

People Management

March 2021

How it started:

How it's going:



Career hit a stumbling block? Help is at hand in our essential guide to navigating HR's occupational crossroads

CIPD

CIPD
People Management
Awards 2021

cipdmas.co.uk
#CIPDPMA21

Enter today

The CIPD People Management Awards celebrate the outstanding achievements and contributions made by people professionals.

Showcase your best work and get the recognition you deserve - **enter today!**

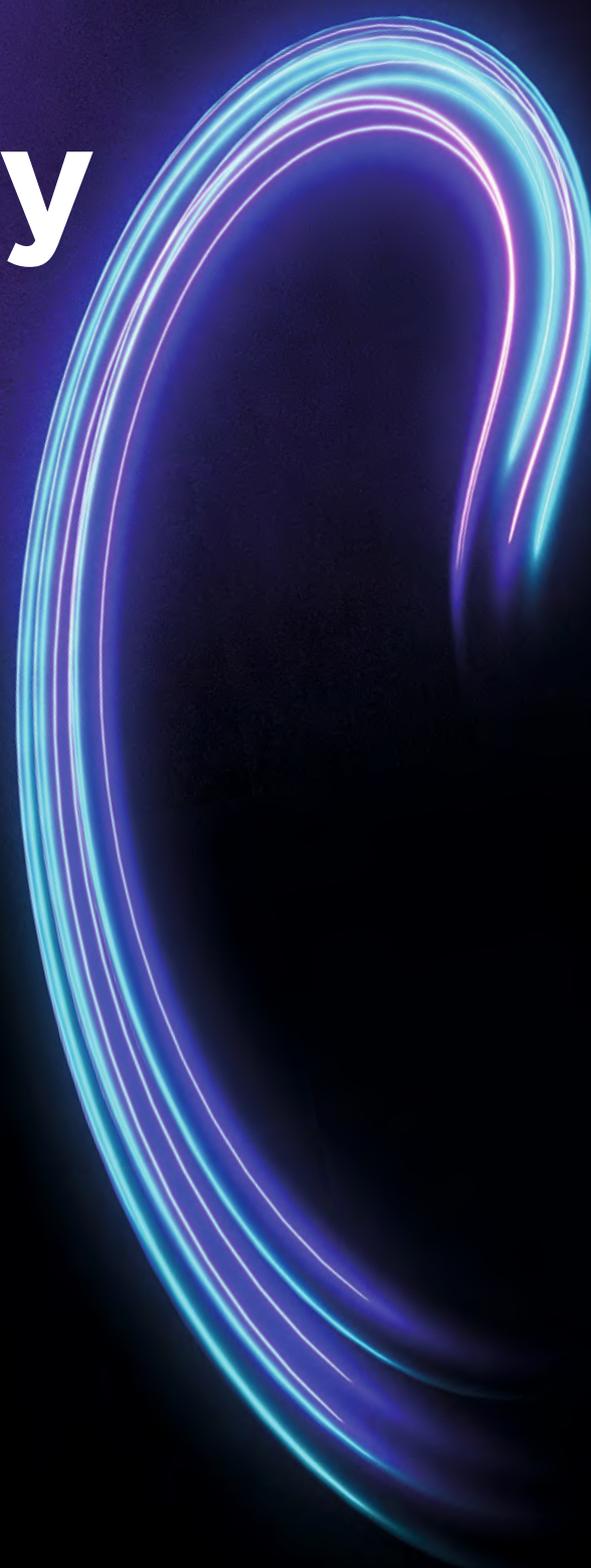
The Awards are open to all organisations, regardless of sector or size and welcome entries from International organisations.

Early-bird entry deadline **25 March**

Final entry deadline **29 April**

In association with:
**People
Management**

Sponsor:
**INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE**
™



Contents

March 2021

The upheaval caused by the Covid pandemic, whether it's enforced working from home, furlough or redundancy, has caused many people to reassess their career priorities – and there's arguably no better time to aim for a promotion or search for better flexibility. We've looked at the key sticking points in a people professional's career – and spoken to those who've been there – to help you reach the next rung on your ladder.

Eleanor Whitehouse **Acting editor**

News & analysis

Welcome from the CIPD p5

This month we've learned... p6

NEWS: Can firms force staff to get the vaccine? p8

PLUS Working from home injuries; #FlexFrom1st

Legal lowdown p19

Columnist Cheryl Samuels p20

Case studies

News UK p22

Rowlinson Knitwear p24

Convention of Scottish Local Authorities p27

Features

COVER Solving HR's biggest career headaches p28

Unsure whether to get specialist experience? Worried about managerial responsibilities? We've got you covered

10 resources to boost your development p36

A handpicked selection of books, podcasts and more

Has Covid destroyed flexible working for good? p38

Many more of us are working remotely, but the crisis could signal the end of true flexibility

How to hire career starters during a pandemic p42

Mass working from home is no excuse for failing to give young recruits the right experience

Career path

Who I am Amy Winder p49

Reviews p50

The Fixer p51

People and posts p52

Research p53

CIPD Focus p54

Could HR solve...? Dirty Dancing p58

p28



p38

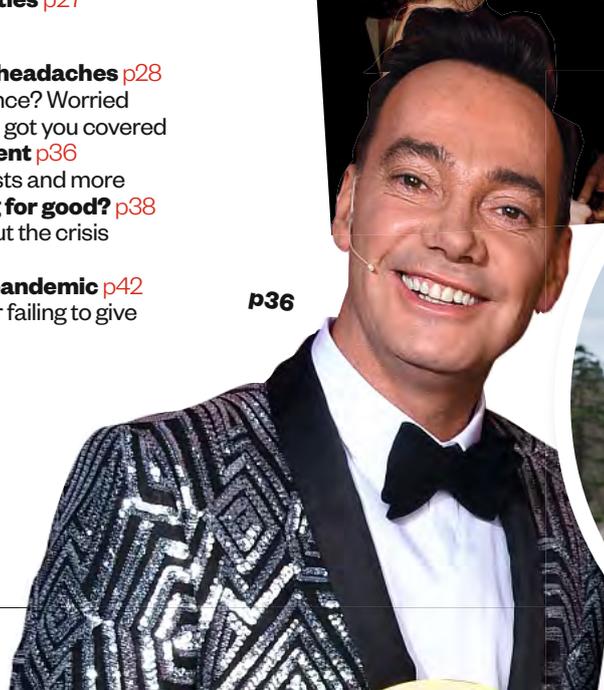


p22

p42



p36



p49



Study the brand-new CIPD qualifications 100% online.

Future-proof your career with CIPD's 2021 qualifications – designed to help you navigate the new world of people practice.

Get your free CIPD course guide today:

cipd.enquiry@icslearn.co.uk

0330 134 2936

icslearn.co.uk



CIPD

Approved centre



Where next, one year on?



Peter Cheese
Chief executive

We are now coming up to a year since the Covid-19 virus took hold. The impact on people everywhere has been immense: the many lives lost, the many who have suffered from the virus directly and may yet have long-term health changes, and the mental health and wellbeing issues that are becoming ever clearer.

Now, close to half of the workforce have experienced working from home during the lockdowns. We've shown that people can be effective and productive, and the

pace of adaptation and innovation has surprised many. But we've also seen offices and places of work in a different light. Many now look forward to time in the office for the social connection as well as the change of scenery. Most surveys suggest therefore that people would like choice: to be able to manage their lives around their work and their work around their lives.



p38

Significant numbers of jobs have been lost. The impact on economic growth has been the biggest seen for decades, and governments everywhere have spent billions trying to stave off the worst effects as much as they can.

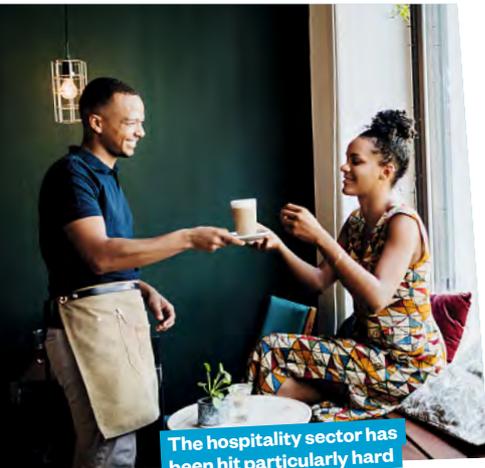
There is a lot of evidence of a disproportionate impact too. We may all have been in the same storm, but we have been in different boats. Different sectors have been impacted in very different ways – some, like the tech sector, are thriving, while others such as hospitality are seeing huge disruption and losses. People have also been affected in varying ways, whether it's women juggling work with a disproportionate load of caring responsibilities; ethnic minority communities suffering more; or people in lower-skilled roles and those who are younger or older being more likely to lose their jobs.

We all have a responsibility to aim for fairness in how people are treated and supported in times like this, otherwise the longer-term effects of the pandemic will create further divisions and unfairness across our societies for years to come. However, from every crisis also comes some opportunity – opportunity for positive change. Perhaps the biggest learning from the crisis is about putting people first. Understanding wellbeing at a deeper level, compassion and caring, seeing everyone as a whole person, and better connections and communication, despite not being able to physically meet up.

One of the biggest changes may be in how we work and the opportunity to provide more flexibility and choice in work schedules and places of work. The years before the pandemic had seen the steady rise in stress at work, workloads and the phenomenon of presenteeism. Yet productivity had plateaued and pay for the majority had stagnated. We were working harder but not smarter.

This represents a great shift in working patterns but will need careful planning and management – making hybrid working work effectively, understanding how teams can work when some may be together and others are working remotely, balancing office usage and perhaps above all making sure it is fair to all. We must be particularly mindful of those whose jobs can only be done from a place of work, and how they also can benefit from different forms of flexible working.

At the CIPD we've long promoted the opportunity for flexible working, and recently launched our #FlexFrom1st campaign. We're calling for everyone to have the right to request flexible working from day one, highlighting the benefits it provides for wellbeing and inclusion, and how it can enable more people to access work. Flexibility can also encourage better use of our time, boosting both engagement and productivity. All of these would be positive outcomes from a crisis that will cast a long shadow.



The hospitality sector has been hit particularly hard during the pandemic

HANNAH J TAYLOR; TOM WERNER/GETTY IMAGES

This month we've learned...

The big lesson

Stress-related absences among people professionals were 70 per cent higher in 2020 than in 2019



{Health & wellbeing}

Stress in HR skyrocketed in 2020

Last year was stressful for a lot of people – thousands faced redundancy procedures or were put on furlough for months on end, and employers had to pull out all the stops to support employees suddenly forced to work from home, many in sub-ideal conditions. It's no surprise then that, given the role the people profession has played in making all this happen, stress-related absence in HR departments has skyrocketed.

Absence data for 1,500 employers, collected by e-days, found stress-related absences among HR professionals were 70 per cent higher in 2020 than 2019, with an average of 0.38 sick days per employee. This gave the profession the third-highest rate of stress-related sickness absence, topped only by the healthcare sector with an average of 0.64 days per employee, and government employees with an average of 0.57 days. Across all sectors, e-days' research noted a 64 per cent rise in the number of stress-related sick days taken in 2020 compared to the previous year.

"People professionals must look after their personal wellbeing"

The findings serve as a reminder for HR professionals to look after their own mental health and wellbeing. "Many months on, as the crisis continues, people professionals need to dig deep to help shore up organisational resilience and continue to support employee wellbeing," said Rachel Suff, employment relations adviser at the CIPD.

"Given these high demands, people professionals must look after their personal wellbeing and resilience so that they can recognise any signs that day-to-day pressures – whether at home or at work, or both – are tipping into unmanageable stress." She added that the CIPD's wellbeing hub provided resources to support members with their own health and wellbeing.

At the same time as stress-related absences were increasing, the data also showed the amount of leave and holiday cancelled almost doubled in 2020 compared to the previous year, raising concerns about presenteeism.

