



Understanding the workplace experiences of autistic women.

James Richards, Kate Sang, Jos Collins, Jesus Canduela, Chiara Cocco The Centre for The Transformation of Work, Heriot-Watt University, and Kat Allen, Into Work

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Aim of today

General and wider details
of our research on autism,
fair work and gender

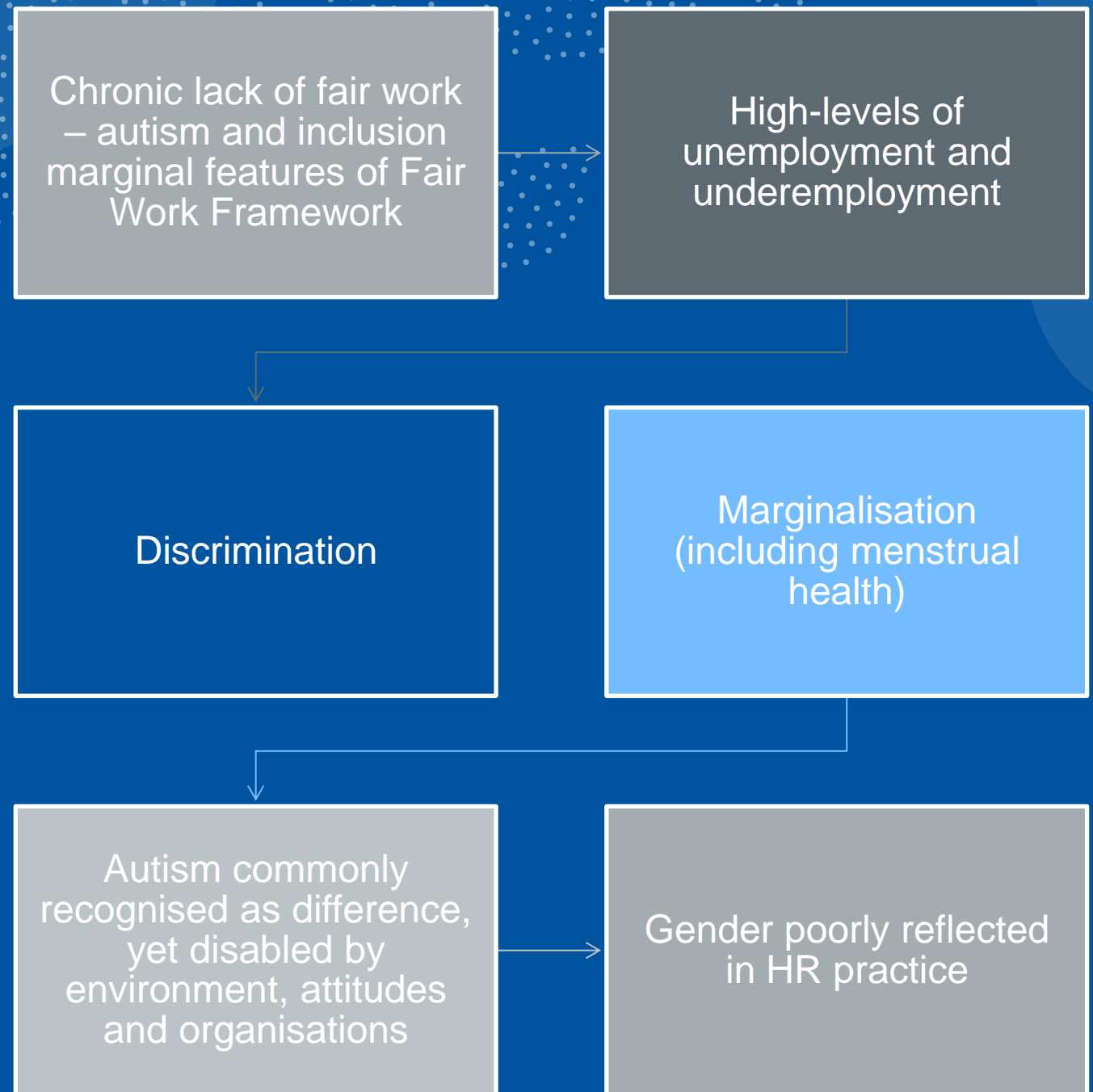
Draw out key aspects of
research related to:

