**Theme 2: Work, care and wellbeing: new solutions, ongoing challenges**

2A: Government, cross-sectoral and workplace policies and supports
2B: Fresh approaches: Enablers and solutions to balancing work and care
2C: Work-care reconciliation: Inequalities and impacts on health, well-being and labour force participation
2D: Retaining talent: Workplace challenges

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**Release date: Tuesday 20th April**

**Theme 2: Work, care and wellbeing: new solutions, ongoing challenges**

**Session 2A: Government, cross-sectoral and workplace policies and supports**

**Chair:**

**Discussant:**

**Camille Allard**

**Supporting working carers in the workplace: Exploring the link between personal and collective wellbeing**

**Affiliation:** University of Sheffield

Drawing on three organisational case studies of support for working carers, this paper will examine the extent to which recognition in the workplace of workers’ private responsibilities for the care of their disabled, sick or older relatives or friends contribute to enhanced collective wellbeing for carers.

McGregor and Pouw’s (2017) multi-dimensional concept of wellbeing (material, relational and subjective) acknowledges the need to distinguish between personal and collective wellbeing. The latter is seen as an “emergent process in itself”, from which the dynamics and links with personal wellbeing must be considered, and which also has the potential to transform quality of life at the community or group level. Person-to-collective relationships are important as they can play a key part in creating the feelings of worth, affection and belonging that are crucial for a person’s subjective and relational needs. At the same time, they can also legitimise and strengthen the individual’s access to material resources.

Drawing on this person-to-collective relationship and on interview data collected in the three case study organisations, this paper will explore the process through which individuals and groups in the workplace shape both the identity of “(working) carers” and the development of resources for material and relational help, and whether this process may contribute to enhanced collective wellbeing for working carers. The findings show in particular the importance of a dynamic carer community as well as the presence of committed employee representatives in the workplace to strengthen access to support and address conflictual issues arising around care and work.

**Janet Fast**

**Sustaining family carers: The case of carer leaves**

**Affiliation:** University of Alberta

**Other authors and affiliations:** Jason Heyes, University of Sheffield

Caring for family members and friends with chronic health conditions, disabilities or ageing-related needs alongside paid work is increasingly common and the consequences of doing so are well established. Governments around the world have responded to the challenges of combining care work and paid work to greater or lesser degrees, and with greater and lesser success. One strategy that has been adopted in some countries, but not in the UK, is providing carers with the ability to take leaves from their paid work (of various durations and under various conditions) in order to attend to intense care responsibilities while preserving the ability for the carer to return to paid work at the end of such periods. But there is a great deal of variability across jurisdictions with respect to whether, to what extent, under what conditions and to what effect carer leaves are provided.
This paper presents findings from policy scans in the UK and selected comparator countries, as well as scoping reviews of academic and grey literature in which relevant policies have been evaluated.

We also situate carer leaves in the broader context of political ideology, economic conditions, socio-cultural perspectives and other carer support policies in the selected countries. Comparator countries for this paper will be selected so as to maximize variability in these contextual characteristics. The purposes of the scan are to: create an inventory of options (instruments) for implementing carer leaves; examine the relative efficacy of these policy options; and inform evidence-based policy decision-making.

Jason Heyes

Employer support for working carers and its consequences for employees' wellbeing in England and Wales

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The adequacy of employer support for working carers is a matter of increasing concern. The number of working age people who have caring responsibilities is growing rapidly (Yeandle, 2017) and supportive work contexts are essential if carers are to successfully combine caring responsibilities with paid employment. The government’s recent Review of Modern Working Practices (Taylor, 2017) emphasised the extent to which workers with caring responsibilities value flexible working arrangements, yet this is but one potential way in which employers might assist working carers. The aim of this paper is to provide detailed and up-to-date evidence on how specific work contexts and employer practices influence the ability of employees to provide care and their wellbeing. The paper draws on a representative survey of 1000 working carers employed in organisations in the UK. The survey, conducted in 2019 with the support of the CIPD, collected information about working carers employed in a variety of sectors, occupations and organisation types. The paper addresses four questions: firstly, how do forms of employer support for working carers vary between sectors and types of organisation; secondly, what forms of support are valued most highly by working carers; thirdly, how do factors such as occupation, status and the organisation of work influence employees’ ability to access employer-provided support; and, finally, in what ways and to what extent does employer-provided support influence the wellbeing of working carers.

