

# WORK-LIFE INCLUSION

Broadening perspectives  
across the life-course



KRYSTAL WILKINSON  
HELEN WOOLNOUGH

# **Work-Life Inclusion**

This book will be a very valuable tool to help HR professionals and organizations to take their health and wellbeing strategy to the next level. To optimize its impact, a strategy should be based on the health risks and needs of its workforce throughout the employee 'life course'. The CIPD fully supports the notion that employers need to consider the whole person if they are to be effective in reducing work-life conflict and supporting their health and wellbeing as they journey through work and life. The book provides an excellent narrative of how this needs to include the multidimensional nature of people's identity and experiences. The different chapters cover a range of key life-stage events, such as menopause transition, that individuals can encounter through the employee lifecycle and which can understandably impact on health and work. The book is a welcome clarion call to breakdown the silence and taboo that persists in many workplaces around broader wellbeing issues that affect so many, so that people can receive empathy, support and understanding.

—*Rachel Suff*, Senior Policy Advisor, CIPD

I am delighted to provide an endorsement for this handbook edited by Dr Krystal Wilkinson and Dr Helen Woolnough. Through a series of well-informed empirical chapters, they respond to the call to broaden understandings of the work-life interface to consider a range of challenges for different groups across the life-course. Many of the chapters highlight topics that have previously been under-explored in work-life literatures, and are highly topical, such as social class in Chapter 2, the earliest stages of working lives (Chapter 3 and 4) solo-living for women (Chapter 5), menopause (Chapter 12), apprenticeship (Chapter 9) and male perspectives on parenthood (Chapter 11). The ground-breaking work is carried in the middle of the book with chapters 6 to 8 on topics that are historically missing from academic agendas; bound by the development of theory on the connection between fertility treatment, miscarriage and perinatal mental illness respectively. These chapters successfully illuminate silenced and taboo topics, bringing them into mainstream workplace narratives to the benefit of readers.

Strength and depth are added by intersectional empirical studies with reflections on work-life complexities from older workers (Chapter 13), ethnic minority female workers that manage chronic illness (Chapter 10) and older ethnic workers (Chapter 14). Taken as a whole, authors draw on a range of theoretical frames and lenses including the work-life interface; equality, diversity and inclusion, career theory, empowerment, training and wellbeing. The book is pitched to appeal to both academics and practitioners through its accessible credible approach. The style is provocative and critical; it challenges our assumptions as researchers or organisation practitioners to think creatively and be more work-life inclusive. All chapters conclude with implications for practice. Thanks to insightful guidance and analysis from Dr Wilkinson and Dr Woolnough, their book plants a stake in the sand that others in the field will need to observe.

—*Professor Carol Woodhams*, Human Resource Management,  
Surrey Business School

Taking an inclusive approach to the work-life issues employees face at different stages of the life-course should be part of an organization's overarching inclusion strategy. This book is a welcome step forwards in deepening our understanding of the multi-faceted nature of people's lived experiences of the work-life interface. Feeling included at work has a positive impact on employees' engagement, productivity and wellbeing. This book is a call to action for organizations to go further in cultivating inclusive cultures by shining a light on some of the under-explored and 'hidden' issues employees face when navigating their working life and personal experiences. A highly informative and valuable read which will help readers think more creatively about how people experience the work-life interface.

—*Craig Oddy*, Head of Talent and People Experience,  
Novuna Financial Services

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# **Work-Life Inclusion: Broadening Perspectives Across the Life-Course**

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*We dedicate this book to all the voices we have collectively attempted to elevate through highlighting under-researched areas of the work-life interface and absent narratives in the workplace.*

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## About the Editors

**Dr Krystal Wilkinson** is Reader (Associate Professor) in Human Resource Management, based at the Business School's Centre for Decent Work and Productivity at Manchester Metropolitan University. Her research focuses on the work-life interface, women's health and well-being at work. Recent research projects have focused on solo-living staff; complex fertility journeys (including employees going through fertility treatment, experiencing pregnancy loss and involuntary childlessness); mental health in pregnancy and post-birth; and women's health more broadly and employment. She has published in academic journals including *Work, Employment and Society*; *Human Resource Management Journal*; *Gender, Work and Organization*; and *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*. She is passionate about knowledge exchange and is working with various stakeholders to raise awareness and create resources, including the CIPD, National charities and employers. Her research has also been featured in the media and trade press including the *Wall Street Journal*, the *BBC* and *People Management Magazine*. Prior to studying for her PhD at Leeds University, Krystal held operational Human Resource Management roles in different industries, including construction, retail and hospitality. She is a Chartered Member of the CIPD and was a member of the CIPD National Examinations team for 15 years.

**Dr Helen Woolnough** is Senior Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Manager at Equans UK and Ireland and Visiting Research Fellow at Manchester Metropolitan University, UK. Prior to this, Helen was Inclusion, Diversity and Well-Being Manager at Novuna Financial Services. Before moving into the corporate space, Helen worked in the education sector and held a variety of academic roles at numerous universities. Her research focused on generating routes for women's leadership and bridging the gap between research evidence and practice to support diversity and inclusion in the workplace. She is a Chartered Psychologist, an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society (BPS) and Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA). Helen is passionate about making work a place where all colleagues feel that they belong and are supported to succeed.

