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The University of Manchester
Alliance Manchester Business School

Alliance Manchester Business School Magazine

Issue 01 | 2017/18

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New campus
School redevelopment takes shape

Vital Topics
A round-up of our year of events

Business and human rights
School at forefront of emerging research

ORIGINAL THINKING APPLIED

> Business schools have a fundamental role to play in developing the next generation of leaders who have the capacity to understand the new challenges that are being levelled at corporations, big and small.

Alliance Manchester Business School

Fiona Devine, Head of School

A cornerstone of Alliance Manchester Business School is our world-class research and this magazine showcases just a few of our many highlights over recent months.

Of particular note is the work of Professor Jill Rubery, Director of our recently launched Work and Equalities Institute and Fellow of the British Academy, who talks about the ground-breaking Human Development Report which has been researching inequalities across Greater Manchester.

This landmark study is seen as a first step towards mapping and understanding the factors that shape human development at the city region level, and specifically looked at the experiences of Greater Manchester residents throughout their lives. It is also a perfect example of how the new Institute will develop new interdisciplinary approaches to addressing core policy and intellectual challenges across work and equalities.

Elsewhere in this issue we touch on a wide range of research topics such as: the future of the UK textile industry; efforts to further embed diversity at work; a standard for responding to emergencies and disasters; and issues around take-up of shared parental leave. Our new Director of Research, Professor Ken McPhail, also talks candidly about the emerging research area of business and human rights, and the essential role that business schools can play.

These are also exciting times for Alliance MBS in general, and you can read the latest news about our £84m redevelopment which was recently awarded £9.7m by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, a true testament to our research strengths. The grant makes us the first business school to benefit from HEFCE's UK Research Partnership Investment Fund, which supports the contribution of research to the economy.

Finally, we round up our Vital Topics lecture series over the past year which has touched on a number of key business issues including diversity on company boards, mental wellbeing, human rights, and cyber security.

Professor Fiona Devine
Head of Alliance Manchester Business School

Contents

Business and human rights

Ken McPhail talks about the role of business in determining our human rights.

"Businesses are both saints and sinners. Give me an issue of current political, social and environmental significance and I'll show you how the private sector is implicated, both in the problem and in the solution to it."

For Professor Ken McPhail, founder of the Business & Human Rights Catalyst at Alliance MBS, history is littered with examples of businesses that have done the wrong thing, whether that be exploiting minerals and natural resources, or whether exploiting people.

Today, a burning issue remains the responsibility of high street names and big brands to honour their social responsibility commitments. "Often it is not intentional, but they can get caught up in unethical behaviour because supply chains are so complex and extensive and have become very difficult things to manage."

Role of business

With half of the largest 100 economies in the world not states but private companies, there is a growing clamour as to what these big global companies and brands should be doing to set the new rules of the globalisation road.

As Prof McPhail adds: "The role of business plays a big role in not only influencing government behaviour, but in determining an individual's lived experience of human rights too."

Guiding principles

The whole subject area of business and human rights has grown significantly since the United Nations formally endorsed the 'Guiding Principles' in 2011.

The Principles are based on three key pillars:

- **protect**, re-affirming that nation states are the primary duty-bearers under international human rights law;
- **respect**, stipulating that corporations have a responsibility to respect rights that is independent of the state's obligations;
- **remedy**, stressing the need for both judicial and non-judicial access to remedy where rights have been violated.

Role of business schools

Prof McPhail says in this context the big responsibility of business schools is to ensure that graduates are ready for the challenges that they will face.

"Many of our graduates will be leaders, many of them will be CEOs, and many of them will start their own businesses as entrepreneurs. They will not only want to do good, but be good.

"Business schools have a fundamental role to play in developing the next generation of leaders who have the capacity to understand the new challenges that are being levelled at corporations, big and small. We live in a completely different world now with different kinds of expectations from workers, consumers, the international environment and, importantly, investors.

"What we need to do is enable students to see that their businesses can be a force for good, to empower them to go and develop the next generation of social enterprises that have major social impacts but which are also financially sustainable. It is about having an impact way beyond the bottom line, having an impact on people's lives."

Manchester tradition

Prof McPhail adds that the city of Manchester has a huge tradition in being radical and is well-placed to address these subjects. "You can see the Manchester spirit in the women's rights movement, the suffragettes, in its history of labour movements, and in relation to the cooperative movement.

"That spirit also seeps into the institution of The University of Manchester as well, and strikes to the heart of the core purpose of universities as being society's critical conscience where ideas can be converted into action."

Ken McPhail is Professor of Accounting and Director of Research at Alliance MBS

Backed by the Lord Alliance Foundation, Alliance MBS has established one of the world's first business and human rights networks at a business school.

The network defines the challenges of business to respect human rights; engages key actors in informed and action-oriented discussion; informs the academic, social and political debate; and helps shape future policy and corporate practice.

Key themes being explored by the network include: modern-day slavery; the refugee crisis; gender equality in global value chains; ICT-related rights; and investment.

> Businesses are both saints and sinners. Give me an issue of current political, social and environmental significance and I'll show you how the private sector is implicated, both in the problem and in the solution to it."

Human development report

Jill Rubery on social and economic inequality.

The full extent of social and economic inequalities across Greater Manchester – and between the city and the rest of the UK – have been laid bare in a major study.

The Human Development Report for Greater Manchester researched inequalities by gender, ethnicity, social class and locality across the city's ten boroughs.

The landmark report is seen as a first step towards mapping and understanding the factors that shape human development at the city region level.

It specifically looked at the experiences of Greater Manchester residents throughout their lives, an approach which allows researchers to highlight some of the critical human development issues at different life stages.

Life course

Lead author Professor Jill Rubery (pictured left), Director of the Work and Equalities Institute at Alliance MBS, explained: "Viewing human development through the life course perspective illuminates these challenges as the chances available to individuals at key life stages, and the support they receive from the social and economic environment to make transitions, have long-term consequences.

"Meeting the challenge of supporting people at key life transitions is critical for Greater Manchester to achieve its stated ambition of a more inclusive growth in which no-one is held back or left behind."

Khalid Malik, former Director of the UN's Human Development Report Office, welcomed the report as the first of its kind in the UK: "It represents an innovative take on addressing concerns over a life cycle or life course and identifying those specific transitions which are critical in shaping people's life capabilities."