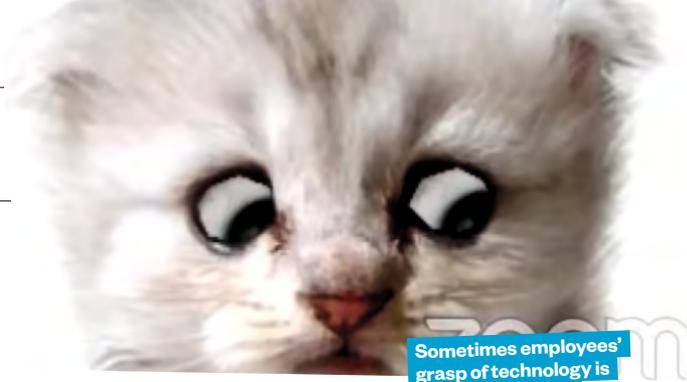
{Skills}

Third lack confidence for new job

Retraining is at the heart of the government's plan to 'build back better' after the coronavirus crisis. Back in October when chancellor Rishi Sunak was stressing that the government could not save every job, the silver lining was that workers pushed out of struggling sectors could make use of initiatives to reskill.

It was bad news, then, that a survey by City & Guilds and Burning Glass Technologies found 32 per cent of workers had no idea where else their current skillset might be useful, while one in five (21 per cent) said they lacked knowledge of other sectors. And despite one in three workers (34 per cent) saying they were looking to change careers, the poll of 1,084 working-age adults also found that, when asked to consider a career change, 34 per cent were concerned about starting over again.

Kirstie Donnelly, chief executive of City & Guilds Group, said the Covid pandemic had made it more difficult for people to understand where their skills could be put to good use. "The UK faces a new reality, where a job for life is no longer 'the norm'. But Covid-19 has accelerated some of the changes happening in our economy and brought new ones into play," she said.



Sometimes employees' grasp of technology is less than purrfect

{Health & wellbeing}

Periods cause workers anxiety

Stigma around menstruation is nothing new, but recent research has thrown light on just how big the problem is.

A survey of 3,000 workers by campaign group Bloody Good Period found almost nine in 10 (87 per cent) people who menstruate have experienced stress or anxiety in the workplace because of their period.

On top of this, more than a quarter (27 per cent) of workers who menstruate never felt supported by their employer around their

menstrual health. Any support was usually built on relationships centred around a senior manager's personal experience.

However, Gabby Edlin, founder of Bloody Good Period, said there was a good business case for providing better support for those who menstruate. "We believe that supporting people when they have their periods can have significant mental health benefits, boosting satisfaction levels, happiness at work, productivity and loyalty. Looking after staff in a way that reflects their whole selves is the right thing to do," she said.

{Pay & reward}

Mental health pay gap tops £8k

The annual median income of workers with common mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression is just over two-thirds (68 per cent) of the income of people without those conditions, research has revealed: the equivalent of an annual earnings gap of £8,400.

A report by the Mental Health and Income Commission found that when people with mental health problems were in work, they were more likely to be in lower-paid occupations. They were also

more likely to be in receipt of benefits such as universal credit or employment and support allowance.

Sickness policies were also cited as part of the problem because, for those who are unwell, sickness policies can be their only fallback. While 70 per cent of employees have some contractual sick pay coverage through their employer, survey respondents said such policies could often be "limited in scope, duration or generosity".

{Flexible working}

You're on meowt

Whether it's interrupting pets or forgetting to turn on your microphone, nearly everyone has had technology hiccups since the pandemic made the use of Zoom and other videoconferencing platforms ubiquitous.

But perhaps none have had it worse – or gone quite as viral – as Rod Ponton, the Texas lawyer who was unable to remove a Zoom filter on his video and accidentally appeared before a judge as a cat, complete with moving eyes and mouth. Professing his humanity by telling

the judge "I am not a cat", Ponton struggled to turn off the filter before accepting that he was prepared to conduct the hearing with it on. "I don't know how to remove it. I've got my assistant here, she's trying to, but I'm prepared to go forward with it," the suitably distressed feline said.

Ponton later told *The New York Times*: "If I can make the country chuckle for a moment in these difficult times they're going through, I'm happy to let them do that at my expense."

{Inclusion & diversity}

LGBT+ harassed more at work

A study of more than 15,000 workers has found that 40 per cent of LGB+ employees and 55 per cent of trans workers experienced conflict in the workplace over the last 12 months, compared to just three in 10 (29 per cent) heterosexual and cisgender staff.

The survey, part of the

CIPD's *LGBT+ working lives* report, also found 16 per cent of LGB+ workers and 18 per cent of trans employees felt psychologically unsafe in the workplace, compared to just 10 per cent of heterosexual workers.

Kate Williams, associate director of workplaces at Stonewall, said these figures were "another upsetting reminder" of the harassment LGBT+ people still faced in the workplace, and called on employers to act. "Employers must be clear that they have a zero-tolerance approach to anti-LGBT+ discrimination, and ensure that all their lesbian, gay, bi and trans staff are supported," she said.



Gabby Edlin says supporting people when they have their periods can boost mental health; Rishi Sunak is hoping redundant workers will reskill





The government says it has no plans to make the jab mandatory - and experts say it would be a risky policy for most companies to introduce

To vaccinate or not to vaccinate

The success of the UK's Covid inoculation rollout so far has taken everyone by surprise, but whether employers can force their staff to get the jab is still hotly debated

WORDS FRANCIS CHURCHILL

The UK's vaccination programme is now well underway – a positive sign that a return to normal might be possible in the coming months. But the vaccine rollout could also be putting employers between a rock and a hard place. Is it possible to make it compulsory – like Pimlico Plumbers' 'no jab, no job' policy – without infringing on employees' rights or opening the business up to a potential tribunal claim? Could employers be protected by existing health and safety rules if they insist employees are inoculated? Or could a failure to mandate vaccinations actually lead to claims from staff who don't otherwise feel safe coming to work?

The government has said it is not planning on making the vaccine mandatory. In February, Edward Argar, secretary of state for health, told the BBC's *Today* programme: "That's not how we do things in this country." Argar dodged questions of whether existing health and safety law might protect employers mandating vaccination, but at the same time said nothing directly prohibiting businesses from introducing such policies.

If employers did want to go down the route of making vaccination mandatory, it can be made a contractual requirement. "In certain sectors, such as care homes, it may be viewed as reasonable for an employer to request that all staff be vaccinated," says Esther Smith, partner at TLT. Although, Smith warns, this would mean changing the terms and conditions of employment, which requires the employee's agreement. "If the employee does not agree, the employer would be faced with unilateral imposition of change or terminating the contract and offering re-engagement on new terms, both of which come with risks," she says.

None of this changes the fact that businesses have an implied duty to take reasonable care of the health and safety of their employees. Smith suggests that firms consider redeploying any worker unwilling to be vaccinated, or asking them to work from home before taking any action against them.

Some organisations, in the social care sector for example, may already have contract clauses that state employees are required to have the vaccinations relevant to their role, says Andrew Willis, head of legal and advisory at HR-inform. "If you're in a setting where you might consider it sensible to at least consider compelling vaccinations,

review the contracts you have in place," he told a CIPD webinar.

However, Willis adds that, going forward, it will be unlikely any employer will find themselves in a position where mandating vaccination becomes necessary to meet health and safety obligations. As such, making vaccination compulsory is "a risky line to take", he says; one that can lead to claims of unfair or constructive unfair dismissal if an individual is fired or resigns over the issue. If failure to comply leads to a disciplinary action then the employer will need to be able to show at a tribunal that the instruction was reasonable, that the employee's refusal was unreasonable, and that a fair process took place, Willis says: "There are many things you can do first before seeking to compel somebody to have a vaccination [and] it will be a very rare case where compelling somebody to have a vaccination would be justified at this stage."

It's a good idea for employers to create a policy on vaccination if they don't have one already, says Rachel Suff, senior employment relations adviser at the CIPD. She also suggests companies encourage employees to get vaccinated by running awareness campaigns, holding Q&As with GPs or other medical experts and pointing staff towards official guidance and sources of information. This can all

help explain the importance of vaccination and how it can help create a Covid-secure workplace.

Where employees do raise concerns about having the vaccine, it's important to listen to them and take them seriously. Confidentiality is also important to avoid any stigma against people who don't get vaccinated. There are many reasons individuals might not want to have the job – including legitimate health concerns.

Employers should also consider the wider wellbeing of their workforce

when approaching them about vaccinations. "Any reluctance at the moment has to be appreciated through the wider context of what people have been living through for the past year," says Suff. "We're in a period of heightened anxiety for many people. That needs careful and sensitive management in the workplace, and that extends to how we approach the issue of vaccination as well."

* Read the CIPD's guide to preparing for the Covid-19 vaccination at bit.ly/CipdVaccineGuide



Pimlico Plumbers CEO Charlie Mullins has a 'no jab, no job' policy

"It will be a rare case where forcing a job is justified at this stage"



Nice people need not apply

It's one of the more bizarre jobs on the market, but a professional development firm is offering a cool £500 a month for an undercover 'bully' to recreate typical conflict situations, such as a confrontational customer or critical colleague, and test participants on its assertiveness training course.

Training provider Development Academy says that, for the right person, the role will entail just two hours' work a week, and the selected bully will also receive travel expenses if required.

Ben Richardson, the firm's director, says: "Being able to successfully stand up for yourself in stressful situations and remain calm under pressure is invaluable.

"This is why we're looking at going one step further and providing participants with a more realistic way to practise the skills we teach."



the number of working hours per week IT security workers spend on leisure activities
SOURCE: KASPERSKY

8% of home workers have been injured using an ironing board as a desk as a desk



The lack of a proper office has led some people to get creative, but businesses could face legal repercussions if they don't protect employees' safety while at home

WORDS LAUREN BROWN

Almost a year into the Covid pandemic and with no sign of a return to the office any time soon, many remote workers will likely have kitted out their home office with a decent chair, a desk and perhaps even a computer monitor, if such equipment wasn't supplied by their employer. But for those who don't have such luxuries (and even for some who do), the risks of back pain, repetitive strain injury, eye strain and more are high.

With remote working likely to be a permanent feature of the 'new normal' for some time to come, *People Management* spoke to employment

experts about what a 'workplace' injury might look like in this new context, as well as employers' responsibilities, and what legal repercussions they could face if preventative measures aren't taken.

What are firms' responsibilities?

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 do not apply to domestic premises, explains Greg Clark, employment solicitor at B P Collins, but that doesn't mean businesses can relax. "If an employee is working from home, employers still have a duty to do whatever is reasonably practicable to protect the health and safety of their employees," he says.

Gerard Stilliard, head of personal injury at Thompsons Solicitors, agrees, adding that it remains the business's responsibility to carry out risk assessments on employees' workstations, even if that is at home. This should cover the work being done, the hours spent working and the equipment being used, he says. "It also needs to factor in relevant personal characteristics such as height, weight, gender, age, disability and whether they are pregnant," adds Clark. "Employees also have an obligation to take care of their own health and safety and highlight any dangers to their employer."

What sort of injuries should businesses be aware of?

For most home workers who were previously office based, there are two main risks, Clark explains: using display screen equipment for long periods of time, which can lead to eye strain, back pain and repetitive strain injury; and the significant risk to employees' mental health.

Ruth Wilkinson, head of health and safety at the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health, also emphasises the mental health risks related to working remotely, including the isolation that can ensue because of limited contact with colleagues or line management. But, she adds: "There are other injury risks within the home, which the employer has joint, limited or no responsibility for." These include the risk of electric shock and fire – which in both cases could be linked to the employer if any incident is related to work equipment. The key question employers and employees must ask themselves is: 'Is it work related?' she says.

What consequences could employers face?

If occupational health and safety responsibilities aren't met and

an employee is harmed, "there is always the potential for criminal prosecution from the Health and Safety Executive or civil legal action in the form of personal injury claims", says Wilkinson.

But she adds that there would need to be a clear failing on the employer's part for them to be found liable for any injury in the home. Providing companies continue to follow good practice through the provision of equipment, training, instruction and supervision, then the risk of litigation is reduced.

There's also the potential for reputational damage, along with other more immediate threats including the breakdown of working relationships between company and worker, reduced productivity and lost time from absence.

"There is always the potential for criminal prosecution from HSE"

What is HR's role?

As a first step, employers should be clear about who in the organisation is responsible for managing health and safety risks, says Matt McDonald,

employment partner at Shakespeare Martineau. While this will often fall within HR's remit, this isn't always the case and firms need to avoid a situation

where no one is taking charge. The nature of remote working also means employers are now largely reliant on employees to take the steps needed to mitigate many risks, so effective communication is key. "Staff must be properly informed of a full range of risks in a home working environment and how these can be addressed, as well as what equipment the employer is prepared to provide to help," McDonald explains.

