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 have been busy researching, and within this newsletter members share their findings on: lean working, entrepreneurs, leadership and the healthcare sector.

We also highlight our new research projects exploring diverse topics such as: co-working spaces, leadership and employee values.

Our evening seminars continue to attract interesting speakers and attendees. In June we discussed workplace mediation, debating the differences and similarities between internal and external mediators. Our speakers were experienced mediators Neil Goodrum a Mediator, Solicitor and Mediation Trainer; and Ronald Bradbeer, a Mediator and Consultant.

Our next seminar will be on Business Strategy and Change: People and Legal Implications for HR. With speakers Julie Duane, Employment Law Advocate and Stuart Lowery, HR Advisor, Napthens LLP. Full details are available on the back page. Please book your space now!


Steve Willcocks (forthcoming) Exploring team working and shared leadership in multi-disciplinary cancer care” in Leadership in Health Services

Workplace Mediation Seminar

In June our iROWE evening seminar focused on workplace mediation. Our external speakers were Neil Goodrum a Mediator, Solicitor and Mediation Trainer; and Ronald Bradbeer, a Mediator and Consultant. Both speakers had extensive experience in the mediation field, and were keen to share this with the audience.

There was a very diverse group of attendees, including practitioners from all types of organizations, academic staff and students interested from both law and HR perspectives. This diversity generated some fascinating discussions as the audience were interested in all aspects of mediation from becoming mediators themselves, to understanding how to deal with challenging mediation cases.

Neil and Ronald covered a wide range of issues within mediation. These included the differences between internal and external mediators, and the different issues each type face. Another area of interest was confidentiality within mediation, noting that in practice this can create challenges and unrealistic expectations, which must be managed by the mediator.

Workplace mediation is a subject very relevant to iROWE, as staff have also acted as mediators themselves and it is a topic we have conducted a lot of research into.

For more details of this research please see our webpage [scroll down to PUBLICATIONS. Then see “Managing conflict in the workplace” papers]
http://www.uclan.ac.uk/research/explore/groups/institute_research_organisations_work_employment_irowe.php
Lean working in the Civil Service

iROWE’s Douglas Martin has recently published his research into Lean and deskilling in the UK Civil Service. He provides a summary of his findings below.

Lean working, the production system, popularised in the UK through its apparent successful application within manufacturing, has been increasingly used within the public sector. Two of the government departments where Lean has been extensively used are the Department for Work and Pensions and HM Revenue and Customs.

One of the neglected aspects of lean working is its impact on the decision-making functions of civil servants who adjudicate tax and social security claims. Much previous research has focussed on the impact of Lean on administrative processes rather than on the quasi-judicial side of Civil Service work.

Using data drawn from members of the main Civil Service trade union, the Public and Commercial Services Union provided the opportunity to look at decision-making through the lens of skill. Essentially has the extensive use of Lean working increased the skill levels of civil servants adjudicating on claims or has Lean led to the de-skilling of the process?

The research found that while the work that civil servants performed retained elements of job complexity, for the majority the work had been increasingly simplified. More noticeably, decision-makers believed that they had significantly less job autonomy. It was not that managers were directly interfering in the decision-making process, but the constant pressure of performance targets meant that decision-makers had to sacrifice quality to ensure that claims were cleared, sometimes with much a less rigorous approach to the law than these claims merited.

Among the conclusions from the research was the finding that the Civil Service was increasingly moving from a bureaucratic model of delivery to a managerial one. The use of the Lean approach under this managerial model was responsible for much of the deskilling.

The challenge for practice is one for the general public, civil servants and the trade union to ensure that skill levels are improved with more discretion given to decision-makers to organise their work as a way of delivering good quality service. Recent news surrounding the DWP’s introduction of Universal Credit suggests much work remains to be done in this area.

Polish tales of entrepreneurship

iROWE’s Dorota Marsh and former staff member Pete Thomas examine the process of transformation in Poland from a communist regime to a neoliberal economy, focussing on the discursive formation of the neoliberal project and the move from a simple ‘imaginary’ to a fully operationalized social formation.

Drawing on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999; Fairclough 2003, 2005) they explore the ways in which discursive resources are articulated together in order to bring about social change.

They analyse how a discourse of enterprise (Platforma Obywatelska 2001; Rokita and Kawalec 2005) has been fostered and promoted in Poland, seen as a necessary step away from the past and its planned economy and state intervention.

Their analysis of the nodal discourse of entrepreneurship goes beyond its importance as a tool of disciplining individuals as they also demonstrate its role in legitimization of the self-reproduction of the former ruling class via a deliberate way of orchestrating the expropriation of the common.

The full piece can be read in:
Research updates

iROWE staff have been working on some exciting research projects that they hope to share more details about in future newsletters:

- Co working project—Adrian Wright and Gemma Wibberley have been exploring the experience of working in a co-working space. These new types of workplace bring together diverse workers, with the aim to create a community of independent workers all based in the same location, sharing resources. The researchers actually worked within a co-working space as part of the study and look forward to reporting on this experience.

- Leadership project - This project will look at a group of Leaders and study the development and outcomes of working practices on this community. This will be conducted by Adrian Wright, Dorota Marsh and Gemma Wibberley. They will investigate how a community is formed and how identity formation and learning occurs. They will look how this community frames working practices and what are the outcomes of this for new ways of working. This project has just started and will be running over the next year.

Conferences/ Presentations

Gemma Wibberley ‘Social media and conflict’, HRM in turbulent times’, MMU, 30th June

FORTHCOMING:

Ruth Slater and Jayne Mizon are presenting a paper at the Professional Manager’s Association in December.

Gemma Wibberley ‘Employee Wellbeing’ April 2018, CIPD Lancashire Branch

Ruth Slater and Jayne Mizon ‘The Employee Voice and their Values’ February 2018, CIPD Lancashire Branch
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

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

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Seminar and Audience Discussion

**Business Strategy and Change: People and Legal Implications for HR**

Speakers:

Julie Duane, Employment Law Advocate,
Stuart Lowery, HR Advisor, Napthens LLP

Julie and Stuart will address the key benefits of having a strategic approach to HR, and the legal considerations when faced with business change:

- The benefits of defining a strategy, and how business and HR strategies link;
- Top tips for delivering strategic HR interventions;
- Expansion and TUPE; Redundancy and Restructuring.

**Tuesday November 21st - 5.30pm – 7pm**

**BB213, Brook Building, UCLAN**

**Note room change**

Refreshments available from 5pm Attendance is free.

**To book a place please contact Gemma : gwibberley@uclan.ac.uk**