Dominique Phillips

Altering work arrangements to accommodate care commitments: Family carers’ experiences in the Irish context

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Due to the challenges of combining work with unpaid care, family carers often reduce or alter their working hours, take on a less demanding role, exit the workforce or take early retirement to accommodate caregiving responsibilities (Longacre et al., 2017). This decision has multifaceted consequences and, under some circumstances, can negatively impact caregivers, care recipients, employers and the economy as a whole. Employers are well placed to facilitate family carers to balance work with care, by offering carer-friendly workplace policies and supports. However, the availability of such policies varies greatly depending on factors such as company size, sector, location and the gender of employees (Ireson, Bharati and Williams, 2018). Although the Irish Carer’s Leave Act (2001) is relatively progressive compared to other international policy, current legislation does not facilitate flexible, short-term and paid leave options for carers.

As part of the CAREWELL project, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 10 family carers who have altered their work arrangements, so that they could attend to the care of a relative. Using a qualitative case study approach (Yin, 2006), this paper will present insights into (a) some of contextual factors which have led family carers to alter their work arrangements (b) the impact combining work and care and adjusting work arrangements has had on the wellbeing of carers (c) the factors that enabled the reconciliation of work and care. It is hoped that the research findings will help to inform workplace and government policies and solutions that are responsive to workers who balance work with care in Ireland and beyond.

References
The Carers Employment Digital Discovery Project, led by DWP’s Behavioural Science team, has been exploring the role that digital information plays in the decisions people make about working and caring for a relative or friend. The ultimate aim is to better support people to combine work and care.

We looked across the caring information landscape from the citizen’s perspective, conducting primary research with people providing care at different points in their caring journey and engaging with a wide range of subject experts. This helped us to understand how people experience these complex and challenging decisions, and to build a context-specific understanding of pain points and unmet needs.

What emerged is a picture of a ‘default decision journey’ in which working people feel pressure to take early decisions hastily without understanding how care needs might evolve; don’t recognise themselves in the loaded language of caring; and struggle to find information that presents their full range of options in a balanced way. As a result, many currently end up making decisions which, over time, mean combining work and care becomes unsustainable.

Based on these findings we have developed a new normative model for informed decision making about work and care, and have identified a group of citizens (those who have not yet made the decisions to become a carer) who are currently under-represented, under-served and often invisible to service providers. The project makes recommendations about improving information for this group through collaboration between central government, local authorities, the third sector and beyond.

There are increasing number of people combining paid work and informal eldercare. Juggling between both roles is not easy. This study aims to understand the daily experience of working informal carers of older people and identify what helped with them managing responsibilities from both sides using the demands-resources model. Eighteen working informal carers of older people from Hong Kong and the UK recorded 2 weeks of diary. Their diaries revealed that informal eldercare involves a wide range of activities, not only assisting with Activities of Daily Living and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living, but also performing Life Administration Activities, Social and Emotional Support Activities and Life Enrichment Activities. Participants indicated having supportive colleagues/supervisor, flexible work arrangement, care-receivers having other social networks and time, and paid care as their help to ease their burden. Time, finance, and working with other people can be a challenge in providing care. Some participants also mentioned their positive experience in relation to eldercare. This study gives a closer understanding in the daily life of working informal carers of older people, their challenges and what resources can help them.

Carers of a person with dementia (PwD) are faced with unique challenges when combining paid work and unpaid care. Technology has the potential to address some of these challenges, enabling carers to stay in paid work, achieve better wellbeing outcomes for both the carer and PwD and delay or avoid institutionalisation of the PwD. This paper will present the Working Carer’s Technology Toolkit (WCTT) framework which connects technologies to work/care reconciliation challenges. The WCTT framework has been developed using a participatory design approach. Semi-structured interviews with working carers identified challenges when combining work and care which form the basis of the WCTT framework. These include i) carers worrying about PwDs’ safety and wellbeing, ii) attending appointments, iii) coordinating the care network, iv) access to
Technologies which have the potential to address these challenges, both currently available and in development, have been identified through extensive literature and web searches and mapped onto the WCTT framework. Key informants in technology research, development and distribution took part in a webinar to validate the findings. A novel approach for online co-designing was used to elicit feedback from working carers and other relevant stakeholders (PwD, employers, care workers) on the identified technologies and design aspects of a useful and useable WCTT self-help tool. The WCTT self-help tool will help working carers to identify suitable technologies for their individual circumstances. Areas where further innovation is needed are also highlighted.