Businesses also need to explain how staff should report accidents or injuries sustained when working from home and make sure they're aware of what support is available, "particularly in relation to mental health concerns", McDonald says.

Employers that don't have in-house occupational health expertise should make sure their HR teams have the relevant qualifications, skills and experience, says Wilkinson. And businesses should ensure risk assessments are in place for all work activities, she adds, with employees informed, aware and competent as necessary. Training and supporting line managers to manage remote workers is also important, and employers need to ensure systems are in place to proactively support employee health and wellbeing.



Ready player one

Lockdown is forcing companies to think of ever more inventive ways to train and develop their employees, but none more so than PepsiCo. The manufacturer has partnered with Blockworks to create productivity training built within Minecraft, the world's most popular video game, based on an idea from an employee's 10-year-old son.

Working for a virtual distribution company producing and shipping pallets to customers, participants seek to improve on processes and learn how to eliminate problems and remove waste and inefficiency.

"Stop moaning"

KPMG UK chair Bill Michael showed little empathy for his workforce during a virtual meeting about the impact of lockdown. (He has since apologised and resigned)



16% of UK workers admit to having a bath while on a conference call

SOURCE: ASUS

WFH injuries in numbers

33% have been injured while working from their garden

48% have suffered an injury at their temporary workstations

20% have received no health and safety guidance from their employer

23% choose to ignore their employer's health and safety guidance

27% have experienced back pain while working from home

25% have been injured by working from a sofa

News & analysis

The coronavirus pandemic has put flexible working front and centre like never before, but has also highlighted inequalities in our working lives. Recent research has found that almost half (46 per cent) of workers do not have flexible working arrangements, such as remote working, flexi-time, job shares, compressed hours and part-time working. That is why the CIPD is calling for change.

Its #FlexFrom1st campaign, which launched on 1 February, is encouraging employers to allow their staff to request flexible working from the first day of their employment, as well as calling on the government to change the law. Currently, workers can only ask for flexibility after 26 weeks' service, and are limited to one request per year.



CIPD calls for improved access to flexible working

New campaign aims to give every employee the right to request flexibility from the start

Peter Cheese, chief executive of the CIPD, says: "We need a new understanding of what flexible working is and we need employers to

embrace flexible working arrangements beyond home working to give opportunity and choice to all. Employees may not always be able to change where they work, but they should have more choice and a say in when and how they work. "Fairness of opportunity in working flexibly ensures organisations do not end

up with divisions or a two-tier workforce"

* Whether you're an individual or a business, find out more and pledge your support for the campaign at cipd.co.uk/FlexFrom1st

"If you trust your people, it will serve you well"



Hannah Howe, head of HR and talent at recruitment firm Austin Fraser, explains how boosting flexibility has benefited her organisation...

What flexible working did you offer before the pandemic?

We had limited flexibility and we hadn't truly embraced it – as a sales business the majority of our staff worked in the office. Some came in later or left earlier, but it wasn't common. There was a challenge around our ability to trust that our people would be doing their jobs effectively if we couldn't physically see them.

What happened when Covid hit?

Austin Fraser has a fantastic tech

infrastructure, so we were able to just get on with working remotely. But it quickly became apparent that our employees were embracing it, which led the company to consider making a permanent change to the way we work. We spoke to our people and addressed their concerns, and realised that we had the opportunity to do something brave and different.

Our Flex Appeal policy launched in September, and our employees can now complete their contracted hours

whenever and from wherever it suits them.

Did you meet any resistance from employees?

Some people were worried about what would happen if they needed to have a team meeting or if someone was underperforming, but we highlighted that managers needed to talk to their teams and set clear expectations.

How has it worked?

Everyone has really embraced it, and we quickly followed up with

our Flex Away unlimited holiday policy, so our staff can be completely flexible both in and out of work.

We now have a highly effective flexible workforce, and we have just celebrated our most successful December in 12 years of trading. It goes to show that if you trust your people and allow them to make their own choices, it will serve you well. We're going to come out of this in a much stronger position with a happier workforce, which is something we're really proud of.

CIPHR CONNECT

Less HR admin More HR strategy

HCM software that connects
you to your people



Find out more:
01628 814242 | ciphr.com



Microsoft Partner
Gold Application Development

Crown
Commercial
Service
Supplier

15 669796

CIPD

Championing better
work and working lives



Feel the strength of your CIPD membership every day

Use the power of your CIPD membership to strengthen your knowledge, succeed in your studies and excel in your career. Plus, gain the status and recognition that your CIPD status brings with it.

- NEW 'Building your career' webinar series
- CV and interview support via CIPD Career hub
- CIPD Community Careers Clinic
- Back to work support
- How to manage a career break
- Self-employed support

CIPD membership.
We're stronger together.
Visit cipd.co.uk/careers-guidance



#StrongerWithCIPD

“A toxic culture at work can be heartbreaking”

Business psychologist Clive Lewis explores how HR can help rebuild hostile workplaces into friendlier and more respectful environments in his new book

In organisations where the “fire is burning”, it is “my job to come in and put it out”, says Clive Lewis, business psychologist, mediator and author of no less than 17 books – most recently *Toxic: A Guide to Rebuilding Respect and Tolerance in a Hostile Workplace*.

Toxic workplace culture, he says, can have long-lasting effects on mental health, causing stress, anxiety and depression, and can cost businesses both money and their reputation. But how does toxicity manifest, and what can HR professionals do to fix it? *People Management* caught up virtually with Lewis to find out more.

What makes a workplace ‘toxic’?

There are three things at play, which I refer to as the ‘toxic triad’. The first is the employee and their willingness to recognise how their behaviour may have contributed; the second is the line manager and the importance of them being competent; the third is organisational systems, such as grievance procedures and performance appraisals. You could have just one of these elements making an environment toxic, but of course, at its worse, if all three of these things are in play, it will have an impact on workplace culture.

What are the signs of a toxic culture?

Generally, businesses will see sickness absence going up and a high level of anxiety. Projects are either not delivered or late and running over budget. At a higher level, you could see slow and bureaucratic decision making. Staff might even be punished for mistakes rather than learning from them. In the worst cases, this can spill over into the customer or patient experience. Work is something that gives us a sense of purpose and meaning, so when it becomes a toxic environment it can be incredibly heartbreaking.

How can firms fix a toxic culture?

It’s important to ensure

there are clear communication channels and information flows upwards as well as sideways through feedback discussions and appraisal systems. Businesses can also ensure the right amount of resources are available; for example, adequate meeting rooms and space for people to have a private conversation. They should also listen to and learn from exit interviews and demonstrate behaviour consistent with the culture they would like to see in the workplace.

Why is mediation a useful tool?

It takes just one day but can bring years of disputes to a close. Either an in-house or external mediator brings the parties together in a safe and confidential environment and encourages them to talk and thrash things out. The number of problems I have seen de-escalate once people feel like they’ve been listened to – it’s incredible.

“Firms will see sickness absence going up and a high level of anxiety”

What’s the most toxic workplace you’ve ever come across?

A group of clinicians in the healthcare sector had one colleague who they described as really difficult. They put up a chart where the person wouldn’t see it, counting down the weeks until they retired. They had three years to go. It was horrific. One of the team even talked about crying in the mornings when they thought about coming into work.





Are you planning to introduce new People Technology within your organisation?

Or perhaps you have already selected a solution and need support with its implementation?

People Force can support you to select & implement new People Technology such as HR, Payroll, Workforce Management/Time & Attendance, Recruitment, Learning & Performance systems.

Selection / Procurement

- We take the time to understand your needs and help you budget.
- We show you suitable solutions from the HRIS market in an agnostic way.

Implementation

- We become an extension of your internal team during an implementation irrespective of solution selected.
- Services range from Project Management, Data Migration, Process re-engineering, Testing, Integration, Change Management/ Internal roll out, Hardware installations (such as clocking devices), Parallel runs and Post-live support.
- All People Force consultants have an extensive operational background in HR and/or Payroll prior to their systems implementation experience.

Find out more by visiting: www.people-force.co.uk/hris

Pandemic has disproportionately affected women, says parliamentary report

Women and Equalities Committee study found the government has 'repeatedly failed to consider' inequalities faced by female workers

There are few who have avoided a negative impact on their working life as a direct result of Covid, but none more so than women, says a group of MPs, who highlighted the disproportionate economic impact of the crisis on women in a damning report.

The report from the Women and Equalities Committee (WEC) has called out the pandemic policy response, in particular the coronavirus job retention scheme (CJRS) and self-employment income support scheme (SEISS), for not only ignoring, but exacerbating, existing gender inequalities in the economy.

It criticised the design of these schemes, which it said "continued to overlook" well-understood labour market and caring inequalities faced by women, adding that the government's priorities for recovery were "heavily gendered in nature". Caroline Nokes, Conservative MP and chair of the WEC, said the benefits provided by the government "overlooked the labour market and caring inequalities faced by women. These are not a mystery – they are specific and well understood. And yet the government has repeatedly failed to consider them."

The report targeted investment plans that were "skewed towards male-dominated sectors" as having the potential to create unequal outcomes



Caroline Nokes says the labour market inequalities faced by women have been overlooked

for men and women, and recommended that support schemes be informed by an equality impact assessment. The WEC called on the government to "conduct and publish" equality impact assessments for the CJRS and SEISS alongside its response to its report to better protect those already at a disadvantage in the labour market.

It also argued that those in insecure work, such as zero-hours contracts and temporary jobs, were less likely to have their wages topped up by their employer beyond the 80 per cent subsidy. As women were more likely to be employed on insecure contracts, this meant they were 10 percentage points less likely than men to receive a discretionary top-up.

In response to the report, Baroness Berridge, minister for women, said the government had provided an

"unprecedented offer of support", including for sectors in which women were more likely to be employed. "We also recognise it is vital that children can return to school to lift some of the weight off parents across the country, which is why we will prioritise opening schools when it is safe to do so," Berridge added.

The report highlighted existing inequalities for women with caring responsibilities, which have been magnified by the Covid crisis. Evidence submitted to the WEC by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) reported instances of pregnancy and maternity discrimination as one of the "most urgent, immediate threats to equality" during the pandemic. It had particular concerns about evidence of pregnant women being "forced to take unpaid leave or start maternity leave early, placed on sick leave rather than furlough or refused furlough because they have childcare responsibilities and not deemed to be working".

Since the report's release, the EHRC has received a letter from several organisations – including the TUC, the Fawcett Society and Save The Children – calling on it to investigate claims the government's response to the outbreak has had a disproportionately negative effect on women.

Lockdown's effect on pregnant women and mothers

A survey included in the report of almost 20,000 pregnant women and mothers, conducted by Pregnant Then Screwed in July 2020, found 15 per cent had been made redundant or expected to be in the next six months, with a significant proportion feeling their pregnancy, maternity leave or motherhood was a factor. Additionally, 10.5 per cent of pregnant women and

11.2 per cent of those on maternity leave were in the same position.

CEO and founder of Pregnant Then Screwed Joeli Brearley said that, throughout the pandemic, policy decisions had "repeatedly ignored the specific needs of women", adding that making people redundant because of caring responsibilities "is outrageous, and it needs to stop".



The needs of women have been ignored during Covid, says Joeli Brearley



Connect to the future

Discover CIPD qualifications

Suitable for every career stage and with flexible study options (either 100% online, blended learning or part-time study), CIPD qualifications make it easier to make the right career choices in a fast-changing business world.

Find out more at www.cipd.co.uk/qualify

CIPD
Championing better work and working lives

Law on Tour - Summer 2021

Various locations. Online and face-to-face.

The Law on Tour is back and we've made it even better than before!

KLC's Cas Carrington and John Fenton, who have developed, written and presented the Law on Tour for almost 20 years, are delighted to bring you the UK's premier employment law update, that is the one-stop-shop for all HR professionals and business leaders.

As we're still in such uncertain times, you can choose between attending a fully Covid-secure face-to-face event (Government guidance allowing) or you can attend through a virtual classroom where you'll see and hear Cas and John presenting, and be able to participate as if you were physically present.

Law on Tour offers so much more than just another employment law update. You'll earn CPD points, and receive comprehensive course documentation, including a reference workbook and helpful resources such as model letters and policies and procedures.

You'll also be able to email Cas and the KLC team after the event, and they will answer any outstanding questions you have.

