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GLOBAL RESEARCH PRIORITIES
PRODUCTIVITY AND THE
FUTURES OF WORK

Time to create healthy jobs

Chris Warhurst, The Futures of Works Lead, PFoW GRP
(Director of the Institute of Employment Research, Warwick
University)

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Health and wellbeing at work

- ▶ Quality of jobs matter, not just because we spend lots of our time in them but because health and wellbeing linked to it (Eurofound 2012).
- ▶ Creating healthier jobs has featured in public policy at various times since the Industrial Revolution.
 - ▶ Protect children (and women) (Factory Acts 1830-40s), maternal and infant health over WWI (McCarthy 2020), save workers' lives in 1960s (Lavery 2015).
- ▶ But not resolved – the unfinished business of 2008 Black Report.
- ▶ Currently estimated that around 1.6m workers suffer work-related ill health (LFS 2019-20) with cost calculated at £14.7-18.3bn (but 'new' cases only and some diseases omitted) (HSE 2011); could be as high as £60bn pa (Black 2008).
- ▶ Covid has reminded us of jobs' impact on physical and mental health – from frontline to home workers.

What needs to happen?

- Shift from remedial to preventative interventions
 - ▶ Current interventions focus on symptoms not causes – more mindfulness and drugs rather than better jobs.
 - ▶ Calls for Occ Health to pre-emptively deal with problems caused by jobs (SOM 2017).
 - ▶ UK Government's 2017 Taylor Review of Modern Working Practices recommended that government should adopt a 'more proactive approach to workplace health'.
- Recognise that ill-health occurs from the 'work' and 'employment' that comprises jobs.
 - ▶ Notable that Karasek & Theorell's prescription for creating healthy work is 'restructuring work environments'; work design typical focus from 1940s to 1970s.
 - ▶ But employment type/patterns matter too:
 - Non-standard employment linked to higher mental ill-health and mortality rates (Piwowar-Sulej & Bak-Grabowski 2020; Balogh et al. 2020;
 - Shift work linked to higher mental ill-health and cancer risks (Jaradat et al. 2017; McElvenny et al. 2018).
- The outcome will be jobs that are sustainable health wise, lessen public healthcare costs and lower employer absence costs

Good work dimensions

Terms of employment

Job security
Minimum guaranteed hours
Underemployment



Health, safety and psychosocial wellbeing

Physical health and injury
Mental health



Social support and cohesion

Peer support
Line manager relationship



Work-life balance

Over-employment
Overtime



Pay and benefits

Pay (actual)
Satisfaction with pay



Job design and nature of work

Use of skills
Control
Opportunities for progression
Sense of purpose



Voice and Representation

Trade union membership
Employee information
Employee involvement