Cathy Thomson

Reconceptualising replacement care in Australia: A holistic approach to the work care nexus

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Carers often face multiple barriers attempting to balance work and caring responsibilities: care needs and preferences, inflexible labour market structures and the wider service and policy contexts. These barriers intersect in complex ways. Yet currently, in liberal welfare states, policies aiming to address carers’ barriers to work do not take account of this complexity. For example, in Australia, successive governments have suggested that the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a means of providing replacement care to ‘free up’ carers for paid work. However, this concept of replacement care is limited and detached from the broader context in which carers provide care while they prepare for, obtain or maintain work.

In this paper, we draw on data from Australia to shed light on the need for a broader conceptualization of replacement care. We draw on the results of the Carers NSW 2018 Carer Survey, a state-wide survey of almost 2000 carers, to examine the extent to which supports provided through the NDIS and aged care system enabled carers to combine paid work and care responsibilities. The analysis shows that while additional services provided to care recipients through the NDIS and aged care system may increase carers’ capacity to take a break or look after their health, for most, it does not support them to remain in or return to paid work.

We suggest that while formal supports provided to the care recipient may replace some unpaid care and increase the time available to carers for other tasks, it is a limited conception of ‘replacement care’, especially with reference to participation in paid work. To prepare for, obtain and maintain paid work, carers need replacement care that: takes account of their care and family contexts (including quality, accessible, affordable services that meet the care recipients’ needs); provides them with the appropriate time to engage in training and job seeking and to commit to ongoing and regular employment participation; and is appropriately aligned with intersecting policy and service systems such as disability support, income support and employment services. Finally, replacement care alone cannot be relied upon to help carers remain in or return to paid work.

Drawing on these findings, we develop a new framework to reconceptualise replacement care for improving carers’ employment opportunities that takes account of the barriers at the individual, familial, labour market, and policy levels.
Theme 2: Work, care and wellbeing: new solutions, ongoing challenges

Session 2C: Work-care reconciliation: Inequalities and impacts on health, well-being and labour force participation

Chair:
Discussant:

Shanika Yoshini Koreshi
The bidirectional relationship between paid work and informal caregiving in New Zealand

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There is a need for well-designed longitudinal research that enables understandings of how caregiving trajectories and trade-offs evolve. We investigated longitudinal and bidirectional associations between informal caregiving and work status congruence among older adults in New Zealand. The present study also explored whether gender, socioeconomic status and caregiving intensity moderate the bidirectional relationship between informal caregiving and work status congruence. The study used data provided by three waves of the New Zealand Health, Work and Retirement Study. Latent growth curve analysis examined possible bidirectional associations measured at three time-points over five years. These findings suggest persistent longitudinal and bidirectional associations between informal caregiving and work status congruence. Regression analyses revealed that females, participants from lower SES backgrounds and high caregiving intensities were most vulnerable to experience work status incongruence. This evidence has implications for care policy given the importance of informal care in sustaining ageing in place policies.

Shingou Ikeda
Stressing autonomy of care recipients among working carers in Japan: Toward a sustainable labour supply of family carers

Affiliation: Japan Institute for Labor Policy and Training

Japan is famous for its family-centred welfare society, although a long-term care insurance system was established in terms of a defamilisation of caring in 2000. Addressing the recent refamilisation of caring due to public financial constraints, statutory care leave and flexible working arrangements have been reformed so that working carers are able to undertake caring responsibilities at home for a long period of time.

There is a possibility that taking long-term leave and shortening working hours, addressing prolonged at-home care, would be disadvantageous for both employers’ human resource management and employees’ career development. In addition, presenteeism of working carers due to their worsening health condition as a result of an accumulation of fatigue by providing care must be an issue in terms of productivity even if they come to the workplace and work full-time.