To see what we'll be covering on Law on Tour, and to book your place, visit <https://klcemploymentlaw.com/law-on-tour>
Or call us on 01483 415276

klc employmentlaw





Did you know that CIPD members have exclusive access to the Employment Law at Work Service and legal helplines?
cipd.co.uk/hr-resources/employment-law

NHS employee subjected to 'stressful' practical joke was unfairly dismissed

Judge rules there was 'no possible justification' for boss's actions

An NHS worker subjected to an "extremely stressful" prank was unfairly dismissed, a tribunal has found. Carol Hurley, who worked as deputy finance business partner for East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust, was awarded nearly £10,000 for bullying and harassment.

The tribunal heard Hurley was sent emails from her line manager reminding her of a fake three-hour presentation she had to deliver the following day as a practical joke. Hurley said she put aside other urgent work to write the presentation and found the situation "extremely stressful" before receiving another email from her boss revealing the prank.

Judge Fowell said Hurley would have been entitled at that point to resign but she did not, feeling the need to "take the joke in good part", but there was "no possible justification for doing that to a member of staff in any circumstances".

Around the same time as the practical joke, plans were being put in place to form a central finance team, of which Hurley became a part in October 2017. However, the court heard that the transition was "difficult" and, by the beginning of November, she had contacted her trade union to report problems with bullying.

On 10 November, Hurley had a meeting with the new central department's manager,

and raised the email prank incident. Hurley felt word of the meeting had got out the following day as she began to be excluded by colleagues, and shared spreadsheets she had updated were tampered with.

Hurley raised her concerns with HR in January 2018, which led to staff being reminded of expected behaviours. However, Hurley's union representatives informed HR on 1 February that things had not improved and staff were creating "further obstruction".

The same day, Hurley had a meeting with her line manager, but did not receive the notes until a month later and felt they did not reflect the conversation. Hurley submitted a formal grievance while off sick in April.

Following an investigation, it was found the prank did not constitute harassment. Hurley appealed and then resigned on 14 September. While she was working her notice, her claims of humiliation and bullying from the practical joke incident, as well as other claims, were upheld. Hurley left the trust in November.

A trust spokesperson said: "We fully accept the findings of this tribunal and wholeheartedly apologise to Mrs Hurley, who we hope understands that we made a conscientious effort to support her, as the judge stated."

Holiday park firm breached contract after making worker homeless

A worker who, alongside his family, was made homeless when his employer took away his onsite accommodation was constructively unfairly dismissed, a tribunal ruled.

Mr G Mason, who worked as a maintenance supervisor for Park Holidays, was given two weeks' notice to vacate himself and his family from the onsite premises, which had been his home for eight years.

When Mason started his job at Steeple Bay Holiday Park near Maldon, Essex, he was told the onsite caravan came with the job. His contract stated that the offer of accommodation may be "reviewed and/or withdrawn at any stage, but only after a period of consultation". He lived in the caravan with his partner and daughter, who has a learning disability and required arranged transport to and from her school, which took "months to arrange", the tribunal heard.

In October 2019, Maldon District Council refused the company's request for staff to remain onsite when the park closed from November to March each year. Mason was given two weeks' notice to vacate the premises in November, without consultation, and later told he could not return to live onsite. He complained to HR.

After a meeting with the regional manager in February, Mason accepted a new position with accommodation at the company's Clacton site. He later discovered that this role was unavailable and complained again, but received no response. He resigned in March, stating that he had "lost all trust and confidence" in his employer.

Judge Ross ruled that Park Holidays breached the implied term of trust and confidence, and a lack of consultation on the accommodation was a "serious breach of contract". Mason was awarded £11,902.87 in damages.

Review of workers' rights axed in latest government U-turn

A controversial review into EU employee rights post Brexit will now no longer be going ahead, the government has confirmed.

Business secretary Kwasi Kwarteng appeared to U-turn on his pledge to look at the Working Time Directive and other rules around pay and breaks. In an interview with ITV's Robert Peston, he said: "The review is no longer happening [and] I made

it very, very clear to officials in the department that we're not interested in watering down workers' rights.

"I've said repeatedly that Brexit gives us the opportunity to have higher standards and a higher growth economy, and that's what officials in the department are 100 per cent focused on."

The decision comes after Kwarteng initially faced a

backlash from both trade unions and Labour over the review.

Rachel Suff, senior employment relations adviser at the CIPD, welcomed the move, saying it was a step in the right direction and a review of EU-derived employment law was simply not a priority. She added: "The big issue the government should be focusing on before looking at deregulation is improving how existing employment rights are enforced."

SHUTTERSTOCK

CIPD | HR-inform

For employment law advice and resources, visit hr-inform.co.uk



I'll tell you something...

CHERYL SAMUELS

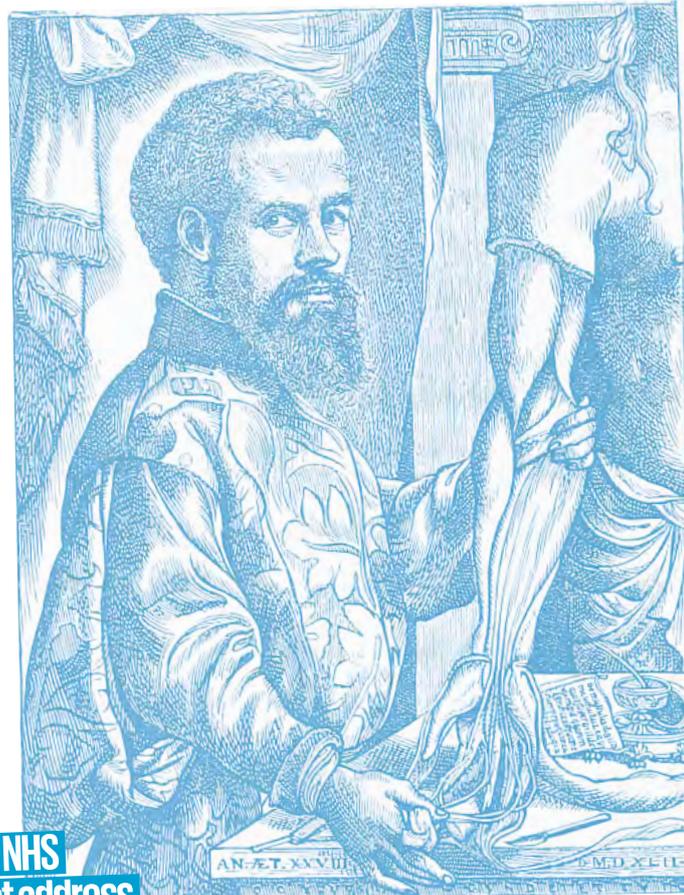
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF
WORKFORCE TRANSFORMATION
(LONDON) AT NHS ENGLAND AND
NHS IMPROVEMENT

The people profession must lead by example on inclusion and diversity

For nearly a year, we've all been locked down and had our freedoms restricted in an effort to combat the spread of coronavirus. But some people with ethnic minority backgrounds have been living their whole lives with a different virus: racism. They've been living in a state of lockdown for much longer, with restrictions impacting their dreams and aspirations, as well as their wellbeing. This happens because not only is the world we live in not truly inclusive, it's now been proven that this is harmful to health thanks to research by Professor David Williams at Harvard University.

The pandemic has illuminated the impact of racial inequalities on ethnic minority communities, and this is reflected in the NHS workforce. For years the HR profession has advised on creating compassionate and inclusive workplaces. However, progress is slow as the profession itself is not diverse and representative at all levels, which is extremely frustrating for those most affected.

The HR function is often described as the 'moral compass' and 'heart' of an organisation. We need to be the real trailblazers of true inclusivity and diversity at all levels. When we lead by example with diverse leadership, we create a sense of hope, belief and credence that there is



"The NHS must address inequality so that staff can feel a sense of belonging"

equality of opportunity and this can be a reality with measurable business benefits.

It's heartbreaking to hear stories from the many ethnic minority HR, OD and L&D professionals I have mentored.

Through their various career journeys they have been scarred because of microaggressions, stereotyping, barriers to progression and unequal access to development. Their stories are shared in small circles owing to the lack of psychological safety experienced by our

own HR and OD staff. If we don't address equality, diversity and inclusion for our own staff, how can we credibly advise and support other functions to develop such practices?

The NHS is the largest employer in the UK. It needs to make a concerted effort to address the inequalities so that staff feel a greater sense of belonging and genuine inclusion. The publication of the NHS People Plan and the London Workforce Race Strategy last year recognises the racial inequalities found in the NHS and sets the ambition to achieve greater inclusion in a way that looks and feels different.

In the absence of research into the impact of inequality among ethnic minority people professionals, the Healthcare People Management Association (HPMA) recently commissioned independent research and issued a formal response to the findings, setting out key recommendations that will make a significant difference.

It's time for our profession to improve the lived working experience of ethnic minority HR, OD and L&D professionals, and white HR leaders have a pivotal role to play by becoming active allies. Let's make sure this is a positive legacy of Covid-19. **PM**

* Read the HPMA's research at bit.ly/HPMAReport



INTEGRATED Human Resources, Payroll and Talent Management

In-house or Cloud you choose



0845 370 3210
sales@frontiersoftware.com
www.frontiersoftware.com



Frontier
software

Human Capital Management
& Payroll Software/Services

OFFICES IN AUSTRALIA, INDIA, MALAYSIA, NEW ZEALAND, PHILIPPINES, SINGAPORE AND UNITED KINGDOM

“The worst part has been the social media abuse”

Why the media giant refuses to be cowed as it diversifies its workforce

Journalist Carole Cadwalladr once described listening to talkSport, the world’s most popular sports radio station, as “a crash course in blokeology”. But while the station has historically been aural fodder for white van men the country over, this is 2021 – and appealing to just one demographic is so last decade.

That’s where News UK, talkSport’s parent company, is already in the throes of making some big changes. “Sport has always been a very male environment, and the people who are commentating and presenting tend to be more white,” says Briony Hughes, News UK’s HR director and diversity lead. The station has had a “loyal following” for many years, she explains, but the company is acutely aware it could open up to more people. As such, talkSport has undergone a major shake-up of its line-up in recent years and introduced female and ethnic minority presenters, all spearheaded by station head Lee Clayton, who “didn’t wait for permission” before pressing ahead with the changes, according to Hughes. “Women who love sport, for example, may not have listened to talkSport before because they might not have felt welcome, whereas now there are plenty of women in our line-up,” she says. “If your staff don’t represent the population, you can’t expect to appeal to that population.”

But rather than use this as a PR opportunity, the station has taken a more understated approach, instead making relatively little fuss about its new faces and their demographics. “We’ve not gone out to every newspaper and radio station and said ‘come and look at us,’” Hughes explains – the proof, she says, is in the listening figures, and although official RAJAR reporting has been paused because of Covid, she’s confident a similar number of people, if not more, are tuning in.

The response from both staff and listeners has been mostly positive, but by far the biggest problem has been racist and sexist abuse on social media directed at the station’s new presenters. “It’s really hard for anyone to get that kind of abuse, particularly when it’s consistent,” says Hughes. “But we’re conscious that we have to do more to protect our people, and we’re still working through that.”

Although the changes at talkSport were what Hughes describes as the “flagship” of wider diversity work across News UK – which comprises *The Sun*, *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*, as well as radio arm Wireless – there has also been progress elsewhere across the company. A big wake-up call came, Hughes explains, when

the topic was raised by staff at an internal meeting in 2018 and the senior leadership team couldn’t say what the firm was doing to improve its diversity. By the time the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests hit the headlines in mid-2020, developments in this area were well underway.

But rather than use BLM as an opportunity to push out diversity work prematurely, the company chose to hold off and delay responding until it was ready. “A few organisations rushed into it, and were criticised,” Hughes says. “We resisted that – it would’ve felt a bit empty.” Instead, the firm’s CEO wrote to the whole business and asked people to share their thoughts and experiences. “She was inundated,” says Hughes.

“And from every ethnicity, not just black staff.” This process, says Hughes, forced the realisation that there were a lot of experiences among the workforce that hadn’t been shared, and meant that when the firm’s diversity strategy did launch in 2020 it had been far more thoroughly considered. “We’re a meritocracy, and someone might be the best person for the job, but we had never considered how hard they might have had to fight to get to that point,” she says.