Findings

The report showed that in all cases the human development indices for Greater Manchester – calculated for working age adults and for six key life stages – are below the national benchmark (see overleaf).

The indices measure three key dimensions of human development – health, knowledge and standard of living – and Greater Manchester scores particularly poorly on health and standard of living measures. Human development scores for men were also lower than for women, while the largest gaps relative to the national benchmark were found for the early years, for older workers and for men of working age.

The indicators on which the overall Greater Manchester score was particularly low were: healthy life expectancy at birth and at age 65; mortality rates for those aged 55-59; men's wage income; and personal, social and emotional development at reception class age.

Added Prof Rubery: "What the research also showed was that at each life stage, and for the working population as a whole, there was a high degree of polarisation of scores across the local authorities in Greater Manchester. Trafford, Stockport and Bury are the only three authorities where the majority of index scores are above the national benchmark. Not one of the seven other boroughs exceeds the benchmark on any aggregate index score." ⟶

> Meeting the challenge of supporting people at key life transitions is critical for Greater Manchester to achieve its stated ambition of a more inclusive growth in which no-one is held back or left behind.
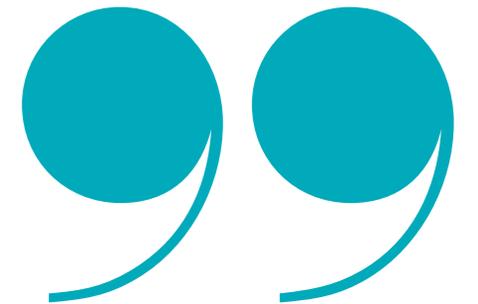
Policy response

Prof Rubery said there were a number of policy approaches that could be pursued at the Greater Manchester level to promote job creation and access to work.

These included working with employers and trade unions to raise and embed decent work standards; supporting working parents through childcare and encouraging employer action on flexible working and the gender pay gap; and monitoring social problems due to changes in benefits in order to reduce risks such as homelessness.

She added that Greater Manchester has been a pioneer in its approach to the early years and this work needed to continue. "This has to be a major priority. Although socio-economic gaps in development at age five are reducing, they are still very large. But life chances aren't fully determined by age five. We argue for a 'cradle to career' approach, looking at development from 0 to 19 and beyond."

Economic well-being

The report says that narrow notions of economic well-being such as GNP also hide the impacts of uneven growth and distribution on large parts of society. This means rethinking investment criteria to take into account social goals and outcomes and rejecting short-term cost benefit analyses that discount the longer term benefits of preventive measures.

"Our hope is not just that the findings will increase understanding of the issues we face in Greater Manchester and their scale, but that the life course and human development approaches that we have taken will provide tools for thinking about how these issues might be approached and what it is that would count as success," said Prof Rubery.

Devolution

She added that a focus on Greater Manchester was very timely. "Not only is devolution opening up a new political space for rethinking priorities and policies, but also the characteristics of Greater Manchester provide a window on the complexities of the human development challenges and possibilities for British society as a whole. Greater Manchester is a melting pot of communities and cultures, divergent legacies and opportunities, and inter-generational as well as inter-area differences."

The study was a collaboration between the European Work and Employment Research Centre at Alliance MBS and the Inclusive Growth Analysis Unit within the Manchester Urban Institute at The University of Manchester. ●

Jill Rubery is Professor of Comparative Employment Systems and Director of the Work and Equalities Institute at Alliance MBS

> "Life chances aren't fully determined by age five. We argue for a 'cradle to career' approach, looking at development from 0 to 19 and beyond.

This autumn sees the launch of the new Work and Equalities Institute at Alliance MBS, which brings together two existing AMBS research centres on Work and Employment and Fairness at Work.

The Institute will support four key themes:

- business transformation and work futures
- fair treatment at work
- inequalities and the life course
- regulation and representation.

The new Institute's Director is Professor Jill Rubery who said work was central to the whole debate about inequality in our society.

"Most of the inequalities that one observes, from health and education to poverty and exclusion, are influenced by labour market factors. But employment conditions are themselves shaped by patterns of inequality. The new Institute will therefore consider equalities issues as integral and central to understanding work and employment arrangements."
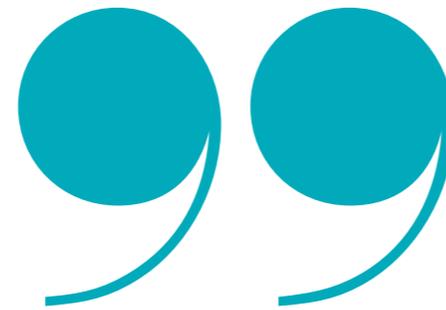
Healthy life expectancy at birth and at age 65

Gap in healthy life expectancy at birth and age 65 in Greater Manchester and Greater Manchester local authorities compared to England average

- ■ Gap Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) at birth
- ■ Gap Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) at 65