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## About the Contributors

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**Prof Fiona Carmichael** is Professor of Labor Economics at the University of Birmingham. Her research looks into issues relating to the employment of marginalized workers with particular emphasis on inequalities and vulnerabilities including those relating to gender, caregiving, aging, disability and poverty. Recent research has focused on aging and menopause at work and gender inequalities in low and middle-income countries.

**Prof Jérôme Chabanne-Rive** is a Professor of Human Resource Management at IAE Lyon School of Management, Université Jean Moulin. With a strong focus on international management and fostering global relations in higher education, he actively contributes to the field. Since September 2018, he has served as the Executive Director of the European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management (EIASM). Previously, he held the position of Dean of IAE Lyon School of Management.

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**Dr Eileen Cunningham** is a Senior Lecturer in Business Psychology at Manchester Metropolitan University, Chartered Occupational Psychologist, Careers Adviser and Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. Her special interest lies in career development and her PhD research explored student experiences of unpaid work.

**Prof Jo Duberley** is Professor of Organization Studies at University of Birmingham. Central to her research is an interest in the concept of career. In recent years, she has developed research examining the impact of gender, ethnicity, social class and age on careers in a variety of contexts, including defense, professional service organizations and the police in the UK. Current interests focus on the career progression of women in the professions, aging and menopause at work.

**Dr Keely Duddin** is a Chartered Psychologist (British Psychological Society), and a Lecturer in the Faculty of Business and Law at the Open University. With expertise in Health Psychology and Policing, Keely's knowledge and experience contribute significantly to her research and teaching. Previously the Head of Research for a UK policing organization, her focus is on research that informs best practice and delivers service improvements. Her research interests are diverse, but she has a strong emphasis on well-being and mental health, maternity experiences and perinatal mental health, suicide prevention, health psychology, and evidence-based practice. She frequently employs a mixed-methods approach and has conducted both quantitative and qualitative research.

**Dr Samantha Evans** is Senior Lecturer in Human Resource Management at the University of Kent and the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Lead for Kent Business School. Her research examines diversity in organizations and how social class impacts the experiences and opportunities of employees. Her research has been published in journals such as *Work, Employment and Society*; *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*; *Management Learning*; *Employee Relations & Personnel Review*.

**Dr Sajia Ferdous** is a Lecturer in Organizational Behavior at Queen's Management School, Queen's University Belfast. Her research explores employment and labor market inequality issues for marginalized workers (e.g., migrants, women and older workers) within the UK and European labor market contexts. She is interested in studying these issues from the critical management and intersectional perspectives. She is an Associate Fellow of the Advance HE in the UK and also an Associate Member of the CIPD UK.

**Dr Grace Gao** is a Senior Lecturer in Leadership and HRM at Northumbria University, UK. Her area of expertise encompasses relational and interdisciplinary perspectives on equality, diversity, and inclusion at work. This involves incorporating feminist theories (e.g., intersectionality) and interrogating work on the gendered nature of non-traditional employment and the emergence of women in male-dominated sectors across borders. Her work has appeared in international outlets such as *Gender, Work and Organization*. She is currently doing projects on the topic of singlehood, cohabiting and mobility. She also serves as the Social Media Editor for *Gender, Work and Organization* and the Co-editor for Special Issues “Towards an Integrated Theory of Gender, Time and Organizations” at the *International Journal of Management Reviews (IJMR)* and “(Un)learning from the Margins in Management and Organization Research” at *Management Learning*.

**Dr Robin A. Hadley** is a Leading Expert on the psychological and sociological impact of male childlessness across the life course. He has written several invited academic pieces and contributed blogs and podcasts to infertility and involuntary childless support groups and he is a Founder Member of the Campaign Group Ageing Without Children. He is from Old Trafford, Manchester (UK). He comes from a large working-class family and left school with few qualifications. His previous careers include counselor, deputy technical manager, scientific photographer, and kitchen assistant. In his 40s, Robin switched careers and trained as a Counselor. Robin’s training as a Counselor and his own experience of desperately wanting to be a dad led him to research the desire for fatherhood for his self-funded MA (2008) and MSc (2009) and involuntarily childless older men for his PhD (2015). His research has been widely published in international and national media and his book *How Is a Man Supposed To Be a Man? Male Childlessness a Life Course Disrupted* has received critical acclaim.

**Dr Gail Hebson** is a Researcher at the Manchester Metropolitan University and Honorary Senior Lecturer at the Alliance Manchester Business School. Her research interests focus on employment, gender inequalities and job quality. Her current research interests include job quality in the social care sector and apprenticeship training in the hospitality sector as a lever to improve job quality and skills.

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**Dr Madeleine Wyatt** is Reader in Diversity and Inclusion at King's Business School, King's College London, and a Chartered Occupational Psychologist. Madeleine's research examines diversity in organizations and how gender, ethnicity and social class can impact on the leadership journeys and career experiences of employees. Her particular focus is on how individuals perceive and navigate informal and political workplace processes and how organizations can build more inclusive political cultures. Her research has been published in *The Leadership Quarterly*, *Human Relations* and the *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*.

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