



1 Year of the PrOPEL Hub

# The PrOPEL Hub

The PrOPEL Hub launched in early 2020 bringing together experts across 7 Universities and the CIPD with a common interest....

**Understanding the role of workplace practice in driving organisation performance.**

Our work centres on 5 key themes:



**MANAGING  
PEOPLE**



**IMPROVING  
WELLBEING**



**ENGAGING  
EMPLOYEES**



**BOOSTING  
INNOVATION**



**SUPPORTING  
DIVERSITY**

# YEAR 1 SNAPSHOT

## It's been a busy first year....

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We launched our interactive Masterclass series bringing together leading academics and innovative managers to provide insights from research and 'on the ground best practice'.



We ran bespoke Knowledge into Practice workshops to explore solutions to key issues facing businesses in management practice and employee engagement.



We developed over 35 blogs, 8 videos and 6 podcasts translating the latest academic evidence into practical guidance for business.



We engaged with 450 business, policy and academic stakeholders from across the public, private and third sector through our events and attracted over 3900 visitors to our website.



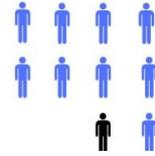
## So what have we learned....

**[FOR MORE ON THE EVIDENCE SEE:  
HTTPS://WWW.PROPELHUB.ORG](https://www.propelhub.org)**

# MANAGING PEOPLE

## In 2020, the way we work changed...

There was an exponential growth in homeworking which seems to be here to stay.



9 out of 10 homeworkers would prefer to continue working from home in some capacity in the future.

## This is not necessarily bad for productivity....

2 out of 3 homeworkers report being able to get the same or more done per hour at home.



And the most productive homeworkers are the keenest to continue working at home.....

Source: [The future of homeworking and its effect on productivity](#), Prof Alan Felstead and Dr Darja Reuschke

## But it could have implications for employee wellbeing

Without proper management, long-term isolated or confined working can be damaging.



Source: [Long-term isolated and confined working: the worst possible outcomes and how to avoid them](#)  
Prof Kevin Daniels and Dr Helen Fitzhugh

## We need to build managerial capability to navigate new and challenging circumstances ...

...in particular management of people and conflict.

A quarter of employees (24%) agree that challenging issues like bullying and harassment - only exacerbated by remote working - are currently swept under the carpet.



Sources: [Boost Management Capability to Better Avoid Conflict at Work](#), Rachel Suff  
[Capability, Conflict and the Productivity Puzzle](#), Prof Richard Saundry  
[Managing in the Context of Covid-19](#), Prof Patrica Findlay, Dr Martin McCracken, Prof Graeme Roy and Prof Richard Saundry

# IMPROVING WELLBEING

Ensuring you provide proper support for employee wellbeing can be daunting in the current climate...

But the good news is that old established principles of wellbeing continue to apply in the new context.

## 5 things we've learned are:

### 1. People Want Quality Jobs

Job quality is linked to wellbeing, productivity and innovation in business.

Source: [Job Quality Matters](#), Professor Kevin Daniels, Professor Colin Lindsay and Dr Helen Fitzhugh



### 2. There are no "quick fixes"

A bowl of fruit won't do it. Our website has guidance on pursuing productivity growth through principled investment in employee wellbeing.

Source: [Pursuing Productivity: better ways for business, people and planet](#), Dr Helen Fitzhugh and Dr Amy Isham



### 3. Not all wellbeing initiatives are made equal.

The [What Works Wellbeing Centre's](#) cost calculator available via our website evaluates and compares the cost effectiveness of wellbeing activities.

Source: [Guidance for better workplace wellbeing](#), Prof Sara Connolly



### 4. Taking a proactive approach is key.

Our checklist for managing the wellbeing of remote workers is a good starting point.

Source: [A checklist for proactive management of remote workers](#), Dr Helen Fitzhugh



### 5. Safety and wellbeing are intertwined.

Fortunately, we have 5 top tips for fostering a safety climate on our website.

Source: [Ensuring safety at work in a pandemic](#), Prof Kevin Daniels and Dr Helen Fitzhugh



# ENGAGING EMPLOYEES

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Fair work that engages employees has never been more important as businesses transition towards a 'new normal' post-COVID-19.

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Here are 3 reasons why:

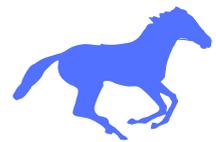
## 1. Innovation

Fair work promotes workplace innovation which is vital in enabling businesses to create new ideas and adapt to challenging situations.



## 2. Discretionary Behaviour

Employees are much more likely to go above and beyond in a job where they feel fairly treated and rewarded.



## 3. Trust

Fair work promotes trust which is highly associated with positive business performance – particularly during times of change.



Sources: [Fairwork in the context of Covid](#), Prof Alan Felstead, Prof Patricia Findlay, Ed Houghton & Prof Graeme Roy  
[Fairwork Reflections](#), Dr Nicola Murray

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**However, experiences vary both across and within sectors**

Check out the good work index available via our website to see how the quality of your job compares to those held by others.



