



Institute for research into organisations, work and employment



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

iROWE's research continues to make an impact, with a study on union learning representatives even being discussed in the House of Lords this summer. Whilst recent research on mediation was cited in People Management, and ACAS utilised findings from iROWE researchers to inform their response to the Government's consultation on 'Resolving workplace disputes'.

Current research within the team include projects on: the role of downsizing envoys in the private sector; individual conflict in the private sector; employee engagement and communication; mediation schemes in a local authority; gender and alternative dispute resolution; lean management in the public sector; and trade union responses to organizational work change, and throughout the newsletter more detail is provided.

Our evening seminar series continues to prove incredibly popular, with the September event having to be relocated due to unprecedented demand. In May, Anthony Hesketh from Lancaster University gave a presentation on Business Transformation Outsourcing. Then in June, the tensions between doctors and managers in the NHS were examined by iROWE's Jan Hewitt and Pete Thomas. September's session was a discussion on informal dispute resolution from the perspective of research by Richard Saundry from iROWE and practice by Nick Evans from Shop Direct Group PLC. In October Ian Ashman discussed his recent findings on downsizing envoys in the public sector. Please see page 8 for details of forthcoming seminars.

The institute continues to grow, and we'd like to introduce you to Tony Bennett, Paul Elmer, Douglas Martin, Emma Thirkell, Barbara Menara and Ruth Slater see page 2 for the first of their profiles. We welcome them to iROWE and know that their research will be of great interest to our members.

Envoys in the private sector – a request for participants



Dr Ian Ashman has recently completed his study of downsizing envoys (the people that have to break the news of downsizing decisions face to face with the victims) in the public sector and is about to begin gathering data from the private sector in order to develop a comparative analysis.

Ian will be seeking to interview HR and non HR private sector workers that have experience of the envoy role in the very near future. So, if you fall within those criteria and are willing to be interviewed or can facilitate access to a suitable organisation or just want to know more Ian will be delighted to hear from you.

The most dependable way to contact Ian is generally by email at iashman@uclan.ac.uk. His phone number is 01772 894782.

New members of iROWE

Barbara Menara joined the University in September 2011. She has previously worked as Teaching Assistant at the University of Essex.

Barbara is completing her PhD in Applied Social and Economic Research, looking at factors triggering conflict within and between professions, conflict management and determinants of career success.

Her research is mainly based on quantitative methods and longitudinal analysis.

Barbara's main research interests are conflict and conflict management, career development, style of management and performance, organizational dynamics and social networks strategies in workplace.

She can be contacted on bmenara@uclan.ac.uk

Tony Bennett joined the Business School in September as a senior lecturer in HRM. Formerly a data engineer and manager, he completed his PhD at the University of Central Lancashire in 2001 – an examination of the effect of trade union merger on the grassroots of the organisation.

Tony subsequently worked as a project co-ordinator for the TUC and at Sheffield Hallam University. He is a practising and accredited workplace mediator.

Tony's current research interests are on conflict in the workplace and its resolution, with a particular focus on the causes of conflict and the efficacy of mediation.

He can be contacted on ajwbennett@uclan.ac.uk



Douglas Martin joined the University in September 2011 from the University of

Strathclyde in Glasgow. At Strathclyde, he was engaged in research into organizational work change in the UK Civil Service and the trade union response. He is in the process of completing his PhD in this area.

Douglas has an MA in Medieval History and Scottish History from Glasgow University and an MSc in Human Resource Management from Stirling University.

He also spent around 20 years working in the public sector where he was active within the trade union at both national and local levels primarily in the area of health and safety. Douglas also has a TUC Certificate in Occupational Safety and Health from Stow College in Glasgow.

He can be contacted on WDMMartin@uclan.ac.uk

Emma Thirkell joined the University in September 2011 having previously worked as a Teaching Assistant at Newcastle University Business School. Emma is about to complete her PhD researching Lean Production in the Public Sector. She also has experience of consultancy work in both the public and private sector. Prior to working in Higher Education, Emma had experience of middle management at a retail company.

Emma's main research interests are lean production, lean in the public sector and higher education. Emma's PhD research looks at the ways in which Lean Management is transferred to the Public Sector, specifically Higher Education, and the affect that it has on work practices including training and development, line management and leadership style, and culture change.

