Teleconference meeting of Academic Forum – 26th March 2020

In attendance *Professor Ewan Macdonald (Glasgow) - Chair, Professor Per Luigi (University of Cagliari), Professor Neil Greenburg (Kings); Professor Karen Walker-Bone (Southampton); Professor Damien Macvelly (IOM); Professor Kim Burton (Huddersfield); Professor Kevin Daniels, DrSara Daniels (UEA); Stephen Bevan (IES); Vaughan Parsons (Kings); James O'Malley (Versus Arthritis), Mike Podmore (RAND); Edward Houghton (CIPD); Dr Glykeria Skamagki (Coventry); Notes – Nick Pahl*

1   Update on Covid-10 from Italy - Professor Per Luigi – gave a sobering account of challenges of respiratory failure, testing (limited and challenge as to who for?) with research challenges as to i) transmission of virus; ii) protecting health care workers (currently around 10% infection rate) iii) the burden of work – lack of sleep; iv) access to correct equipment and burnout. Comment was Psychological support minimal and not built in. Discussion occurred as to need for a) data recording b) improved epidemiological data and data looking at efficacy of prevention e.g. re PPE

2   Discussion on UK research challenges e.g.
-   Health care workers (HCWs)– Risk moral injury (see https://www.bmj.com/content/368/bmj.m1211); Possible risk of HCWs leaving profession. Lack of staff support (NHSE currently looking at this - looking at team, management, rostering., shift patterns)
-   Mental health and psychological impacts – can be post traumatic "growth" – new social groups and interconnectivity
-   Physical health e.g. MSK – effect of home working; use of laptops; lack of vitamin D. Noted data from Southampton would be useful to track changes over time
-   Impact on workers who have been asked to take unpaid leave; are on zero hours and made unemployed
-   Domestic violence
-   Organisation of work - change in job quality; over and under work

Opportunity for SOM lobbying on concern about extended shifts / overwork on rostering for intensive care staff etc

3   Funders
Noted that Nick had been part of a call with Wellcome and MIND - planning to do a call out on mental health in April – contact is Beck Smith <Be.Smith@wellcome.ac.uk>

4   Centre for work and health
Ewan said there was significant interest to take forward from ESRC via UKRI. Support from WHU. Consultation event on 27th April – now by phone (was in Cardiff). All welcome

5   Activity update:
CIPD –plans to measure job quality closely throughout this crisis. They run an annual assessment of UK Job quality *UK Working Lives* which draws on survey data from c.4000 UK workers. This year they hope to run a regular study on a monthly or quarterly basis, to track several job quality indicators.
Information on recent publications, and the job quality measures we use can be found here: https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/work/trends/uk-working-lives#40068
Contact Edward Houghton E.Houghton@cipd.co.uk as to specific areas of interest we could include in the instrument. As its in development now is a perfect timing.

UEA/What works wellbeing - Remote working blog - https://whatworkswellbeing.org/blog/remote-management-can-make-you-better-manager/;

Evaluation of the mindfulness app can be found here - https://whatworks.college.police.uk/About/News/Pages/Mindfulness.aspx.

IES – new Homeworker Wellbeing Survey - IES is conducting an online survey to look at the physical & emotional wellbeing of people working at home. They will share the headline results.https://wh1.snapsurveys.com/s.asp?k=158514663787

SOM - have an advice sheet updated daily, and have released statements on COVID-19 testing for key workers, PPE and handwashing. We have also helped facilitate OH volunteering to help the NHS occupational health community at this difficult time. We are in touch with NHS People about their plans to procure from the private sector OH sector and have an private sector OH meet next Tuesday. We have added resources to our Work and Health area such as What should Occupational Health Professionals know about Mental Health and COVID-19? and HSE Guidance for occupational health providers, appointed doctors and employers on performing health/medical surveillance. We are also posting regular blogs on topics such as working from home during challenging times and technology and COVID-19. In April we are running a free webinar for members on remote consultations.