In the cultural background of such matters, Japanese carers are traditionally expected to devote themselves to adult care recipients as if they were an entirely dependent person like an infant. This is considerate for care recipients, but self-sacrificing for carers. However, I hope to show that the majority of today’s full-time working carers keep an adequate distance from care recipients, and respect their autonomous life as mature adults. Such autonomous caring has a positive correlation with working carers’ labour supply and health condition compared to traditional devoted caring. We must reconsider family relationships between carers and care recipients in order to construct a sustainable system for combining work and care in the world’s most aged society.

Yanan Zhang
At tipping point: The intensity of unpaid care and employment status transitions across cohorts of men and women in the UK

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This study investigates the employment status of carers and how the intensity of their caring responsibilities affects their employment by age and gender. We analyse waves 1-8 (2009-2017) of the UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS) and waves 1-18 (1991-2009) of the harmonised British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) using random-effects logit and multinomial logit estimates. Our results show that providing care for more than 10 hours per week increases the likelihood of exiting the labour market, and that this threshold varies by age group. Carers aged 20-35 (the youngest age group studied) typically exit the labour market at 35 hours of care per week, whereas carers aged 56-65 (the oldest age group studied) tend to exit the labour market at 20 hours of care per week. The results also vary by gender: the threshold is higher for men than for women except among the 36-45 age group. Caring for 10 hours per week is associated with labour market exit for women aged 46-55 and for men aged 36-45. Carers are also more likely to exit the labour market altogether, rather than move from full-time to
The results suggest that policies on caring and employment need to take account of the needs of male and female carers at different stages of life.

**Hedva Vinarski Peretz**  
**Work, elder care and employment policies: A comparison between Australia, England and Israel**

Affiliation: The Academic Yezreel Valley College  
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The goal of the present paper is to explore to what degree are the workplace needs of working carers for old age relatives supported through employment rights. Drawing on findings showing that informal care burdens threaten to overload career and labor market participation, the current study compares the extent to which the needs of employees with caring responsibilities are supported in employment policy through employment rights in Australia, England and Israel. The study utilizes an intrinsic case study research design to compare and analyze the employment legislation in these countries. We focus on two types of support relevant to the reconciliation of work and the care of frail, elderly, sick, or disable old age family member – 1) the right and entitlement to employment, which may protect carers from dismissal or unfair treatment and enable them to vary their working arrangement to facilitate caring activities, and 2) the financial assistance available to carers while they give up, take leave from or reduce their hours of paid work. While there is much country specific research, there is less analysis of legislation and policy from an international perspective. The study provides retrospective policy analysis strategy of ex post analysis based on actual results, that is, mainly after policies have been implemented, rather than on forecasts. Consider that employment rights of carers who combine paid work with unpaid informal care for elderly relatives have become a critical global workforce issue, such comparisons can inform policy targeted to reconcile distress along the work-eldercare axis.
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Theme 2: Work, care and wellbeing: new solutions, ongoing challenges

Session 2D: Retaining talent: Workplace challenges

Chair:

Discussant:

Mandy Cook

Transforming workplace challenges into opportunities: How businesses use innovative approaches to support employees who balance employment with unpaid care

Affiliation: Forest Research

This paper will explore the innovative approaches used by businesses to transform workplace challenges into opportunities to add value to their businesses by supporting employees who combine work with unpaid care. Aligning to the core themes, challenges and opportunities highlighted in the UK industrial strategy (2017), which sets out the government’s plan to create an economy that boosts productivity and earning power throughout the UK, this new knowledge will then be used to explore future developments in working carer support in sectors of key importance for the strategy (small and medium sized businesses, employers in regions with low skills/productivity). It makes business sense for employers to support carers (of a disabled, seriously-ill, or older loved one). Rapid growth in the number of people with caring responsibilities, especially among older workers, means that to thrive, businesses must adapt to the needs of their employees who are carers. Organisations that do not support carers risk difficulty in recruiting/retaining skilled workers and/or organisational disruption and productivity losses caused by staff absence, employee stress and high turnover (Carers UK, 2013). This paper draws on qualitative research conducted in the UK, involving 28 expert and stakeholder interviews with members of the Employers for Carers (Carers UK) forum in England and Wales, organisations recognised as a Care Positive Employer in Scotland, and representatives of business, and industry organisations, as well as four industry placements. This research is part of the multinational, multidisciplinary, Sustainable Care research programme.