a) Men

b) Women
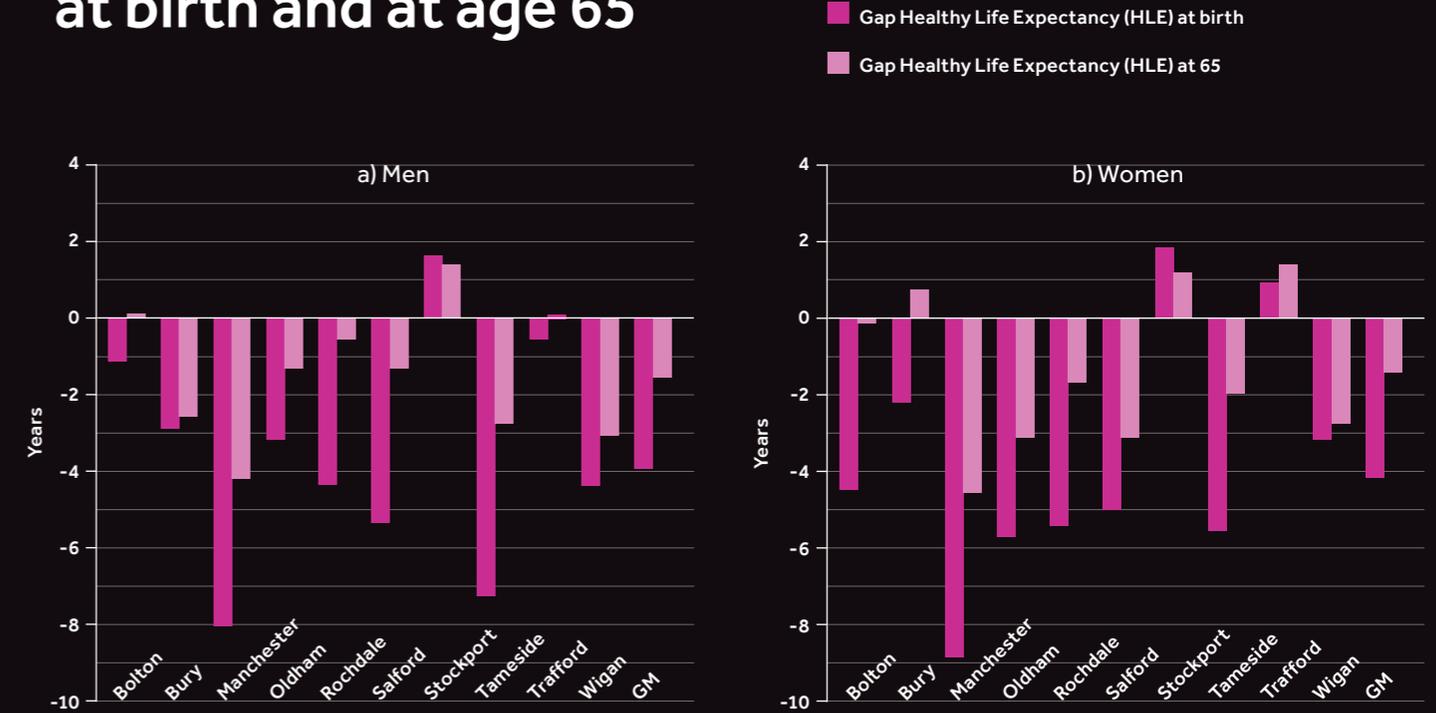
Human Development Index across Greater Manchester

- ■ Human Development Index Greater Manchester
- ■ Difference between Greater Manchester and England

*score based on life expectancy at birth; mean years of schooling and expected years of schooling; and gross national income per capita.
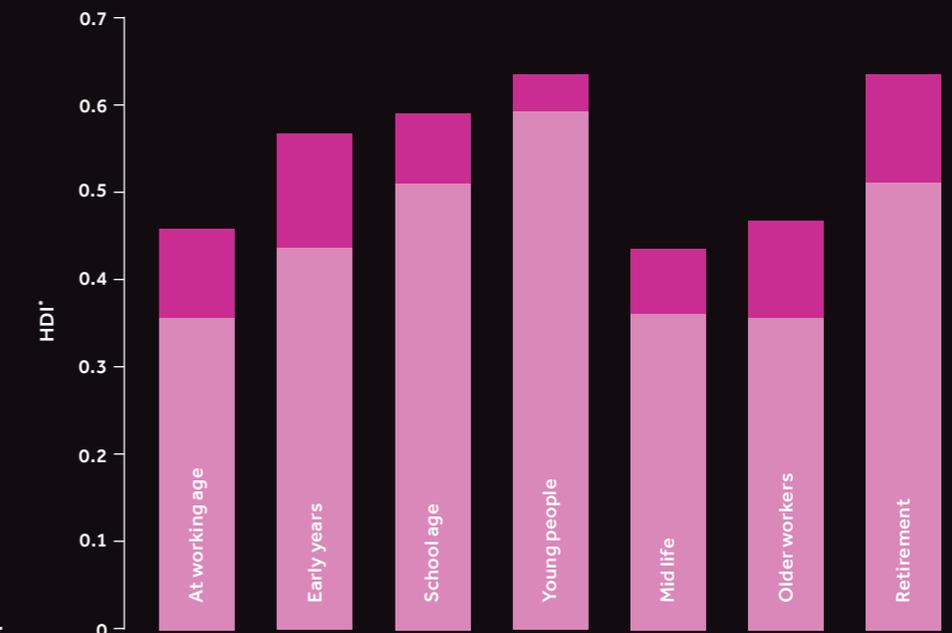
Textile industry future

The UK textiles sector needs a more imaginative industrial policy to help it build the capabilities needed for a sustainable future.

Academics from Alliance MBS say the findings of their report *Coming back? Capability and Precarity in UK Textiles and Apparel* are directly relevant to the current UK government consultation on industrial strategy and to debates about reshoring manufacturing.

Said Julie Froud, Professor of Financial Innovation at Alliance MBS: "The textiles and apparel sector remains important but is now dominated by small and micro-firms with, on average, low investment, productivity and wages. While it is possible to make high quality products in the UK, many producers struggle with low returns."

Mundane sectors

The report argues that industrial policy needs to have a more explicit focus on important mundane sectors like textiles. Policy also needs to move beyond generic concerns around innovation and skills by addressing some of the specific challenges that a diverse sector presents.

Drawing on sub-sector cases, the report explains how the business environment acts as an ecology that offers both opportunities and challenges to producers. Ecological conditions shape the way in which firms develop the productive, marketing and finance capabilities that they need to be sustainable.

Adds Prof Froud: "For example, carpet manufacturing includes some of the largest capital intensive firms in the sector, paying higher than average wages. The relative success of these firms reflects technical capabilities that lead to distinctive high quality 'Made in Britain' products and co-operation between producers and retailers, which supports marketing and distribution.

"In contrast, many small clothing manufacturers have little power in their relationships with major retailers, resulting in low and uncertain profit margins. These conditions make it more difficult to achieve prices necessary to pay UK wages, manage risk, secure a modest return for business owners and invest for the future. The result here for many firms is precarity, not sustainability."

Addressing obstacles

She said an effective industrial policy needs to address such obstacles to developing sustained capability. For example, in the apparel sub-sector this should include supporting co-operation between producers, fostering innovative ideas that improve garment makers' bargaining power within the supply chain, and enforcing minimum wages.