As well as looking specifically at recruitment – a new head of early talent will focus on offering work experience and

“If your staff don’t represent the population, you can’t expect to appeal to that population”

apprenticeships – and setting targets for 50 per cent of the workforce to be female and 20 per cent from ethnic minorities (currently at 38 per cent and 8 per cent respectively), the organisation’s diversity strategy, backed by a new, dedicated team, also sets its sights on making sure the content produced by all its brands – on the airwaves, online and in print – factors in better diversity. A newly created head of creative diversity role, reporting to both HR and communications, ensures this happens. The idea, says Hughes, is to challenge News UK’s content: “We don’t tell people what to write and say,” she explains. “But the media has a huge role to play in making society a fairer place, and we want to make sure we have style guides that are fit for purpose and journalists who are trained in appropriate use of language – for example, *The Sun* no longer uses the term ‘BAME.’”

Another significant investment in the firm’s diversity work has been its data gathering. The company previously only collected information on employees’ gender and nationality, but it’s now expanded that to include sexual orientation, religion, caring responsibilities, race and ethnicity, and socioeconomic elements including highest level of education, type of school attended and area grown up in, although Hughes admits that encouraging people to complete it has sometimes been difficult. “We thought – and were right to – that our workforce was very London-centric,” she explains. “If that’s the case, we’re not going to appeal to readers in Wales, or the north as much.”

Hughes was concerned that diversity would be forced to take a back seat when Covid hit, but she needn’t have worried. “Initially I thought it would fall off the agenda,” she says. “But it didn’t stop any of our output – stations are still running and papers go out every day, and this is the same.” The data has so far been promising; in a year, the number of staff who agree that the company values diversity has increased nine percentage points to 65 per cent. But, as Hughes points out, the proof is in the results: “It’s not a wonderful score, but it’s going in the right direction. We’ve made a great start, but our people want to see more.”



In practice

Real organisations, real challenges

Rowlinson Knitwear

“It felt like we’d been forgotten about”

With half its staff unable to work from home, the Covid crisis has brought extra challenges for the knitwear manufacturer

It’s crystal clear now that Covid has been a catalyst for a significant change to the rhetoric around the future of work and the move away from the traditional 9-5 in a formal workplace. Much of that conversation has been around the benefits (or otherwise) of full-time home working, and whether we’ll ever see a full return to the office post pandemic.

But what if your work can’t be done from home? For Nicola Ryan, director of colleague support at Stockport-based manufacturer Rowlinson Knitwear, this talk of the ‘new way of working’ has made her workforce feel somewhat “forgotten”. “More than half our workforce can’t just work from home – particularly those in our warehouse and production teams. That’s been one of our frustrations,” she says. “We would read these articles about this utopian working from home situation and know that’s not right.”

There has been much debate around people – particularly low earners – having to choose between following the rules around self-isolating and

going to work to earn enough to put food on their tables. But Rowlinson made sure if any of its employees needed to self-isolate, whether they or someone else in their household had symptoms, they received full pay for that period. “We recognised the value and the contribution they make to the company. They work hard and we needed to look after them,” says Ryan. “A lot of what we have done in the face of the pandemic links back to the business’s ethos – we genuinely care about each other.”

Since January, 20 per cent of the company’s workforce has needed to self-isolate on full pay at some point, ranging from two days to two weeks. As a result, the number of positive Covid cases among staff is now around a quarter of what it was between March and November last year. The reduction, says Ryan, is “because people felt they were able to do the right thing comfortably”. “We’ve not had any serious workplace transmission where we’ve had to isolate an entire group. The most important thing we did was listen to people’s

concerns and properly risk assess their roles,” she says.

As a knitwear manufacturer, Rowlinson was not considered an ‘essential’ business so, during the first lockdown last year, was forced to furlough around 80 per cent of its workforce. But it was this time out, Ryan explains, that was crucial in being able to make the premises Covid secure and recognising that checking in with employees was vital. “We’re quite a social business so, before the pandemic, we used to get everyone in a big room fairly often, tell them what was going on and answer any questions,” she says.

But when gatherings en masse were no longer an option, Ryan and her team turned to producing helpful videos for staff, disseminating them using internal communication platforms, which were particularly useful for those on furlough or not able to attend work. “They allowed us to interpret what the government was saying and explain how the rules would affect us as a business,” she says. “And seeing our managing director, for example, talking about how we’re coping and having



Nicola Ryan says becoming an employee-owned business has enabled the firm to reward its lower-paid staff

confidence in the future of the business gave people reassurance at a time when there was a lot of anxiety.”

But for Rowlinson’s 60 employees, any threat to the future of the company comes with far higher stakes. Since the formerly family-run firm implemented a 100 per cent employee-owned model in 2015, every member of staff has received a proportion of whatever profits the business makes every year. There are no individual shares, Ryan explains, with funds instead being held in a trust so that “the whole workforce can benefit”. “More than half of our colleagues are in traditionally lower-paid roles, and they’re the ones who have really worked hard to generate that profit,” she says. “Becoming an employee-owned business meant we could build a culture where we could reward those people.”

And with staff owning their own slice of the company, it’s been even more important that they’re both psychologically and physically able to do their jobs effectively. One of the biggest effects of Covid, Ryan says, was on employees’ mental health. Luckily, before the first lockdown, around two-thirds of staff had completed a two-day training course on mental health and wellbeing, which gave them the skills and techniques to listen and help each other, and to signpost people to helpful resources if they needed them. “And just like everyone else who isn’t going into their place of work, we’ve also had video catch-ups where we talk about anything but work and share things like how to get a good night’s sleep, because we know a lot of people are struggling with that at the moment,” Ryan explains.

“Creating these opportunities where people can offer advice and interact with each other has been really well received, and this is reflected in our feedback,” she adds. Overall staff satisfaction is 98 per cent, according to the latest survey, and 100 per cent of workers said they felt Rowlinson cared for their wellbeing, despite it being a challenging year.

The pandemic, Ryan says, has challenged HR departments like never before and has been a huge learning curve. But for her, the most important thing is still having a degree of flexibility, which has been – and continues to be – hugely beneficial to employees: “We may not be able to work from home, but we can still meet the needs of our people and the business.”

Softworks
Works for your workforce!



Contact us for
a Live Demo
Today!

Employee Scheduling, HR, Time & Attendance and Absence Management Solutions

Trusted by leading organisations for over 30 years



For further information about Softworks Solutions
Contact us today on 01527 888 060 (UK) | 01 286 6126 (Ireland) | hello@softworks.com

“It showed us how archaic the recruitment process was”

Covid restrictions provided the government organisation with the opportunity to future proof hiring for public sector jobs in Scotland

The problem

Lockdown has forced many HR teams to review their recruitment processes – and none more so than the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), which represents local governments in Scotland.

COSLA runs myjobscotland, a national recruitment website for public sector jobs across nearly all Scottish local authorities. Since launching in 2008, the platform not only advertises around 40,000 jobs each year, but also has an applicant tracking system that helps councils streamline their hiring process.

But when Covid hit and the prime minister issued his ‘stay at home’ message, the organisation saw an almost overnight move from 5 per cent of public sector staff working from home to more than 80 per cent. “Our issue was that we had all these

people sitting waiting to be hired, but we were no longer able to organise face-to-face interviews,” explains Douglas Shirlaw, COSLA’s chief digital officer.

With vacancies still needing to be filled despite the lockdown restrictions, the organisation had to quickly come up with an alternative process, all the while further hindered by the usual challenges of tighter council budgets and limited resources.

The solution

Like many organisations, COSLA considered making use of popular videoconferencing platforms as a virtual alternative to conducting interviews. However, this would have been difficult to streamline with its applicant tracking system, says Robyn Adamson, digital services L&D coordinator. Instead, Shirlaw and Adamson realised the

current system offered the option for candidates to add a video as part of their application, and so piloted using this with 10 councils. Candidates were asked to put a video together answering questions they would usually be asked at the interview stage. Not only was this a “relatively quick” process to roll out, Adamson says, all the data could be tracked, and hiring managers “just had to log in to the system as normal to view it, saving us time on training”.

The outcome

So far, more than 5,200 candidates have produced a video as part of their application process, and 253 roles across Scotland have been filled using this system to date.

COSLA found that the new process created greater efficiency when recruiting. For example, the time to offer for vital home carer vacancies reduced from 74 days to 15 days, and time to hire decreased from 119 days to 44 days.

Feedback from candidates has also been positive: one applicant with dyslexia said they “relished the opportunity to not

type out lengthy text responses”, Adamson explains. It also highlighted how “archaic” the recruitment process was before, she says, and that this could be the shift needed for what is typically a very traditional sector to become more digital in the future.

Shirlaw adds that given how varied public sector jobs are, managers have been generally positive about the addition of video to the application process. “It gave them a real insight into the candidate and an idea of their soft skills,” he explains. The organisation now plans to work with the remaining councils so they too can “reap the benefits”.

WORDS JYOTIRAMBHAI PHOTOGRAPHY CHRIS GORMAN/GETTY IMAGES

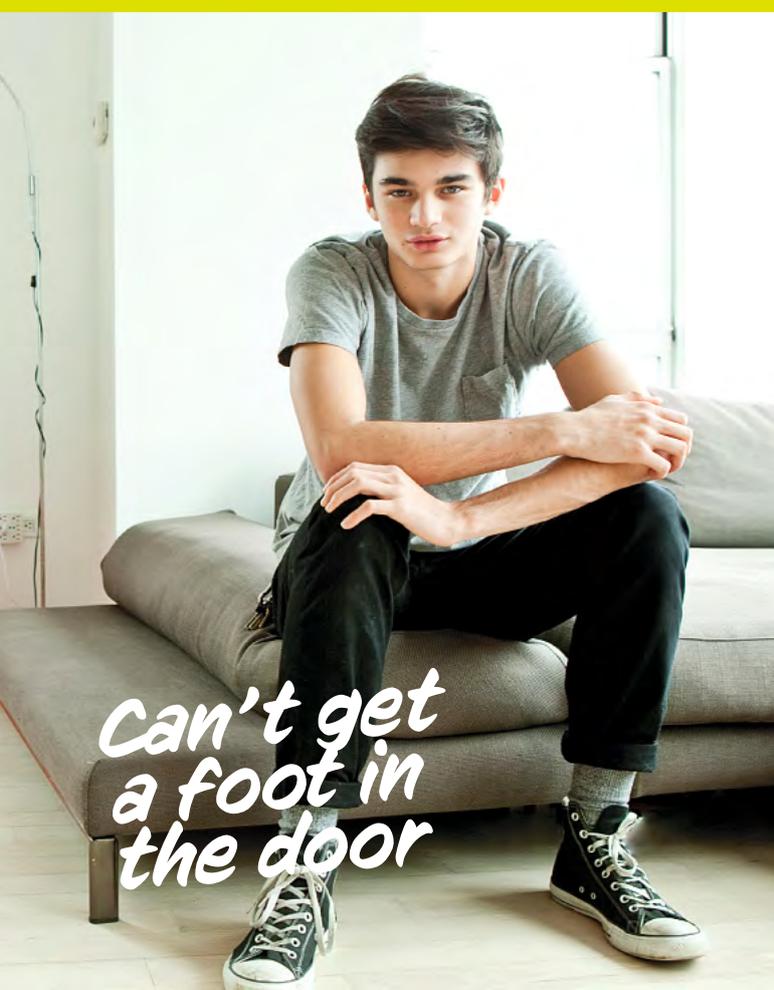




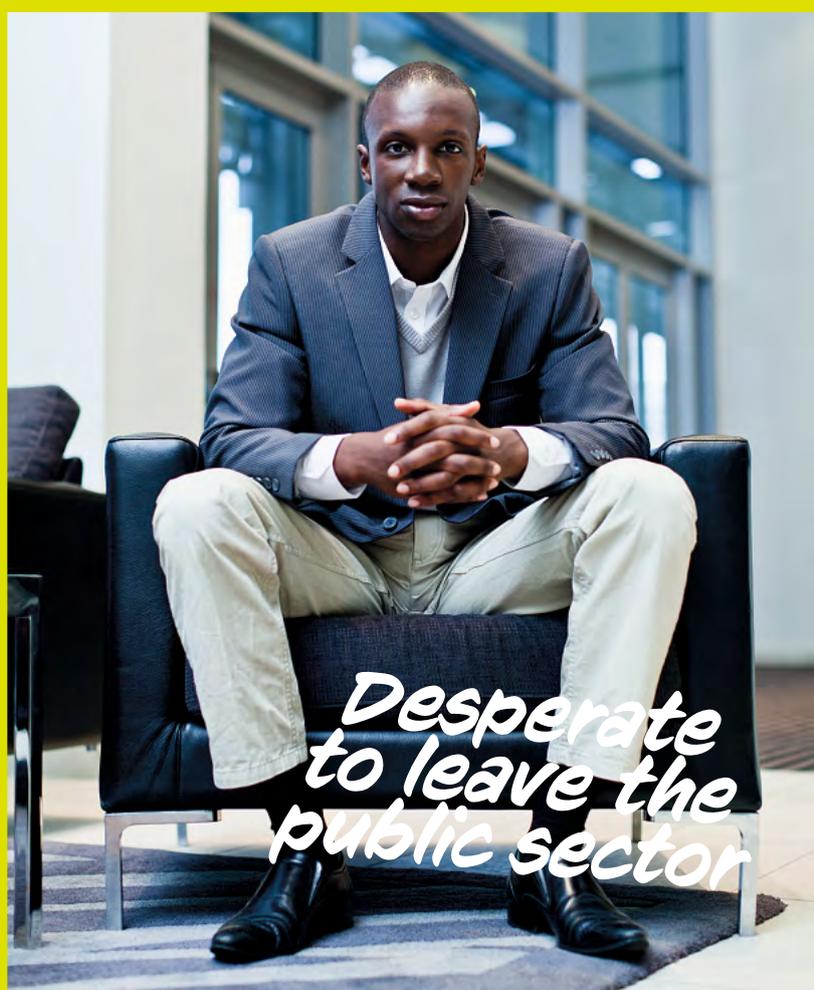
*Might not
have enough
specialist
experience*