Mai Yamaguchi

Wellbeing and turnover intentions of Japanese working carers: What do they feel about balancing work and care?

Affiliation: Japan Lutheran College

How to decrease the number of turnovers due to caring roles is an important political issue in Japan. The objective of this study was to explore the relationship among wellbeing, support, feelings on balancing work and care, and turnover intentions of Japanese working carers for eligible users of long-term care insurance. A cross-sectional Web survey was administered to carers and ex-carers in Japan. We used the data for current working carers (N = 923). The main variables are feelings on balancing work and care, wellbeing, and turnover intentions. Among all respondents, 10.2% stated their intentions ‘not to continue their work’, while 22% stated ‘don’t know’ and 67.8% stated ‘to continue their work’. The results of logistic regression analysis revealed a significant relationship between wellbeing and feelings of balancing work and care as well as turnover intentions. Gender, main carer, and co-residence were not significant indicators. We also found that those who responded ‘don’t know’ are less likely to have advice from others and more likely to have deteriorating wellbeing compared with those who responded ‘to continue their work’. It would be necessary to support both groups (the ‘not to continue their work’ and ‘don’t know’ groups) separately and differently to improve the wellbeing of these working carers. Carer-friendly workplaces as well as tailored advice and counselling opportunities based on carer assessments would be crucial to support these diverse working carers. These findings might have practical implications for employers and social care professionals to reduce the turnover of working carers.

Yanfei Zhou

Elderly parent care at home: Challenges that Japanese are facing when it occurs in their 30s or 40s

Affiliation: Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training

Although Japan initiated a long-term care insurance system in 2000, family care still plays an important role in Japan’s society. Along with the delayed maternal age, more and more Japanese have to begin caring for elderly parents at home in their 30s or 40s. According to the governmental statistics, the number of family care providers in their 30s and 40s rose as much as 11% in the last five years, from 1.10 million in 2012 to 1.22 million in 2017. Since the 30s and 40s are typically regarded as a critical time for career development and family formation, the early occurrence of care responsibilities could impose huge challenges for the care providers’ own life prospects.

Using data from a large-scale originally designed internet survey, this paper probes how elderly parent care responsibility occurring in the 30s or 40s affects the managerial promotion and marriage probability of care providers when they enter their 50s. The estimation results show that for males and females in their 50s who are caring for or have cared for elderly parents
at home, the occurrence of care responsibility in their 30s or 40s does impose a negative impact on their probability of gaining managerial promotion. Meanwhile, we find that females who took on elderly care responsibilities in their 30s are less likely to be married when they are in their 50s. For males, however, the early occurrence of care responsibilities has little impact on their family formation.

Attracta Lafferty

Balancing family caregiving with employment during the COVID-19 pandemic: An Irish qualitative study

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The health and social protective measures implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted community care provision for many requiring care due to an illness, disability, or age-related dependency. The withdrawal of services and supports meant that family carers, many of whom were in employment, had to suddenly assume additional caregiving responsibilities including for those considered most ‘at risk’ due to old age and underlying medical conditions. Without ‘usual levels’ of support from family, friends, work, school, homecare and other community services, this significantly impacted family carers’ ability to manage both work and caregiving roles.

This qualitative study explored the impact of the pandemic on family carers, their employment and caregiving responsibilities. In-depth, semi-structured, telephone/online interviews were conducted with 16 family carers (14 females, 2 male) who were in employment before or since the onset of the pandemic. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Four themes were identified from the interview data: colliding worlds; navigating unchartered waters alone; growing despite adversity; and the relentless unknowing. The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically altered family carers’ work and care routines, causing these two life domains to become intrinsically intertwined. Adopting new ways of working and caring with reduced informal and formal supports, impacted the wellbeing of carers and caused considerable stress, worry and anxiety. Based on these findings, policy and practice gaps are identified and recommendations are made to enable employees with caregiving responsibilities to remain working as this pandemic progresses.