"In other sub-sectors, ensuring management succession and securing patient capital that can withstand the cyclicality of the industry are relevant to sustaining capabilities. Overall, the priority is not simply the number of jobs but the sustainability of firms and of clusters of textile and apparel manufacturing," she added.

The report, which was funded by the British Cotton Growing Association Workpeople's Collection Fund, was a joint research project between the Centre for Research in Socio-Cultural Change at Alliance MBS and the School of Materials at The University of Manchester. ●

Julie Froud is Professor of Financial Innovation at Alliance MBS

Diversity code

A new code of practice to facilitate fairness and dignity at work has the potential to help transform management thinking and improve diversity.

Speaking at the recent launch of the new British Standard BS 76005 entitled 'Valuing People Through Diversity and Inclusion', Dr Anne McBride, Senior Lecturer in Employment Studies at Alliance MBS, said the aim was for the code to be applied "to any organisation at any time.

"This is for anyone involved in managing and developing people. We want top management to seize the day and say 'this makes sense for our business strategy'. The code is about saying that no-one is excluded because of difference. It is about moving from exclusion to inclusion."

Helge Hoel, Professor in Organisational Behaviour at Alliance MBS, said the code was the culmination of two years' work. "We have produced a really strong standard, the first of its kind, and are proud that the BSI chose Alliance MBS to launch this standard. This is not about positive discrimination. It is about giving people who may be disadvantaged the chance to compete – not to get a job but to have the chance to get a job or the chance to be promoted."

Diversity

Omar Khan, Director of race equality think tank the Runnymede Trust, said the standard had particular benefits for promoting increased diversity in the workplace. He said businesses were waking up to the issue, given that the black and minority ethnic (BME) population was set to rise to 27% of the UK population by 2051.

However because most company bosses today were brought up during a time when the BME population accounted for just a fraction of the total UK population, this can continue to have a bearing when it came to making senior appointments. Today just 1 in 16 top management positions are filled by the BME population.

He said this can be down to both unconscious and "fairly conscious" bias too. "People running companies today did not know many black people when they were growing up. We need to keep that in mind. Being brought up in the 1970s was a very different experience to today."

He added: "Something is going wrong and we have a big challenge in terms of race equality. In order to change perceptions we need to see black people in a wider range of jobs to break down stereotypes."

Appraisals

Khan said one solution could be to build standards such as BS76005 into management appraisals and progression. "If you made it a performance target for a manager to get more BME staff into their company this would quite quickly improve things."

Dr Wilson Wong from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) said the new standard signalled the need to look far more seriously at diversity and inclusion. "What kind of Britain do we want? Employers have an incredible influence in this country."

He added that the key now was for managers to start using and sharing the code, and the commitment of business leaders was essential. "This is the beginning of a progressive journey." ●

The new standard – BS 76005 Valuing people through Diversity and Inclusion – is a code of practice for organisations intended to facilitate fairness and dignity at work.

With initial input from a range of academic experts within The University of Manchester's Fairness at Work Centre (FairWRC), and developed in collaboration with a range of business diversity and inclusion practitioners and specialists, it provides a framework of recommendations for reviewing, assessing and undertaking a competent and principled approach to diversity and inclusion.

Helge Hoel is Professor in Organisational Behaviour at Alliance MBS

Dr Anne McBride is Senior Lecturer in Employment Studies at Alliance MBS
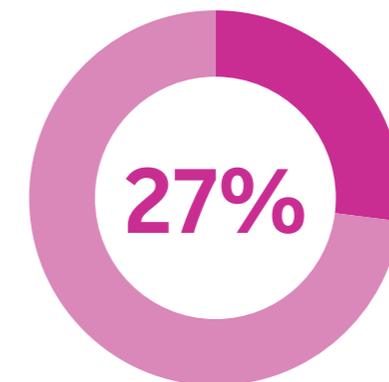
27% Black and minority ethnic (BME) population is set to rise to 27% of the UK population by 2051

1/16 Today just 1 in 16 top management positions are filled by the BME population

What it means to be gentle when caring in a professional role

Major research looks at what it means to be gentle for health and social care workers.

The key characteristics of employee gentleness can be described as taking a 'soft and slow' approach that combines guidance care behaviours – to direct the care process and achieve care objectives – and relational care behaviours which maintain and develop the relationship with the client.

These are the major findings of a study into care led by Professor David Holman, Professor of Organisational Psychology. As he explained: "We want to develop our understanding of what it means to be gentle, and to understand how organisations can support it. To do this we observed practice over a few months and interviewed staff, patients and residents at a hospice day care centre and two care homes in the North West."

The soft and slow approach includes a wide range of behaviours such as: speaking in a soft and quiet manner; softly touching hands or the lower arm; keeping an open posture (i.e. not crossing arms); sitting or crouching down to talk with clients; and generally not rushing care delivery or decisions.

Prof Holman added that when guiding people, three things seemed most important. Firstly, friendly enquiry helps build a detailed understanding of who clients are and their needs. Secondly, offering support was essential and focused on giving people advice, assistance and encouragement. And thirdly, managing emotions was crucial.

"Employees sought to manage clients' emotions and feelings by reducing negative emotions such as anxiety, worry, fear and guilt, and by promoting positive emotions like calmness, contentment, happiness and comfort."

Aspects of care

The study found that being gentle helped with three particular aspects of care.

Firstly, it helped ensure that clients and caregivers could discuss and disclose complicated, and at times emotional, topics. Secondly, being gentle helped with persuading clients to do a particular task such as eating, getting out of bed, or taking medicine. And thirdly, a gentle approach could give comfort when clients were upset or in pain.

Low workloads, few interruptions and high staffing levels are all factors that make it easier for care workers to spend extended and uninterrupted time 'being gentle' with clients. Prof Holman said issues around workload and staff were especially evident at the hospice where staff-client ratios were low (1:1 or 2:1) and where staff had few interruptions and the pace of work was deliberately slow.

However, in care homes workload was high and interruptions far more frequent. In this context, job discretion and support from colleagues and managers became all the more important for fostering gentleness, as they enabled employees to carve out the time to be gentle. ●

David Holman is Professor of Organisational Psychology at Alliance MBS

The report authors believe there are several ways that health and social care organisations can now help staff take a gentle approach to the care that they provide:

- Sharing a belief in a person-centred care approach with other employees.
- Allowing staff discretion to decide what tasks to do when, and for how long, so that client needs can be met.
- Having supportive colleagues and managers who will redistribute care/other tasks when caregivers need to spend extra time with clients.
- Sharing knowledge of clients at handovers and team meetings.
- Low workloads and few interruptions to allow caregivers to spend extended and uninterrupted time with clients.