*Worried
about coming
back after
maternity
leave*



*Can't get
a foot in
the door*

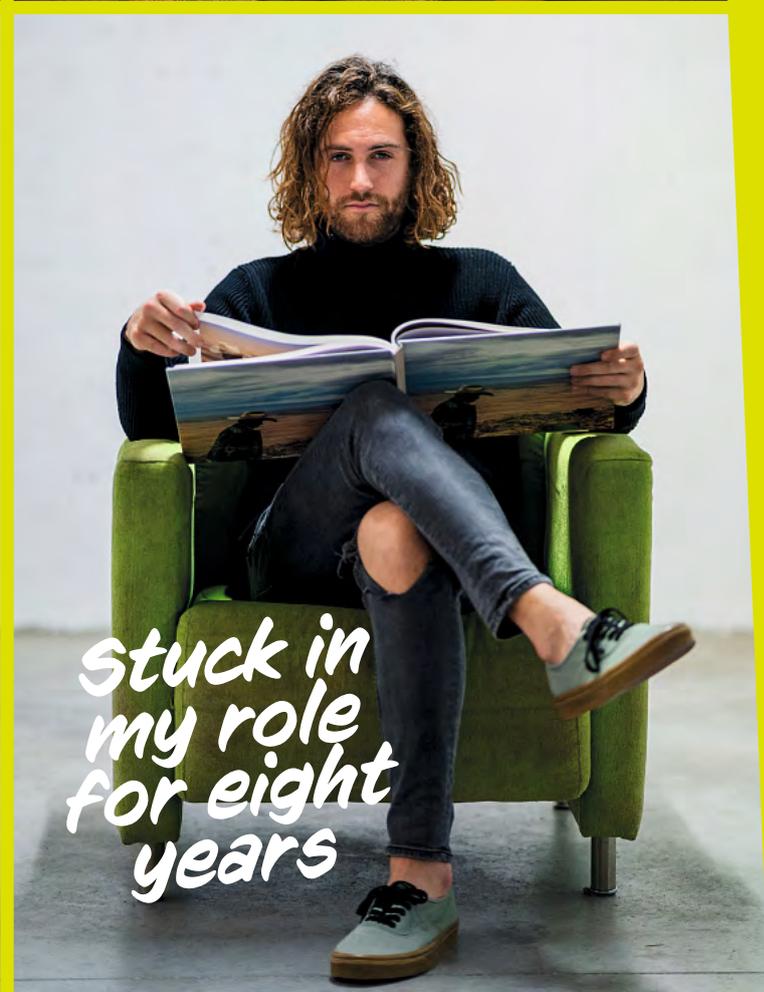


*Desperate
to leave the
public sector*



Thinking about going self-employed

Anxious about becoming a manager



Stuck in my role for eight years

Has your career stalled?

Covid has provoked a wave of career reassessing. But for HR professionals unsure where to go next, People Management solves seven of the biggest sticking points

WORDS KATIE JACOBS

As a people professional, there's a good chance you're passionate about helping others with their career development. But how much time do you spend thinking about your own? 2020 has provided many of us with the opportunity to rethink what we want from our careers and whether what we're doing now fits with our future goals, as well as reconsider how work/life balance and flexible working sit within that. And although the next 12 months still look uncertain, the glimmer of hope on the horizon means it's a good time to start thinking about what you want to achieve in the short and medium term, as well as the long term.

With that in mind, *People Management* has explored seven of the most common career crossroads for HR, complete with advice from others who have been there and done that.

1. I'm struggling to break into the people profession. How can I find my elusive first job?

Whether you're leaving full-time education or trying to move into the

profession from a different field, getting started can feel overwhelming. A pandemic and downturn make things even trickier. But before you panic, Matthew Whitfield, director and HR specialist at recruitment firm Hays, has some encouraging news. While 2020 was "the strangest recruitment market [he has] ever seen", 2021 is shaping up more positively. "There is some light at the end of the tunnel and lots of organisations are going into candidate attraction mode," he says. "It is challenging trying to break in, but there are opportunities out there."

The key word is 'perseverance'. Rakhee Patel, global people and culture partner at ISS, started off as a hotel receptionist. Knowing she wanted to break into HR, she proactively started helping out the people team, building her network inside and outside the organisation. When an HR co-ordinator role came up at a different hotel, she applied and... heard nothing. Rather than give up, she rang the HR manager and the rest is history. "It worked out because I persevered," she says. "If you see a

job you feel is right, don't give up. There are so many methods to get in touch and sell who you are."

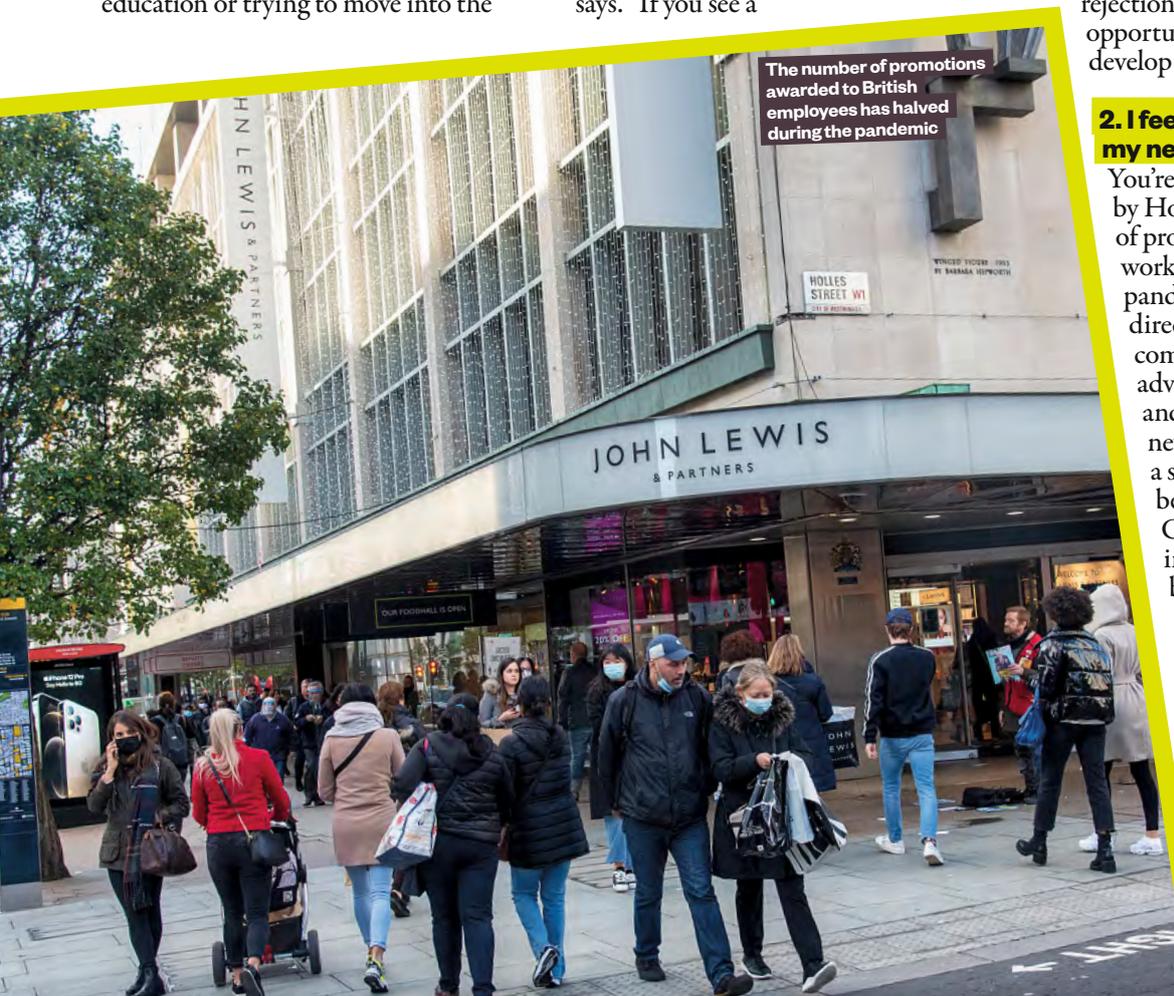
To get a foot in the door, build your experience any way you can, from placements to temporary roles. Employee relations business partner Velisa Bowlay-Williams was working on the shopfloor at John Lewis when she started helping out HR with rotas. This led to an internship elsewhere and getting her first part-time HR admin role while still at university.

You should also focus on your transferable skills. Natalie Ellis, founder of consultancy Rebox HR and author of *Launch Your HR Career*, worked as a travel agent before deciding HR was for her. Applying for roles, she focused on the skills she was confident in – customer service and relationship building – before landing an HR job. "Think about what you have to offer," she says. "Get your CV in tip-top condition, reviewed by someone else – a recruiter or a mentor." And remain resilient. Ellis was getting 10 to 15 rejections a week, but took it as an opportunity to ask for feedback and develop further.

2. I feel stuck. How can I land my next promotion?

You're not alone. A recent survey by HowNow found the number of promotions received by British workers has halved during the pandemic. Louise Sorrell, business director for HR at recruitment company Badenoch + Clark, advises being open-minded and flexible when considering new opportunities: "Could a sideways move be more beneficial than a promotion? Can you consider a new industry? Does it have to be a permanent role?"

You might need to be open to opportunities beyond the profession. Yetunde Oladipo, senior talent consultant at the Department for Work and Pensions, has left HR twice to enable career progression. "I was ready for promotion but no one





was moving on and no roles were being created,” she says. “I left HR, went on to the frontline and gained experience working in the business. That helped me move up in HR.”

Think about how you can gain experience where you are now, advises Tim Pointer, SVP for HR at brand management agency CAA-GBG. Being curious and asking the right questions could help grow your profile and influence, he says: “If you’re asking the right questions, you will often come away with new responsibilities. Lean into that.”

And take your own medicine: what coaching techniques can you use on yourself? Paula Leach, who recently left a CPO role to launch Vantage Points Consulting, uses two coaching tools: a four-box grid plotting what you are good at and less good at against what you love and don’t love doing, and vision boarding. “Own your ‘stuckness,’” she says. “It’s not anyone else’s fault. It’s not the organisation’s fault. The person who has to change it is you.”

Nebel Crowhurst, people and culture director at Roche, takes a similar approach, with a career development plan broken into short, medium and long-term goals set at the start of each year. “You have to practise what you preach,” she says. “All those hours I’ve spent career coaching other people; it would be stupid if I didn’t do it for myself.”

3. I’m considering self-employment. How can I get started?

The people profession offers multiple opportunities for self-employment and has a thriving community of independents. But being your own boss brings challenges as well as opportunities, especially in the current climate.