Questions and queries

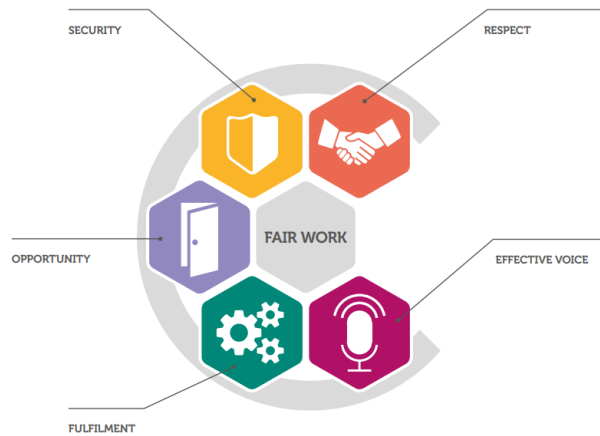
Lived experience

Women's experiences

Motivation for research



Research questions



- What does work look like for autistic people?
- How do autism and gender intersect at work (including fair work)?
- What are the main barriers and facilitators to fair work for the autistic workforce?
- How can the Fair Work Framework be advanced to be more inclusive of the autistic workforce?

Methodology/conceptual framing: 2 studies

- **Two surveys** – autistic working people (n=191), and managers/HR senior HR professionals (n=32) with oversight of autistic employed working people
- **Two sets of interviews** – autistic working people (n=21), and managers/HR senior HR professionals (n=5) with oversight of autistic employed working people
 - Based on perceptions of fair work
- **Conceptual framing** – Fair Work Framework (5 dimensions), lived experience, social model of disability, intersectionality
- Interviews with 56 women about their menstrual health at work
- Aim to inform workplace interventions tailored to diverse women's needs
- Particular interest in intersections with disability and neurodiversity (including autism)

Dimensions and aspects of fair work

Dimension of fair work	Aspect of dimension
Effective voice	• Employers encourage open communication regarding autism
	• Employees can safely express views in a range of ways
	• Employees have access to a staff representative or independent advocate
	• Employer responds positively when raising autism-related matters
Opportunity	• Employees offered reasonable adjustment during recruitment and selection
	• Access to training and development opportunities
	• Access to point of contact, mentor or job coach
	• Available promotion and progression opportunities
Security	• Paid a wage reflecting experiences, skills and qualifications
	• Employment is secure and low risk of losing job
	• Effective reasonable adjustments enable employees to do their best at work
	• Reasonable adjustments reviewed on regular basis
	• Employment rights understood and respected by employer
Fulfilment	• Job allows use of skills, knowledge and experience
	• Employees allowed opportunities to work autonomously, solve problems and make a difference
	• Reasonable adjustments made to allow employees to train, develop and learn skills for career development
Respect	• Employees feel understood as an autistic person
	• Confident of receiving support regarding bullying and harassment
	• Employer supports well-being, health, and safety
	• Meaningful training on inclusion and diversity translating in policy and practice
	• Colleagues have good understanding of needs of autistic workers

Key findings

- Statistically significant differences between male and female employees
 - Employer responding positively when raising autism-related matters
 - Access to training and development opportunities
 - Job allows use of skills, knowledge and experience
 - Employer supports well-being, health and safety
 - Colleagues have good understanding of needs of autistic employees
- Least positively experienced aspects of fair work (men):
 - Access to point of contact, mentor or job coach
 - Reasonable adjustments during recruitment and selection
 - Understood as an autistic person
- Least positively experienced aspects of fair work (women):
 - Reasonable adjustments during recruitment and selection
 - Reasonable adjustments reviewed regularly
 - Colleague understanding of needs of autistic employee
- Multitude of organisational facilitators and barriers to employment – the bad likely to cancel out the good

Neurodiversity and menstrual health at work

It's been the killer of my career

- Loss of regular menstrual cycle with perimenopause
- Management of menstrual blood
- Loss of ability to 'mask'
- Inadequate workplace support for autistic women

Key recommendations

Adopt Social Model of Disability

**Consult autistic workforce and
inclusive employment specialists**



**Consider gender differences
and other intersecting
identities**

**Multi-stakeholder
approach**

Q&A

Key contacts:

j.richards@hw.ac.uk

k.sang@hw.ac.uk