Disaster standard

How charities, businesses and community groups across the world can streamline and improve their response to emergencies and disasters.

"Spontaneous volunteers following a catastrophe can make a huge difference in terms of relief efforts and support for those affected."

A new international standard, developed by a team led by Duncan Shaw, Professor of Operations and Critical Systems, provides guidelines on how groups can make best use of enthusiastic volunteers who jump to the assistance of emergency services in the event of disasters such as flooding, hurricanes or man-made catastrophes.

The ISO 22319:2017 standard was based on research conducted for the UK government led by Prof Shaw and involving Dr Chris Smith, Lecturer in Operations and Critical Systems. The international group of experts further developed the work for the International Organisation for Standardisation which has been officially adopted by the British Standards Institute.

Crucial guidance

Professor Shaw says that the standard provides organisations and services with crucial guidance which could make the difference in the event of a major emergency.

He said: "Spontaneous volunteers following a catastrophe can make a huge difference in terms of relief efforts and support for those affected. However, that response can be made even better if organisations on the scene understand the best practices which make the most of the volunteer force.

"In recent times, we've seen incredible volunteer support turn out for catastrophes, whether it's widespread flooding in the UK, tsunamis and nuclear disaster in Japan, or hurricanes across the United States. This new standard will make sure we're better prepared than ever for the unforeseen events that can have untold impact on communities." ●

Duncan Shaw is Professor of Operations and Critical Systems at Alliance MBS

More information on the ISO 22319:2017 standard can be found at **www.iso.org**

There are six key areas covered by the standard:

01.
Understanding of spontaneous volunteers and their benefits

02.
Fundamentals of volunteer management

03.
Risks associated with management of volunteers

04.
Planning and implementation guidelines

05.
Communication strategies

06.
Assessment of the impact of volunteers and their engagement in the longer term

Creating a breakthrough culture

Joseph Lampel looks at how to embed breakthrough thinking into business.

In a hyper-competitive world where strategic advantage is temporary if not ephemeral, creating breakthrough innovations has become the gold standard of organisational strategies. Today's business managers not only seek to launch breakthrough innovations, but also (and more importantly) are keen to develop an organisational culture that fosters breakthrough thinking.

Inevitably, managers look to 'celebrity firms' such as Apple, Google, or Tesla for lessons on how to create such a culture. But in truth, one can find breakthrough thinking in many lesser-known companies, in high-tech sectors, not only from today, but also going all the way back to the industrial revolution.

Innovation research

Researchers have been looking at innovation and breakthrough thinking at least as far back as the 1960s, if not earlier. We now have a very large body of research, as well as multi-disciplinary institutions such as the Manchester Institute of Innovation Research (MIoIR) that have been expressly set up to understand the dynamics of innovation.

Many universities – including The University of Manchester – have used this accumulated research to introduce breakthrough innovation thinking into the undergraduate and graduate curriculum, and to engage in highly active executive education and outreach programmes.

Fostering innovation

Distilling the rich body of knowledge about how organisations develop breakthrough cultures into a set of principles is difficult. However, we can

point to two areas that are proving increasingly crucial in the contemporary economy: connectivity, and the ability to absorb knowledge.

While ideas for breakthrough innovations may start with individuals, or small groups, the ability to quickly take these ideas from conception to success depends on connectivity within and across organisations.

This should be remarkably easy in our digital age – but, paradoxically, while the internet has made connectivity a prerequisite to breakthrough culture (since everybody now has the same connectivity tools), it has also made effective use of connectivity much harder.

High quality connections

Knowing hundreds of people on a casual basis used to be a social feat, but with LinkedIn and other social media this has become mundane. Quantity of contacts does not necessarily beget quality; in fact, it may even make it harder to put contacts to good use.

Connectivity that fosters breakthrough achievement is based on knowing which of your contacts will have the missing piece of knowledge you need to complete the puzzle. This in turn depends on what researchers on innovation call 'absorptive capacity': the knowledge base needed to understand the value of knowledge generated elsewhere, and to integrate this knowledge into your work.

Research suggests that organisations that have a diverse knowledge base are more likely to have the high level of absorptive capacity needed for breakthrough innovations than organisations that are less diverse.

Outsourcing your knowledge base

Many organisations simply do not have the resources to maintain the diverse body of knowledge needed to develop strong absorptive capacity. Fortunately, they can often offset this problem by making use of the knowledge base that surrounds them.

Businesses based in the North West of England are particularly fortunate in this respect. The region has a strong publicly funded knowledge ecology, which includes world-class research universities such as The University of Manchester.

But the role of a university is not only to create knowledge that others can use; it is also to develop the talent on which breakthrough culture depends. Organisations, both public and private, understand that knowledge and know-how are often indissolubly linked. This is why they look to universities such as The University of Manchester to supply cutting-edge knowledge, as well as knowledgeable and skilful researchers and graduates, to create the breakthrough culture they need to survive and prosper. ●

Joseph Lampel is the Eddie Davies Professor of Enterprise and Innovation Management at Alliance MBS

Toxic bosses

Abigail Phillips shows how the dark traits of bosses can become reflected in their workforce.

Traditionally, organisational researchers have primarily been focused on identifying the qualities and traits of individuals that characterise effective leadership.

However, there is an increasing consensus among scholars and practitioners that, to understand why leadership can sometimes result in destructive outcomes, we must also focus on understanding the qualities and traits of individuals that characterise dysfunctional leadership styles.

Dark traits

Previous research has suggested that dark personality traits, such as narcissism, Machiavellianism or psychopathy – the 'Dark Triad' – may be among the causes of dysfunctional leadership.

As part of a research team at Alliance MBS we explored the implications for employees and organisations across two of these traits – leader psychopathy and leader narcissism. Psychopathy encompasses traits relating to callousness, manipulativeness, impulsivity, and poor behavioural control, while narcissism is typified primarily by feelings of entitlement, grandiosity, self-love and a need for admiration.