Source: [How good is your job?](#), Prof Alan Felstead

# SUPPORTING DIVERSITY

**COVID has revealed the deep-seated inequalities which exist in our society.**

**Without positive action, the current pandemic will only heighten these.**

**Here are 4 steps for building back towards a more inclusive, fair and ultimately productive workplace:**

## **1. Develop managerial capacity to support disadvantaged workers.**

As a starting point, our website offers guidance on steps you can take to protect disabled employees during the Covid-19 recession.

Source: [Protecting disabled employees from unequal treatment during a Covid-19 recession](#)  
 Prof Melanie Jones, Professor Kim Hoque, Prof Victoria Wass and Professor Nick Bacon



## **2. Create space for all voices in decision making.**

There are valuable lessons to learn from the public sector on coproduction and how to tap into the potential of all stakeholders.

Source:s: [Digital Co-production](#), Prof Elke Lolfeller  
[Co-production as a route to transformation](#), Prof Colin Lindsay



## **3. Avoid a one-size fits all approach**

Business and employee support should be user driven to ensure it is responsive, inclusive and meets needs. Our website provides case studies on how to mobilise networks and ensure diversity is central to policy debates.

Sources: [Community Organising and Business Support in the Pandemic](#), Prof Monder Ram and Saidul Haque Saeed  
[The P-Word: 12 Midlands based creatives changing their industry](#), Katherine Jones  
[Thriving in Uncertainty](#), Susan Aktemel, Prof Eleanor Shaw, Prof Monder Ram and Ammo Talwar



**FOR MORE ON THE EVIDENCE SEE:**

[HTTPS://WWW.PROPELHUB.ORG/CATEGORY/ENGAGING-EMPLOYEES/](https://www.propelhub.org/category/engaging-employees/)

# CASE STUDY: THE P-WORD

The “P” Word, led by Punch Records and supported by the PrOPEL Hub and CREME at Aston University, is a dynamic leadership programme for ethnic minority entrepreneurs in the creative sector.

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The entrepreneurs represent an almost forgotten business sector - there is a distinct lack of infrastructure in Birmingham to support artists and often an expectation that they move to London to make a career.

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The P-Word 9-month leadership development programme connects the entrepreneurs with world class contributors, enabling them to form vital networks in Birmingham and to shape and design support for their business in a way that works for them.



Source: *The P-Word: 12 Midlands based creatives changing their industry*, Katherine Jones

# BOOSTING INNOVATION

**Workplace innovation will be key if businesses are to respond and pivot in an uncertain and challenging operating environment.**

**Here are 5 things employers should know about it:**

## **1. Employees are central to workplace innovation**

By proactively considering principles of job design, fairwork and employee wellbeing, employers can create the best possible conditions and unlock discretionary effort.

Source: *[Understanding the Contribution of Employees to Workplace Innovation](#), Prof Alan Felstead*



## **2. Line Managers have a crucial role to play**

Trained properly, line managers can encourage and facilitate innovation. Without support, line managers can become innovation bottlenecks.

Source: *[Implementing HRM and Innovation: the Role of Line Managers](#), Professor Colin Lindsay*



## **3. Standards can be enablers rather than blockers of innovation**

Having agreed managerial standards can help build trust and encourage adoption of new ideas and technologies.

Source: *[How can standards address the UK Productivity Problem](#), Professor Richard Kneller and Dr Cher Li*



## **4. Working with and sharing ideas with others is key to innovation.**

Our website has details of upcoming events and workshops to explore how you can support workplace innovation in your own organisation.



**FOR MORE ON THE EVIDENCE SEE:**

[HTTPS://WWW.PROPELHUB.ORG/CATEGORY/BOOSTING-INNOVATION/](https://www.propelhub.org/category/boosting-innovation/)

# LOOKING AHEAD

With year 1 complete, we are already planning to make sure year 2 is just as productive.

So what can you expect from us....?

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## 1. More practical content, guidance and videos

For example our upcoming measuring productivity blog series.

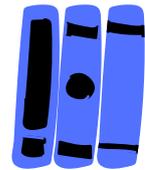


<https://www.propelhub.org/measuring-productivity-mini-series/>

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## 2. International Research Seminars

Our Research Seminar series will showcase evidence from across the globe on the role of workplaces in driving engagement and productivity in a post Covid-19 world. Click on the link to register for our first session.



<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/myevent?eid=135827709335>

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## 3. Knowledge into Practice Events

Our upcoming workshop in February has been informed by years of workplace wellbeing research and will provide support for organisations to implement and improve wellbeing activities and strategies.

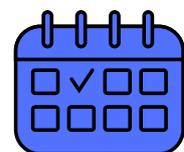


<https://www.norfolkchamber.co.uk/events/chamber-webinar-%E2%80%98-spangle-trap%E2%80%99-how-improve-workplace-wellbeing-without-resources-google>

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## 4. Masterclasses

Our next Masterclass event will provide key insights on how to enhance management of workplace conflict and improve productivity.



<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/taking-a-strategic-approach-to-the-management-of-workplace-conflict-tickets-138471727665>

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