with emergency services

iROWE is very excited to be starting work with an emergency services provider this summer. We will be conducting research into HR issues with staff in operational and non-operational roles.
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

Building a Strategic and integrated Approach to Conflict Management – Lessons from the Research

Guest Speaker:

Dr Richard Saundry
Associate Professor (Reader) in Human Resource and Leadership Studies, Plymouth University

In this session, Richard will draw on his own recent research to identify how organisations can develop more effective approaches to managing workplace conflict. In particular, he will set out the key elements of integrated conflict management systems which are being increasingly adopted by large corporations in the US and ask what lessons this has for organisations in the UK.

Wednesday 3rd June - 5.30pm
Brook 008, UCLAN

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