Workplace bullying

Across our three studies, drawing on an international sample of more than 1,200 employees from a variety of different industries and organisations, we found that as the levels of psychopathy and narcissism increased among leaders, so too did the prevalence of workplace bullying, counterproductive work behaviour, job dissatisfaction, psychological distress and depression among subordinate employees.

What was perhaps most interesting about our findings was that workplace bullying emerged as a mediating mechanism, through which leader psychopathy and narcissism seemed to affect employee job satisfaction, well-being, depression, and counterproductive work behaviour.

Lack of empathy

We know that bosses high in psycho-pathy and narcissism have a strong desire for power and often lack empathy. This can result in these individuals taking advantage of others, taking credit for their work, being overly critical, and generally behaving aggressively in order to achieve their desired outcome.

We also know, from previous research, that these individuals have reputations for being bullies, and are likely to engage in bullying behaviours more frequently than individuals low in psychopathy or narcissism.

Employee frustration

However, our results suggest that in addition to the negative consequences for their psychological well-being and job satisfaction, employees who find themselves in such a working environment are more likely to retaliate by redirecting their resulting frustration at either the organisation (resulting in more counterproductive work behaviours) or their fellow employees.

Our research highlights the need for organisations to consider the darker side of personality, particularly when selecting individuals for leadership positions.

But, if organisations are able to implement effective interventions targeted at managing workplace bullying, then at least some of the destructive consequences of psychopathic and narcissistic leaders might be diminished. ●

Abigail Phillips is a PhD Researcher in Organisational Psychology

Shared parental leave

Complexity and cultural reasons mean take-up of parental leave remains poor.

More than two years since the launch of Shared Parental Leave (SPL), take-up of the policy remains very poor with parents confused by its complexity and put off for cultural reasons.

Dr Emma Banister, Senior Lecturer in Consumer Research at Alliance MBS, says employers are also failing to meet their side of the bargain with many workplaces not providing clear, accessible information and seeming unable or unwilling to enhance statutory SPL pay.

Said Dr Banister: "Research has shown that men are actually really keen to take SPL but are hindered by lack of information, difficulties dealing with employers, and by the wider parenting culture. While SPL clearly reflects and signals changing attitudes and ideals, I question whether the policy in its current form can inform the change in fathering practices as was originally envisaged."

Experience at work

She added that experiences often depended on the employer. "Generally speaking larger companies are able to embrace SPL much better than smaller firms which are often much less flexible and don't have the resources to provide the information that employees need."

The point is echoed by Jonathan Swan, Head of Research at Working Families. He adds: "SPL is working partially and it really depends on who your employer is. Some employers are going the extra mile, enhancing SPL and paying it very well. But then there are many employers who don't pay anything at all. SPL needs to evolve to give all fathers the properly paid right to time off."

Increasing awareness

To help increase awareness of SPL, Working Families has been working with Alliance MBS, Lancaster University School of Management and the Fatherhood Institute to create a new video case book showing the first-hand experiences of parents who have used the scheme.

Jonathan Swan said paternity leave now needed to match statutory maternity pay. "This would send out the signal that mothers and fathers are equal. The next step then needs to be the expansion of the availability of SPL to fathers whose partners don't work, and to the self-employed or those working in the gig economy."

Adrienne Burgess, Joint Chief Executive & Head of Research at the Fatherhood Institute, added: "What do we need to do to ensure fathers take up leave? Firstly we have to ensure it is a genuinely independent right and that means if the father doesn't use it the family lose it. Secondly, it needs to be well paid so that it is a disincentive for the family not to have the father use the leave. If you have a father with decently paid leave you can bet that family is going to choose that he takes it."

Dr Banister added: "Many employers don't have the resources to be able to provide dedicated information to their employees so working parents can find it difficult to work out the options available to them. These new films let parents and employers hear the honest, lived experiences – both positive and negative – of those who have used SPL." ●

Dr Emma Banister is Senior Lecturer in Consumer Research at Alliance MBS
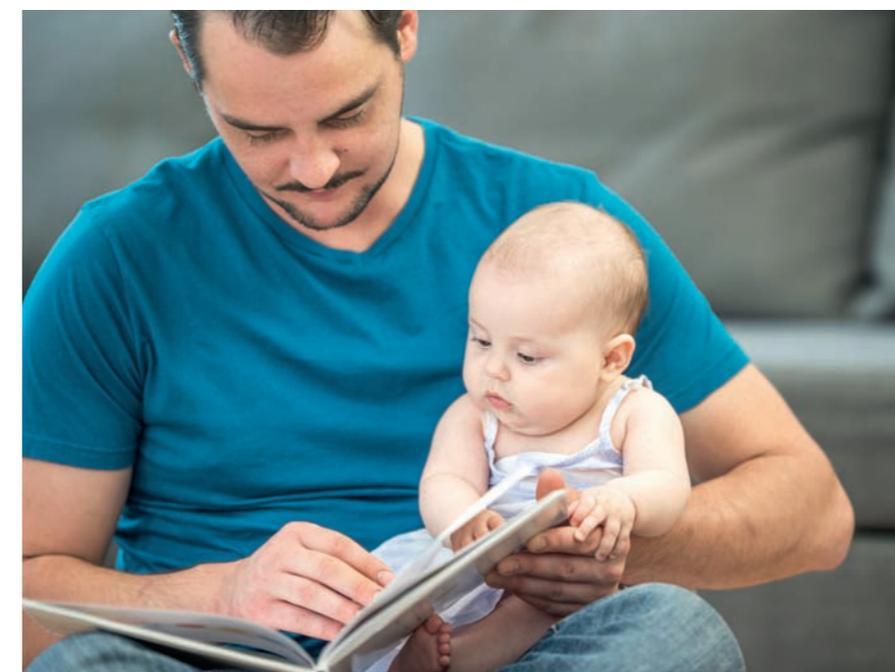
Shared Parental Leave allows employed parents to divide up to 52 weeks of leave between them in their child's first year.

According to Working Families more than half of fathers would be happy to use SPL. However of those fathers who said they wouldn't use the scheme, more than a third said this was because they couldn't afford to. A quarter didn't know about SPL at all.