Alastair Swindlehurst is the owner of Swindlehurst Consulting. He made the move to self-employment in June 2018. “I was head of HR and I don’t think I was showing the best side of me,” he says. “Doing the same thing in the same office day to day was not fulfilling.” Years of networking and experience in the business process outsourcing space gave him the confidence to go it alone, and he hasn’t looked back.

But he says anyone thinking of a similar move should really question it. “It isn’t for everyone,” he says. “Some people love the support of a business behind them – there’s nothing wrong in that. Most people need to go out and generate their work. I took the approach of saying yes to every opportunity to meet people, develop business and create opportunities. You never know who people know and where it will lead.”

He has used the pandemic as an opportunity to define his true proposition, helping business owners with their people challenges, and has set up another business: EZHR. “Know what you can contribute and be confident about that,” he advises. “If you present yourself as an expert on everything it can undermine what you excel at. Don’t give away your time cheaply. And get a good accountant.”

For Mandy Coalter, founder of education sector HR consultancy Talent Architects, the driver was work/life balance, having been an HR director for more than 15 years. “I wanted control over my working life,” she says. “Having worked in the education sector for a long time and published a book, people were asking me for support. I saw I could have a bigger impact and a better balance.”

Her key advice? “You have to be able to cope with peaks and troughs, in workload and finances. Have a safety net to give peace of mind. Learn how to market yourself, but focus on relationships rather than the hard sell. And be very clear about your USP: know when to turn work down.”

4. I’m about to come back from parental leave. How can I get back into work?

It’s normal to feel apprehensive. Julianne Miles, co-founder and CEO of Women Returners, points out

that professionals returning to work after an extended break face multiple personal and structural challenges, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic. “Personally, some of the biggest challenges are internal,” she says. “After a long period out of the corporate world, it’s easy to lose your ‘professional identity’ and confidence.” Structural challenges around caring commitments and lack of flexible working compound these worries.

If you’re looking for work, Miles advises focusing on what you bring rather than what you lack, creating a list of achievements and identifying your strengths. Use specialist sites like Timewise, Working Mums and Ten2Two to search for flexible opportunities, as well as Women Returners for lists of organisations offering returnships.

Coming back to the workplace, think about how to regain your professional identity: read industry news, consider L&D options, network and arrange to ‘talk shop’ with current or former

colleagues. But Miles warns: “Don’t put unrealistic pressure on yourself – either to quickly find a job or to immediately hit the ground running when you’re back at work.”

Valerie Hughes D’Aeth, former CHRO at the BBC and now pursuing a

portfolio career, has taken maternity leave three times. If you are yet to go on leave, she suggests deciding how much you want to be involved in work while you are away (do you want to be contacted by your team? Do you want to use your ‘keep in touch’ days?). Before returning, meet with your manager and honestly discuss what you are coming back to.

Hughes D’Aeth took a step back when she returned after having her first child. “I went from being UK HR director to managing a project. It’s not all about status, but broadening your skills,” she says. Your confidence might take a bit of a knock, but remind yourself what you add. As she puts it: “You bring a fresh breadth of perspective, rather than being down in the weeds.”

**“Own your
‘stuckness’.
It’s not anyone
else’s fault – it’s
you who must
change”**

CIPD

*Championing better
work and working lives*

CIPD Online Student Conference
20 March 2021

Inspiring you to be your best

Our Student Conference will bring together hundreds of students and early-career professionals from across the UK and Ireland to explore the big and emerging workplace themes such as:

- Inclusion and diversity
- Wellbeing
- Learning and development
- Career support
- Ethical practice.

Get excited – build your network, knowledge and skills to excel in your studies and future career.

Book today from only £20

cipd.co.uk/stuconf21

Despite their transferable skills, HR professionals can find it difficult to move into the financial services sector

5. I want to move sectors, but job adverts always insist on industry experience. Is there any way around this?

One of the best things about a career in the people profession is that it is transferable across all sectors. But the narrow views of some hiring managers can make this easier said than done.

Sorrell acknowledges it can be a challenge, particularly for juniors and in sectors such as financial and professional services. If you are passionate about moving to a sector, be specific, she advises, and don't dilute it by applying to lots of other sectors. Be clear in conversations with recruiters and in applications. Use your network: do you know anyone in that sector who could help you? And use your recruitment agency. As Sorrell says: "It's easier for us to bring you to life for hiring managers."

Laura Walker, consultant, coach and specialist in mid-life careers, has worked across various sectors, from financial services to retail, aerospace to pharmaceuticals. "I've always made it an advantage on my CVs and in interviews," she says. "Once you've done it, it's easier to do it again. Emphasise your transferable skills." She advises moving earlier in your career if you can and before you've spent five years in one sector: "If you've worked in one company for 20 years, people might find it hard to

believe you're committed to moving to another sector."

However, Leach managed a move into the CPO role at the Home Office after 18 years at Ford. "In those 18 years, I moved context lots of times – supporting different functions, living in different countries and doing different aspects of HR," she says. "Even if you work in one sector, you can find diverse experiences."

Similarly, Hughes D'Aeth, who has worked across technology, construction and media to name but three sectors, advises looking for experience where you are: "Think about moving around divisions. If you are in the construction sector but want to get into technology, can you be HRBP for the IT department?"

"Don't take no for an answer," she adds. "Keep marketing yourself and showing your passion for the sector. I had no media experience before the BBC, but it didn't take that long to learn. HR is transferable: people are people."

6. I'm about to start my first leadership role. How do I step up?

There's a difference between managing and leading – something that can take some adjusting to. "Management is about having a team, objectives and a budget. Leadership is about the vision, creating something for people to follow,

coaching and delegating," says Hughes D'Aeth. That means letting go of the day to day, which can be a challenge. Recalling her first leadership role, setting up recruitment teams across Europe, she admits that "letting go and trusting others was the hardest part".

"We think leadership is about having more control, but it's all about letting go," agrees Leach. "Taking on the CPO

role at the Home Office, there was loads I didn't know. I had 350 people working for me – who all knew more than me. I had to trust others. I was transparent about what I needed and what I could give. Leadership is a collaboration."

Looking back on her first leadership role, as head of HR in a local authority, Coalter admits she made "loads of mistakes". "The biggest mistake was thinking I had to be the person who had all the answers," she says. "It's about leading through people." This means not being afraid to surround yourself with people who are better than you.

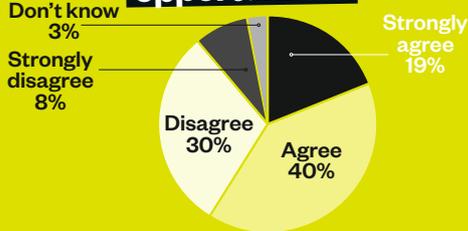
If you want to practise your leadership skills before getting the role, Hughes D'Aeth suggests volunteering to chair meetings or lead smaller projects, but believes it is difficult to fully comprehend before actually doing it. Pointer advises ▶

"We think leadership is about gaining control - but it's all about letting go"

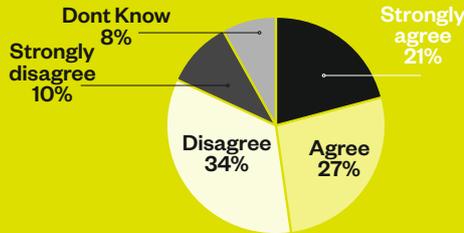
We surveyed *People Management* readers about how coronavirus has helped or hindered their professional development

The pandemic has meant...

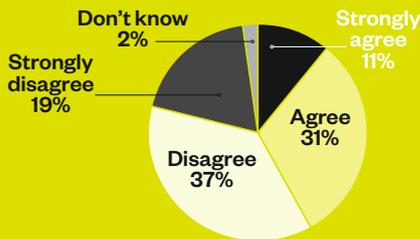
...my organisation hasn't been able to offer as many L&D opportunities



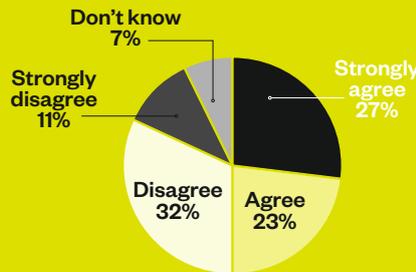
...my organisation has offered fewer opportunities for promotion



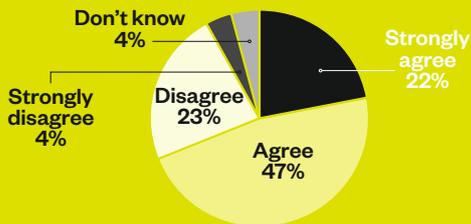
...I've had more time to spend on my own professional L&D than I would have normally



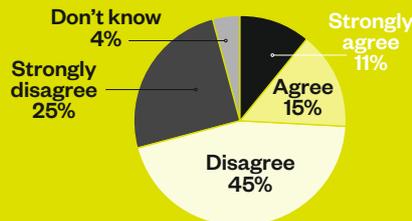
...my organisation hasn't been able to offer pay rises



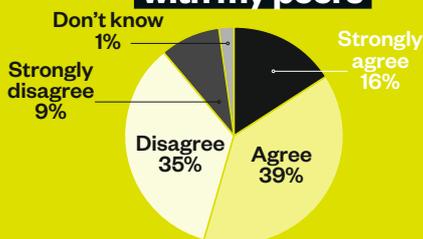
...I've taken more responsibility for my own professional L&D than I did before



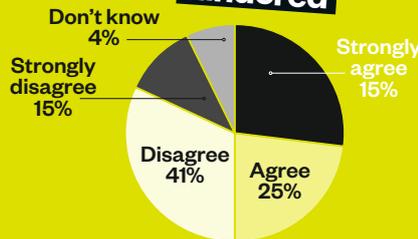
...I've had to cancel or postpone a major career move or decision



...I've made more of an effort to network online with my peers



...generally speaking, my career progress has been hindered



identifying leaders you admire and who energise you, and working out what it is that makes them so special. "That will help you work out what kind of leader you want to be," he says.

7. I've only ever worked as a generalist. Should I get specialist experience?

It only takes a glance at the CIPD Profession Map to show what a rich diversity of specialisms exist in the people profession, from L&D to I&D, reward to talent management. You need to think about what you want long term.

If your ultimate ambition is to get into an HR director role, you'll need certain building blocks. Crowhurst started off as a talent and learning specialist, but knew she wanted a senior leadership role. "The reality is: there are fewer senior leadership roles as a specialist," she says. "If you want to be a leader, you need to have generalist experience. If I'd stayed in L&D, it would have been hard to get a director role." She advises finding ways to gain that experience by helping out your colleagues. In earlier L&D roles she offered to take notes during restructuring meetings and consultations, giving her insight into a different side of HR. "When you hit something like a reorg, it's all hands on deck," she says. "Your HR colleagues will be delighted to have help."

Hughes D'Aeth advises trying out different specialisms early in your career, as it can become more difficult as you climb the ladder. "I was advised by a mentor early on that if I wanted to get to the top of the profession, I had to get stronger reward experience," she recalls. "I thought I knew it all, but I had no idea. When you get to CHRO level, not having credibility around a RemCo can really sink you."

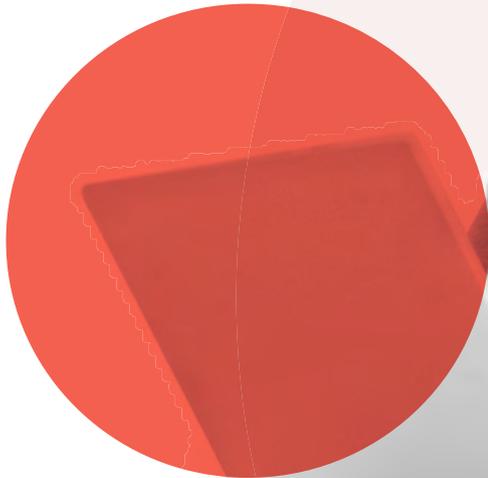
Patel feels you don't need to settle on either one specialism or being a generalist too early. "I was told not to be pigeon-holed," she says. "The work we do in HR is evolving all the time." She advises looking at different job descriptions and identifying where your gaps are, and aligning these with the CIPD Profession Map. And thanks to the magic of social media, there's nothing to stop you forensically examining the career paths of people you admire and would like to emulate. **PM**

* For more career guidance, watch the CIPD's webinar series 'Building your career 2021' at bit.ly/CIPDCareerBuilder

**Confidence in complexity.
Superiority in service.
Perfection in payroll.**

Zellis Managed Services

Contact us for a
free consultation at
www.zellis.com



zellis.com

zellis





essential resources for a winning HR career

People Management has handpicked a selection of books, podcasts and apps (and more) to lift your professional development



TedX Talk

Why specialising early doesn't always mean career success

David Epstein

Science journalist Epstein explains why specialising too early in your career may be detrimental to progress later on, and advocates a 'sampling period' of trying new skills and experiences.

bit.ly/EpsteinSpecialising



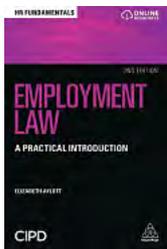
Podcast

Learning & Development Stories

Kevin Anselmo

The Florida-based learning consultant's podcast speaks to L&D pros about how they've leveraged learning to progress their careers.

