**Diversity and Inclusion International Conference**

28-30 June 2017, Brunel Business School, Brunel University London, UK

**Stream title: Disability and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion: Contemporary and Inter-disciplinary Perspectives**

**Stream Convenors:**

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This stream seeks to explore contemporary and critical issues around disability, under an inter-disciplinary approach. We would like to explore disability in different settings and from a variety of disciplines and approaches. As a complex phenomenon reflecting interactions between features of a person’s body and their society (WHO, 2005), disability involves a wide range of disciplines such as sociology, psychology, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, business, law, design and architecture. While a multitude of disciplines have each studied and contributed to this topic, there seems to be a lack of interdisciplinary and holistic studies where disability is explored as a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon. This stream aims to explore potential convergence and synergies across various disciplines and reflect critical and innovative approaches to the topic.

For instance, disability represents a very critical area in the workplace, where disabled people experience discrimination and disadvantages. Sociological studies point out that the reason of this disadvantage is attributed to the ignorance of the employers to understand the capabilities disable people have and their unwillingness to adjust to their needs (Berthoud, 2008).

Attempts have been made in the UK to address this problem by providing additional employment rights for disabled people (e.g. Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005). These legal changes facilitated the shift from a medical model, whereby the person is perceived as capable of doing limited tasks, to a social model whereby the organisation needs to adapt to facilitate the employment for this category of workers (Barnes and Mercer, 2005; Conley, 2012; Foster, 2007). Legal changes did not fully solve the problem at its roots. Recent research suggests that disabled employees are badly managed in the workplace because the lack of OH practices and policies. The goodwill of individual line managers was considered as the most important factor in the decision whether employees need appropriate adjustments or not (Cunningham *et al*., 2004; Foster and Scott, 2015; Foster, 2007).

Although new initiatives see the business case for managing this diverse category of workers, the majority of disable people suffer from discrimination.

How could a multi-disciplinary approach facilitate the integration of this category of workers in the labour market and ease their empowerment?

We welcome papers which are theoretically and/or empirically informed from a broad variety of disciplines and geographical areas to explore and inform our discussion on the theme of disability.

**Possible themes include but are not restricted to:**

* Disability and the workplace
* Legal issues and disabilities
* The business case for disability and diversity
* Migration and disability
* The role of government in enabling social inclusion of people with disabilities in public institutions
* Disability and stigma
* Disability in the context of higher education
* Neurodiversity, participation and stigma
* Invisible disabilities, identity and disability
* Ownership and management of wellbeing from a disability perspective
* Inclusive design and human-centred innovation around disability
* Innovative /interdisciplinary methodologies and disability

***Important Dates***

Deadline submission long abstract/full paper: **28th April 2017**

Response to authors (acceptance / rejection): **15th May 2017**

***References***

Berthoud, R. (2008) Disability employment penalties in Britain. *Work, Employment and Society,* 22(1): 129–48.

Conley, H. (2012) Using equality to challenge austerity: new actors, old problems. *Work, Employment and Society* 26(2): 349–59.

Cunningham, I., James, P. and Dibben, P. (2004). Bridging the gap between rhetoric and reality: Line managers and the protection of job security for ill workers in the modern workplace. *British Journal of Management*, 15, 273-290.

Foster, D. (2007) Legal obligation or personal lottery? Employee experiences of disability and the negotiation of adjustments in the public sector workplace. *Work, Employment & Society* 21(1): 67–84.

Foster, D. and Scott, P (2015) Nobody’s responsibility: the precariousness position of disabled employees in the UK workplace, *Industrial Relations Journal*, 46 (4): 328-343.

***Stream Convenors’ Information***

***Dr Pamela Abbott*** Information System School- The University of Sheffield.

Dr Abbot’s research areas are: knowledge processes, collaboration and innovation in global sourcing arrangements; transformative potential of ICTs in various work situations e.g. hospital discharge processes and e-health interventions and personalisation of healthcare as it relates to wellbeing enhancement. Her more recent work in global sourcing looks at sources of collaboration and innovation through knowledge processes in software and services outsourcing. Dr Abbott is now working in an inter-disciplinary project: *Wellbeing Care Maps; Exploring the Definitions and Enhancing Sense of Ownership and Personalisation*, sponsored by Brunel University London.

***Chioma Ezenwa*** Department of Information System- Brunel University London.

Chioma Ezenwa is currently a Research assistant at Brunel University where she has just submitted her thesis for the award of a PhD. Presently, she is part of an inter-disciplinary project: Wellbeing Care Maps; Exploring the Definitions and Enhancing Sense of Ownership and Personalisation, sponsored by Brunel University London. Her research interests are around healthcare and wellbeing as well as the area of ICT and people, whether at the individual, group or societal level. She also has a keen interest in the development and use of social theory.

***Dr Elizabeth McKay***College of Health and Life Sciences - Department of Clinical Sciences; Brunel University London.

Dr McKay has expertise in approaches to the evaluation of specific health services including: mental health, children, services and end of life care and extensive expertise in researching service users’ perspectives. Her recent project, ‘Hospice at Home care’– is multidisciplinary team evaluation into Hospice at Home Care Ireland funded by Atlantic Philanthropies. Dr McKay is now working in an inter-disciplinary project: *Wellbeing Care Maps; Exploring the Definitions and Enhancing Sense of Ownership and Personalisation*, sponsored by Brunel University London.

***Dr Farnaz Nickpour -*** College of engineering, Design and Physical Sciences- Department of Design- Brunel University London.

Dr Nickpour’s expertise lies in the areas of Inclusive Design, People-centred innovation, User research and Co-design.

Her recent research project includes: ‘Evolvable Walking Aid Kit’ - a design research project winner of Nesta Inclusive Technology Prize 2015. This project aims to create a ‘modular’ personalised walking aid kit which ‘evolves’ with the user’s long-term condition to support their deterioration/rehabilitation journey.

‘Motability Research Priorities Project’ - £120K project funded by Motability 10th Anniversary Trust investigation and identifying the future areas of priority to provide long-term mobility support including products and services to disabled people in the UK.

‘Light Touch Matters’ – an EU funded project exploring the use of a new generation of smart materials to develop smart health and wellbeing related products.

Dr Nickpour is now working in an inter-disciplinary project: *Wellbeing Care Maps; Exploring the Definitions and Enhancing Sense of Ownership and Personalisation*, sponsored by Brunel University London.

***Dr. Raffaella Valsecchi***- College Business Arts and Social Science, Brunel Business School- Brunel University London.

Dr Valsecchi has an expertise in the research areas of flexible working, health and well-being in the workplace, and health and technologies. She has been awarded a grant from The British Academy/ Leverhulme Trust and Knowledge Transfer Scheme from Brunel University investigating new ways of delivering occupational health services to small business. She has also worked as a Research Fellow on an ESRC research project investigating the profession of tele-nursing at NHS Direct, a telephone advice line which provides advice and health information to NHS patients. Dr Valsecchi has published in academic journals such as *Work, Employment and Society*, *New Technology and Employment*, *Economic and Industrial Democracy and Employee Relations.*

Dr Valsecchi is now working in an inter-disciplinary project: *Wellbeing Care Maps; Exploring the Definitions and Enhancing Sense of Ownership and Personalisation*, sponsored by Brunel University London.