To view the SPL video case book go to: **www.workingfamilies.org. uk/shared-parental-leave-videos/**

Private arbitration to avoid delays to transport projects
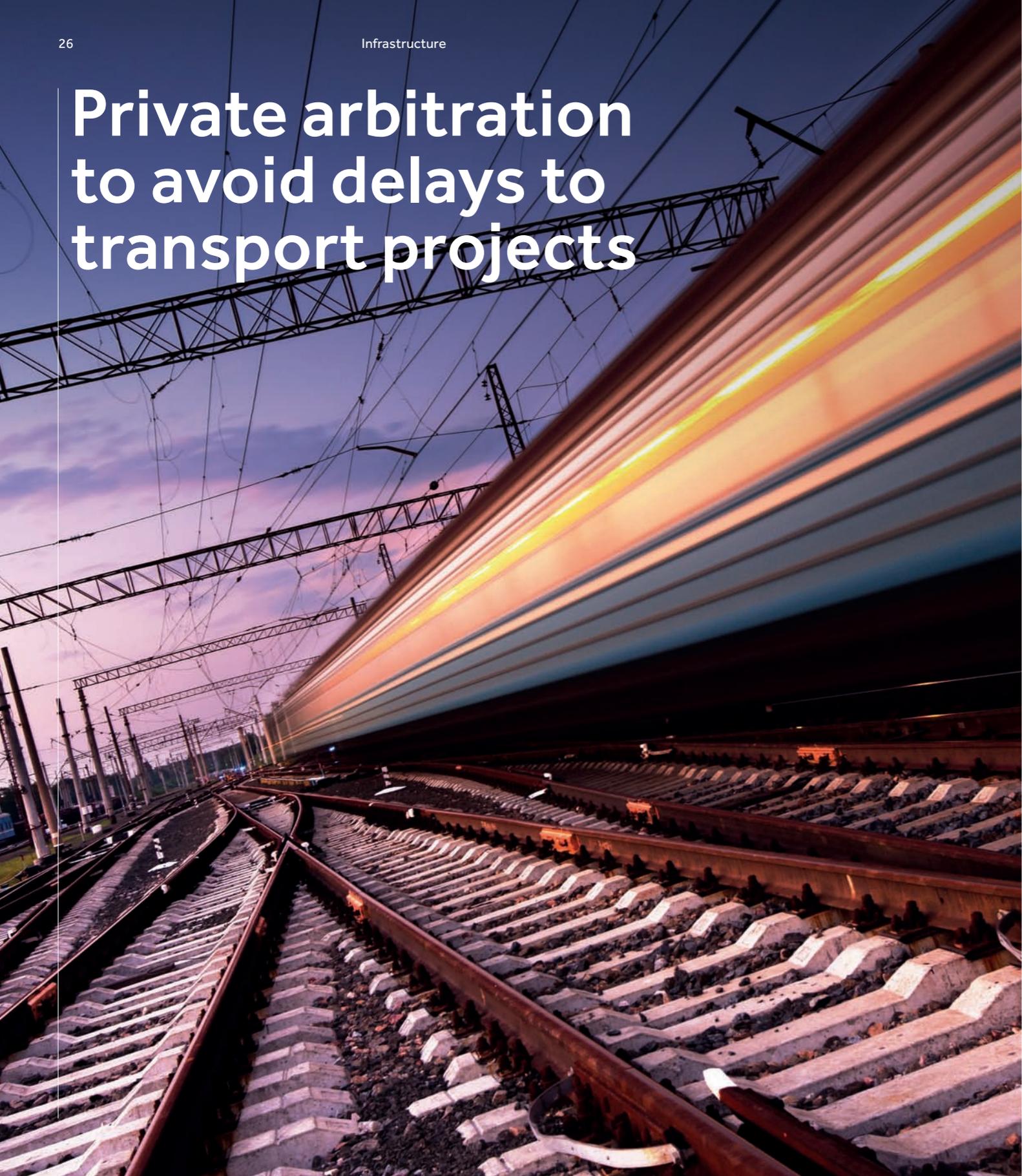
Major infrastructure projects are often beset by legal disputes. Professor Nuno Gil says there is a better way to resolve such conflicts.

Calls have been made for a new system of private arbitration to avoid costly delays to national infrastructure projects.

Nuno Gil, Professor of New Infrastructure Development at Alliance MBS, says under the present system major transport schemes are often prone to lengthy planning delays as a result of disputes between local authorities and Whitehall going through lengthy parliamentary battles.

He says although there is a clear role for parliament in pushing through compulsory purchase orders and compensating residents who are affected by infrastructure projects, disputes between central and local government need to be handled differently.

Said Prof Gil: "There are often disagreements between councils and central government about what the overall vision of a project should be. While defending the right of councils to object to proposals and assemble their case, the issue here is that they invariably end up petitioning parliament to resolve planning disputes, a move which is both costly and causes delays. There is a lot of gaming going on which can be very disruptive and protracted, yet this is an outcome that the disputants do not actually want."

Arbitration

Instead Prof Gil, whose own research has been looking at the organisational design of major infrastructure schemes, says evidence has suggested that independent arbitration similar to what is observed in strategic alliances leads to much better outcomes in such disputes.

"We can improve the system by involving arbitrators that are third party to the dispute, but not to the project organisation, without undermining the democratic process."

HS2

He says such issues are brought into focus by the proposed HS2 high speed rail link between London and the North.

The first phase of the £56bn link between London and the Midlands is due to open in 2026 while a second Y-shaped phase, taking the line to the North West in one direction and Yorkshire in the other, is due to be completed about 2033.

Although the government recently announced the first contracts to build the scheme, the project has seen heated debate over the exact route of the line in the North and where exactly its main stations should be located. There has also been a debate over the redevelopment of Euston Station as part of the project.

Added Prof Gil: "HS2 is a perfect case in point of these issues. If we are to accept government evidence, accepted by parliament, that demonstrates HS2 will open up major opportunities for value co-creation and appropriation by a large array of private and public organisations in northern cities such as Manchester and Liverpool, we cannot afford to see major planning delays to this project."

Wider studies

Prof Gil's call comes in the context of a study by the Institute of Government into new forms of structuring around the infrastructure planning process. ●

Nuno Gil is Professor of New Infrastructure Development at Alliance MBS

Set to open in Autumn 2018, the redevelopment of Alliance MBS forms part of The University of Manchester's campus masterplan.