Emma regularly collaborates with individuals from both the public and private sector who engage in lean management activities.

She can be contacted on ETHirkell@uclan.ac.uk

Join iROWE

iROWE is a new 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 will have a particular emphasis on policy and practice—in short research that will have an impact and make 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

Conferences presented at by iROWE

- Dr Richard Saundry spoke about 'Rebuilding employment relations? Mediation, partnership and the management of conflict', at Effective Conflict Management - What Works? as part of the Acas Research Seminar in London.
- Dr Ian Ashman was invited to give a presentation on his downsizing research at the Lancashire Employment Relations Forum.
- Dr Mary Welch was invited to present on Rethinking internal communication at the academic research contact group FNRS seminar on internal communication, held at Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium, 20th May 2011.
- Dr Mary Welch attended the 18th international communication conference held at Lake Bled, Slovenia, BledCom in July 2011. She presented a paper entitled: Appropriateness and acceptability: Employee perspectives of internal communication.
- PhD student Kevin Ruck also attended BledCom 2011 and presented his paper on: Valuing internal communication; management and employee perspectives.
- Dr Mary Welch and PhD student Kevin Ruck were invited panellists at the BledCom 2011 Round Table panel discussion: Internal communication education. July 2011.
- Dr Pete Thomas presented a paper on change management at the International Critical Management Studies Conference in Naples in July. The paper entitled '*Managing' change: The discursive construction of stability in the flux of organization*, examined the discursive resource that managers use to create an illusion of stability in organizations. The paper will be revised for journal publication in the Autumn.
- Alison Hollinrake gave the following presentation 'Policy into Practice: What's in it for me?' at the 7th International Critical Management Conference, University of Naples Federico II in July
- Emma Thirkell gave a presentation on 'Transferring Lean production: Training in Higher Education' at the British Academy of Management Conference in September 2011
- Dr Gemma Wibberley attended the BSA Ageing, Body and Society Study Group Conference: Body Work in Health and Social Care: Critical Issues, New Agendas , at the British Library in September and presented a paper entitled 'Getting the bodies of the workers to the bodies of the clients – the role of the rota in domiciliary care'
- Emma Thirkell spoke about 'Lean in Services: Findings on Lean Training and what the Public Sector could learn from Industry' at the Lean in Services Conference, at Monash University (Italy) in September 2011
- Douglas Martin attended the International Students Working Lives Colloquium/Summer School in Social Sciences at the University of Evry Val d'Essonne, Centre Pierre Naville in September 2011 and presented a paper "Organizational change in the UK Civil Service: the trade union response".



HR and the line – the importance of good relationships



A paper written by iROWE academics, Carol Jones and Richard Saundry, investigating how HR practitioners and line managers handle disciplinary issues has been published by the Human Resource Management Journal. The article entitled, 'The Practice of Discipline: Evaluating the Roles and Relationship between Managers and HR Professionals' is now available online via subscription at

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1748-8583.2011.00175.x/pdf>

For the research, which was funded by Acas, Jones and Saundry interviewed HR staff, operational managers and employee representatives in eight case-study organisations.

The central claim of the paper is that high-trust relationships between HR professionals and the managers that they advise is fundamental to developing and maintaining informal processes of dispute resolution.

However they caution that the changing nature of the HR function threatens to lead to more formal responses to disciplinary situations. In all the organisations within the study, HR practitioners now played an advisory role in relation to discipline with day-to-day responsibility devolved to line managers.

The problem they identified was that many line managers lacked the confidence and skills to deal with disciplinary issues in a flexible and creative way. Instead there was a tendency to either avoid dealing with problems altogether or adopt a safety first approach whereby procedure was applied in a rigid and inflexible manner. This led to more serious and more formal disputes.

Jones and Saundry argue therefore that HR practitioners retain a crucial role in developing the confidence of line managers and in encouraging them to address and attempt to resolve disputes at the earliest possible stage.

New Paper on Mediation

Dr Tony Bennett, a new member of iROWE, has recently published a paper on mediation with his colleague Dr Rory Ridley-Duff. It "examines alternative approaches to conflict resolution by developing a theoretical framework", and "investigat(es) the assumptions underpinning interest-based bargaining and mediation".

For more detail please e-mail Tony on ajwbennett@uclan.ac.uk.

The full paper 'Mediation: Developing a theoretical framework for understanding alternative dispute resolution' has just been published in the *Industrial Relations Journal*, Volume 42, Issue 2 and is currently available via subscription through the :

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-2338.2011.00614.x/pdf>



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Informal learning, and the 'nonhuman' in HR

David Vickers presented two papers at the British Academy of Management Conference at Aston University in September.

The first paper was a study of how managers learn following a takeover and focussed in particular on what we learn informally and unofficially as practitioners operating in a community rather than through formal organisational routes such as training events and manuals. As David points out by way of simple example most of us learn how to use the new photocopier from trial and error/success; from tips from colleagues; by drawing on previous experiences. Generally we cannot remember then how we learned how to undertake a particular activity on the photocopier. Not many of us use formal taught methods such as reading the photocopier user guide or by going on a course on how to use the photocopier.



The second paper considered the complexities of networks in a work environment and the impact of nonhumans (texts such as procedures and policies) on human resource practices. David will be talking more about this in his iROWE seminar session on 29th November, for more information see page 8 or contact David on DAVickers@uclan.ac.uk

The role of the rota in domiciliary care

Gemma's, ESRC funded research into domiciliary care has highlighted the problematic nature of lack of time scheduled for domiciliary care workers to provide care for their clients.

Within domiciliary care the clients are located throughout the community in their own homes, and the domiciliary carers must therefore travel between them to provide care. The 'rota' is a document created by the domiciliary care managers, which determines the place, duration and timing of each of these care visits, and is therefore a key organising mechanism. However, the rota is also a key source of pressure for domiciliaries.



The research has highlighted the inherent tensions between stakeholders in creating and managing rotas; the insufficient amount of time allocated for care; the declassification of activities from the official job to decrease the cost of domiciliary care; the discrepancies between the time scheduled and the amount of time domiciliaries actually spend working; the ability of rotas to create immense time pressures in which the work must be completed, and domiciliaries' attempts to resist these time pressures and the rota.

The rota is a vitally important topic, due to its ability to shape the time and funding available for care, and domiciliaries' pay and working conditions. Yet there is a lack of literature on rotas, and in policy there appears to be a move to increase the 'efficiency' of rotas, both of which this research seeks to challenge. This study has provided substantial insights into the rota, demonstrating the challenges it creates for domiciliaries to get to their clients on time. Unfortunately at present the burden of making the rota work appeared to rest upon domiciliaries, and substantial amounts of unpaid time *out* of work were given travelling and providing unpaid care tasks, over which the research demonstrated most domiciliaries had little choice to give more than officially required.

These findings have recently been disseminated at conferences and publications are planned for next year. For more information contact Gemma on gwibberley@uclan.ac.uk

Research on public sector employment

An article on corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the public sector, by Dr Tony Bennett has recently been accepted for publication. The research evaluated a pilot scheme called 'Learning to be job ready' (L2BJR) involving 16 long-term unemployed people from a range of backgrounds being offered a 6-month paid placement within the care department of a city council in Northern England.



The project was based on a partnership with the largest college in the city specialising in post-16 education and training for residents and employees. The college targeted people as potential candidates for the programme through their prior attendance on or interest in care courses at the college, rather than the council employing more traditional methods of recruitment. Surveys, focus groups and interviews were utilised to capture the views and experiences of the participants, project workers and line managers, and also evidence of the project's impact on service delivery in the care department.

The research provided interesting findings on corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the public sector. From a social and business perspective, it highlights a potentially more robust strategy for matching long-term unemployed citizens to training and job opportunities in the public sector than is otherwise possible through the more conventional route of the job centre. Secondly, through this approach and with appropriate pre-training, a greater understanding of and empathy for the service users can be developed in the new organisational members, strengthening the subsequent ethical delivery and quality of the service. Finally, the research shows that this method can increase the ethical and social inclusion duties of public sector organisations not only as service providers but also as potential employers.

For more detail please e-mail Tony on ajwbennett@uclan.ac.uk. The full paper 'Learning to be job ready: Strategies for greater social inclusion in public sector employment' will be published shortly in the Journal of Business Ethics. It is currently on-line via subscription on: www.springerlink.com/content/w5360081010246q7

'Leading Academics' in Union Learning



Dr Richard Saundry and Alison Hollinrake have been named as 'Leading Academics' on the subject of union learning representatives in the workplace by Unionlearn.