Our new space

In just a year's time our new building, featuring a major interior and exterior refurbishment, will be complete. New facilities — such as the creation of a world-class Learning Resource Centre, Enterprise Zone, Data Analytics Visualisation Lab and a Behavioural Economics and Strategic Management Laboratory — will ensure we remain at the forefront of business and management research and education.

Directly underneath the new building there will also be a number of retail and leisure outlets in a new area called University Green. Among the outlets will be informal restaurant and bar chain, Loungers, American burger restaurant, Five Guys, and Co-op Food.

Meanwhile, adjacent to the redevelopment, work is now almost complete on our new Executive Education Centre which will provide a new home for the School's corporate leadership and management programmes.

The Centre will also adjoin a new hotel development, with both projects set to open in February 2018. The lower floors of the development will be home to the 212-room Crowne Plaza Manchester Oxford Road, while the upper floors will house the Staybridge Suites Manchester Oxford Road hotel which features 116 studio and one bedroom suites.

Preferential booking rates are available for Alliance MBS and University of Manchester visitors, staff, students and delegates. For details contact Tracy Moreland on 0161 275 6424 or email hotel@manchester.ac.uk. ●

Alliance Manchester Business School has recently been awarded £9.7 million by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

The grant, announced by Universities Minister Jo Johnson, has been awarded through the HEFCE-managed UK Research Partnership Investment fund (UKRPIF), which supports higher education research to attract investment, and to strengthen the contribution of research to the economy.

The award adds to £23 million of private investment towards the transformational capital redevelopment of Alliance Manchester Business School to create a world-class business and management research centre of excellence for the North.

Professor Fiona Devine, Head of Alliance Manchester Business School, said: "It is testament to our research strength that HEFCE has identified Alliance Manchester Business School as a driver for economic and inclusive growth in the region."

£9.7m

Vital Topics

Our Vital Topics lecture series has attracted global business leaders to Manchester and has touched on significant boardroom issues over the past year.

Diversity

Despite the compelling business case for having more women on company boards the move towards gender equality in the boardroom has stalled. That was the key message from our debate on diversity which heard that there remained a complex – and often contradictory – array of reasons as to why more women did not hold senior management positions.

Ann Francke, CEO of the Chartered Management Institute, said: "We have a glass pyramid where women simply drop off. Women get to a certain point within a business, look up and do not like what they see. They think to themselves 'this does not fit with my life' and they opt out. Their ambition also decreases as they gradually feel less supported by the business."

Professor Jill Rubery, Director of the Work and Equalities Institute at Alliance MBS, added that the "horrendous issue" of working hours put many women off more senior management positions. "What does part-time even mean when full-time hours are so long? There is also the issue of lack of second chances. It can be very difficult for women to get back into full-time working and there is a huge amount of age discrimination. If a woman back pedals for a while or has not 'made it' by 40 she can be written off. This is a big issue."

Mental wellbeing

The demands of modern working life were also under the spotlight at our debate on mental wellbeing in the workplace.

Sir Cary Cooper, 50th Anniversary Professor of Organisational Psychology at Alliance MBS, said although awareness of mental health issues has greatly increased in recent years, far more still needs to be done to tackle it in the workplace. He said that stress remained "a four-letter word" in the office despite the huge cost to employers – and impact on productivity – of mental health.

"How many people would actually be prepared to tell their line manager today that they had a mental health problem? I fear the number is still very small. We have to get more people talking about these issues. In terms of awareness of mental health I would give it eight out of ten. But when it comes to tackling it I would say it's nearer three."

Sir Cary said that wherever you are from in the world, a quarter of people will suffer from depression and anxiety during their lifetime. "Yet here in the UK the NHS spends less than 10% of its budget on mental health. We need far more parity in terms of spend between mental and physical health."

Human rights

The human rights responsibilities of global companies were discussed when Michael Posner, Professor of Ethics and Finance and Co-Director of the Centre of Business and Human Rights at New York University's Stern School of Business, led a discussion on the growing research field of business and human rights and the responsibilities of the modern-day corporation.

Prof Posner said half of the largest 100 economies in the world were not states but private companies. "It is not surprising that people are saying 'what should these big global companies be doing as we try to set the rules of the road'."

He said the debate about globalisation had become more pressing in the wake of the US election result and Brexit. "The world is suffering from a governance gap. It has some weak governments which are either unwilling or unable to protect their own people, while large corporations are operating in those weak states often because there is a lack of regulation or because it's cheap to do business.

"The question for all of us is how do we begin to navigate this increasingly complicated global space where a lack of equality or sense of disenfranchisement is so prevalent throughout all our societies? How do we create a sense that there is some fairness in the global economy?"

Cyber security

Our debate on cyber security made for sobering reflection as our panel warned of the ever-increasing dangers of attacks.

As panellist Katherine Kearns, Principal Consultant at the NCC Group, warned: "Companies have done a lot of things right, but it is not a matter of if, but when, they will come under attack. Attacks are becoming larger and more scalable, and because of the success of ransomware attacks that trend is likely to continue."

Carolyn Harrison, Marketing Director at BeCyberSure, said a lot of breaches were down to human error and one of the issues for the industry was that people were getting away with not declaring breaches. "The media stories we see on virtually a daily basis are just the tip of the iceberg. Criminals will ultimately go after things that are easy to get. They just want to get money as quickly as possible."

Harrison said forthcoming EU General Data Protection Regulations, which aim to strengthen and unify data protection, will represent a "seismic" change when they come into force next year. ●

Vital Topics 2016/17 was supported by:

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> Women get to a certain point within a business, look up and do not like what they see.
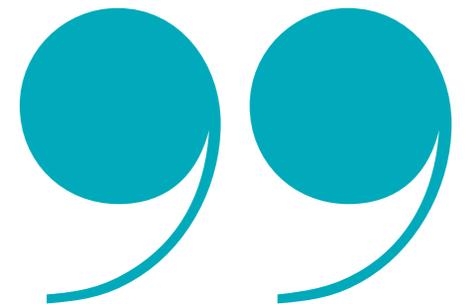
Ann Francke, CEO,
Chartered Management Institute