Their recent report 'Research Paper 12 - Union Learning Representatives: Activity, Impact and Organisation' (<http://www.unionlearn.org.uk/publications/index.cfm?frmPubID=196>) was highlighted by Unionlearn in their latest research bulletin as an example.

Recent iROWE publications

A paper by Ian Ashman and John Lawler has been accepted to *Leadership* 'Leadership and authenticity: a Sartrean critique' and will be published shortly.

Richard Saundry, Alison Hollinrake and Valerie Antcliff, *Union Learning Representatives: Activity, Impact and Organisation* (Research Paper 12), <http://www.unionlearn.org.uk/policy/learn-3926-f0.cfm>

A paper by Tony Bennett on 'Learning to be job ready: Strategies for greater social inclusion in public sector employment' will be published shortly in the *Journal of Business Ethics*. It is currently on-line via subscription on: www.springerlink.com/content/w5360081010246q7

Saundry, R., Stuart, M. and Antcliff, V. (2011), 'Social Capital and Union Revitalization: A Study of Worker Networks in the UK Audio-Visual Industries'. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8543.2011.00850.x

A paper by Mary Welch has been published by *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*. The paper "The evolution of the employee engagement concept: Communication implications" appears in Volume 16 issue 4 of the journal and is available online via subscription at: <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/10.1108/13563281111186968>

Jones, C. and Saundry, R (forthcoming in print) 'The practice of discipline: evaluating the roles and responsibilities between managers and HR professionals', *Human Resource Management Journal*
The early edition of this paper is currently available online via subscription <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1748-8583.2011.00175.x/pdf>

Just published is Ridley-Duff, R, and Bennett, T. (2011) 'Towards mediation: Developing a theoretical framework for understanding alternative dispute resolution' *Industrial Relations Journal* Vol. 42, Issue 2, This paper is currently available online via subscription: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-2338.2011.00614.x/pdf>

Saundry, R., McArdle, L. and Thomas, P. (2011) *Transforming Conflict Management in the Public Sector? Mediation, Trade Unions and Partnerships in a Primary Care Trust*, ACAS Research paper, Ref: 01/11, <http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/k/8/>

Just published is a paper by Pete Thomas and Jan Hewitt (2011) 'Managerial Organization and Professional Autonomy: A Discourse-Based Conceptualization', *Organization Studies*, Vol.32, No. 10, pp 1373-1393 This is currently available online via subscription: <http://oss.sagepub.com/content/32/10/1373.full.pdf+html>



Forthcoming presentations

Emma Thirkell will be giving a paper on 'Lean in Services and Higher Education' at Lean in HE: Transformations at Portsmouth University in January 2012.

Please contact Emma on ETHirkell@uclan.ac.uk for more information.

FREE Seminar Programme— 2011 –2012

- 29th November 2011 Dr David Vickers
'Nonhuman Resource Management - the impact of nonhumans on Strategic HR'
- 11th January 2012 Speakers tbc
'Employment regulation and SMEs – Threat or Opportunity?'
- 25th January 2012 Speakers tbc
'Trade unions in an age of austerity'
- 29th February 2012 John Crawley – CMP Resolutions + other speakers tbc
'Individual Conflict in the UK – Dispute Resolution or De-regulation'
- 28th March 2012 Dr Steve Wilcox, Dr Ian Ashman + other speakers tbc
'Aspects of Leadership – hope, hype or the holy grail?'
- 25th April 2012 Dr Mary Welch
'Employee engagement: The impact of workplace communication on organisational engagement.'
- 30th May 2012 Dr Carol Jones
HRM and the line – consistency, compliance and conflict

All seminars will be held in Greenbank Building Room 348. They will start at 5.30 pm and finish at approximately 7pm. Free teas and coffees will be provided. If you wish to book a place at any of the above, please don't hesitate to contact Gemma Wibberley at gwibberley@uclan.ac.uk.

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iROWE seeks to encourage the conduct and dissemination of high quality academic research into organisations, work and employment. In addition i-ROWE will work closely with employers, government and trade unions in order to inform the development of effective workplace practice and employment policy

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