Via any podcast provider



Book

Employment Law: A Practical Introduction

Elizabeth Aylott

It's an area that can trip up even the most experienced HR pro, but Aylott's guide offers excellent grounding in the basics for those developing their career.

bit.ly/EmploymentLawAylott



Webinar

How to Become an HR Consultant

HR Recruit

A panel of four established HR consultants explain the ins and outs of building a career as a successful freelance people professional, and offer advice for those considering making the move.

bit.ly/HRConsultantWebinar



Podcast

HR Uprising

Lucinda Garney

The business psychologist's podcast aims to empower people professionals to learn through collaboration and build their confidence to progress with a mixture of topic-led episodes and interviews with thought leaders.

Via any podcast provider



Website

Career options in the people profession

CIPD

The CIPD's careers site is a one-stop shop, including explanations of the 12 career areas and the Profession Map.

bit.ly/CIPDCareersSite

Career resources

Book

She's Back

Lisa Unwin and Deb Khan

Hailed as a 'must read' for mothers looking to get back into work after having a family, *She's Back* draws on the authors' collective six decades of experience and their difficulties re-entering the world of work.

bit.ly/ShesBackBook



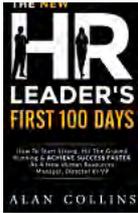
Book

The New HR Leader's First 100 Days

Alan Collins

Aiming to get HR managers off to a flying start during the first few months of their leadership role, Collins offers tips on building a team, prioritising projects, creating trust and more.

bit.ly/First100DaysBook



App

Magpie for L&D

Filtered

An AI-based tool built specifically for learning and development, Magpie promises to bring "deeply personalised" content curated specifically for you – just tell it about your role and your goals. The more you use it, the more it learns about what you find useful.

bit.ly/MagpieLAndD

Book

Launch Your HR Career

Natalie Ellis

Sometimes, the biggest career hurdle is landing your first job. HR consultant Ellis's guide offers advice on interviews, qualifications, mental health, networking and more.

and more.

bit.ly/LaunchHRCareerBook



Slipper sales went up by



1,291%

in 2020

Lockdown may have been lucrative for casualwear retailers, but it's meant adoption of true flexible working has stalled. So how can HR get it back on the right track?

WORDS JO FARAGHER

It's been described as the 'great home working experiment', a lightbulb moment where managers suddenly realised that jobs can be done flexibly, a turning point for equality at work. But has this really been the case? "If it's been an experiment, it's been an inefficient one with no planning and no end date," says Gemma Dale, lecturer at Liverpool John Moores University and author of *Flexible Working: How to Implement Flexibility in the Workplace to Improve Employee and Business Performance*.

"We need to stop using this term now. Normally we'd implement home or flexible working in a strategic and organised way rather than sending everyone home and sorting it out after. All we've done is lift and shift what we do in the office to the home, rather than look at the way we actually work."

While it might not have been the most scientific of trials, some still hail the pandemic as a game changer for flexible working adoption. CIPD research shows that the reality for many is quite different, however. Just under a fifth of respondents in a recent survey said their organisation did not offer any flexible working arrangements, while fewer than a third of employers planned to introduce more forms of flexible working (beyond home working) in the next six to 12 months. And while stories abound about toddlers crashing Zoom calls and managers holding meetings from their bedrooms, more than two in five (44 per cent) employees have not worked at home at all during the crisis, according to the CIPD. Claire McCartney, senior policy adviser for resourcing and inclusion, says there is a danger of creating divisions and

feelings of unfairness if organisations fail to recognise that flexible working does not necessarily equal working from home. "We need to open up managers' minds to the different types of flexibility they can offer, whether that's a job share or giving staff more control over shifts. Employees who feel more in control tend to have a better work/life balance," she says.

In February, the CIPD launched its #FlexFrom1st campaign to make the right to request flexible working available from the first day of employment, rather than the current threshold of 26 weeks.

In some ways, the sudden switch from the office has set the cause of flexible working back, says Claire Campbell, programme director at flexible working consultancy Timewise. Concerns about meeting deadlines and job security have led

“JOB DESIGN IS KEY”

How HMRC crafted a flexible workforce fit for the future

HMRC has undoubtedly been one of the busiest government departments since Covid struck. CEO Jim Harra has said that policies and rules for financial support schemes introduced by the chancellor were “largely devised on the kitchen tables and in the home offices of HMRC staff”.

Around 80 per cent of its 64,000-strong workforce were working from home most or all of the time within a week of lockdown, according to Gillian Smith, deputy director of diversity and inclusion. HMRC had already done a lot of work on implementing technology to support this shift to home working, and offered a range of flexible working patterns. Although more women than men work at the department overall, it has made changes over the past five years to increase female applications, with graduate intake rising from 24 per cent women to 49 per cent. Flexible working helps to retain those women and ensure they can progress into more senior roles.

“Job design is key, as is challenging hiring managers’ preconceptions about person specifications and role fit,” says Smith. The civil service has been a pioneer in job sharing, launching a job share tool in 2015 so employees can look for roles and find a potential job share partner.

“Advertising the flexibility that we offer is important, not only for those looking for flexible patterns now, but for those who may wish to do so in the future. Many colleagues join us on a full-time basis because they know that, if and when their circumstances change, our policies will support them to make adjustments to their working patterns. We specifically target job adverts to people returning to the workplace after taking time out for childcare or other caring roles,” she adds.

Flexibility has helped all employees, not just women, deal with the challenges of the pandemic. “Many have shared with me how more flexibility has enabled them to strike a better balance, and how their line managers have been open and responsive to requests for flexibility,” says Smith. “Disabled staff and carers in particular have told me the increased flexibility has enabled them to manage better. They feel better supported and engaged, and as a result see opportunities they had not previously seen for using their talents and flourishing in their careers.”

many working parents to put in a full shift of homeschooling before starting an eight-hour work day in the afternoon, while there have been reports of extreme monitoring by managers who have demanded employees are ‘live’ on Zoom during normal working hours. “Anything about enforced home working isn’t the way we’d see true flexible working,” says Campbell. “What it has done, however, is break down the idea that only some jobs can be done from home. We’ve shown we can work productively and we’ve developed workarounds for some of the barriers that came up before.”

Paul Hamer, CEO of construction company Sir Robert McAlpine (SRM), admits there was an element of “making this up as we go along” when the lockdown restrictions hit last March. “We found ourselves in this situation we were unprepared for; we reacted and acted quickly,” he says. “But normally in business there’s a precedent you can refer to – a previous recession.”

Hamer is keen that his firm does not spring back to how it was before, and flexible working is now being built into how it does business – even for roles that pre-Covid might have been argued as impossible to do flexibly. He adds: “There are elements of job design and work patterns that lend themselves to flexibility

“Employees who feel more in control tend to have a better work/life balance”

– I can work from home more easily than a construction manager who physically needs to be on site, for example. But we’re asking our people to design our flexible working culture – to tell us how working patterns can be changed.” There are two elements to this: an internal flexible working survey to identify the opportunities and challenges, followed by pilots of working models. Hamer has no expectations that

flexibility at SRM will look the same as it does at other firms. “It’s not a failure if we implement flexibility in a different way,” he says. “We’ll do the pilots, understand the implications, consider what it means for our strategy and recruitment. In some cases jobs could change significantly.”

Like SRM, many businesses are turning to employee surveys to gauge how their staff want to work in a post-Covid world. These tend to focus on how employees wish to split their week, whether they’d feel more comfortable with more days in the office than at home, or vice versa. Increasingly, employees are keen for a hybrid of home working, with time in the office for collaboration and cultural bonding, but this is where the challenge lies. “What most people want is blended, and that’s hard,” adds Dale. “We’ll need new ways to manage performance and to avoid presence bias, as managers who are



Construction firm Sir Robert McAlpine is asking its employees to design its flexible working culture

in the office will automatically default to the people they see.”

Lucy Adams, founder of HR consultancy Disruptive HR, warns against giving in to a complacency that cultures have changed because staff have more freedom to choose where they work. “On the surface there has been a disappearance of objections, but I’m not sure those old assumptions have gone away,” she says. “Some organisations are approaching the return but applying old thinking. ‘We’ll allow someone to work from home for a couple of days’ is not the same as stepping back, looking at when and where we work best, and building your strategy from there.”

Nick Bacon, professor of human resource management at City University’s Cass Business School, argues that it’s too early to make rigid plans for new working plans or locations. “For a lot of client-facing roles, it will depend on what the customer wants – you might need to meet them and fit in with their time scales,” he says. “Also, we don’t know what the price of office space will be in a year’s time, yet many employers are closing down offices. It’s genuinely still very early.”

Consulting firm PwC is one such client-facing business facing these dilemmas. It continues to open new offices, but they are built around collaboration rather than quiet workstations, explains Sarah Churchman, chief inclusion, community and wellbeing officer. The company is looking at how it advocates fair work, so projects go to people based on their skills and experience, regardless of their working patterns or location. It’s not just about how salaried employees work either – drawing on a network of contingent workers and consultants means the firm will be able to respond to clients’ needs in an agile way. “Flexibility is not a straight line,” she says. “We’re looking at resourcing engagements on fairness rather than convenience, so leaders aren’t choosing people because they’ve worked with them before.”

She acknowledges that managers are often the gatekeepers of (or barriers to) flexibility, and there is an ongoing shift in focus in the business towards deliverables rather than counting hours. In leadership training, managers are encouraged to think about times when they performed at their best: “This tends to be when

they were trusted or allowed to stretch themselves, rather than someone looking over their shoulders all the time. We’re encouraging them to realise that people work well in different ways.”

Bacon says this mindset shift needs to happen before organisations can embrace true flexibility. “Managers have to get used to having conversations with employees rather than dropping in on them – to rely on outputs without observing them,” he advises, highlighting the increased regularity of contact managers have had with their teams over the course of the pandemic. But with that, organisations will have to consider how new approaches to flexibility affect existing processes around performance management and reward. “We know home working can be more productive than being in the office, but it does affect your promotion opportunities,” he adds. “Virtual appraisals tend to be scored lower than face-to-face ones, so there could be a promotion penalty.”

So what does this mean for existing policies around flexible working and how employees request it?

McCartney advises employers to look at what they currently offer, but crucially also how they advertise it. “Think about how you communicate it even before that first day,” she says. “A survey can help you build a response without guaranteeing arrangements, but can also help you see how practices might differ. Don’t take for granted that everyone will want to work from home.” If someone asks to work in a certain way, she adds, piloting it can show up any aspects that need to be adapted without formalising it.

One of the challenges is that policies and approaches have often been built around working time expectations that date back to the industrial revolution, Dale adds: “We’re moving beyond the 9 to 5 when we all had to go to the same place at the same time to ‘do work’; technology has allowed us to do that. People have been using this time to discover they’re a morning person, or they come alive at 10pm or they like working in short bursts. We will never embrace flexible working until we embrace asynchronous working.”

Insurance giant Zurich rolled out a company-wide flexible working programme in 2015 but discovered that, for managers to really embrace it, it would require a slightly different approach. “We soon noticed that pick-up globally could be improved, which is why we launched ‘Flexwork 2.0,’” says Dr Katja Raithel, group head of diversity, inclusion and wellbeing. In 2019 it started six-month trials in selected countries, collecting data locally to monitor progress and adapt if needed. Culturally, there needed to be a shift in mindset among managers to focus on outputs rather than inputs before it could be a success. Simply rolling out online collaboration tools is not enough, she adds: “One of the things that became visible during the pilot phase was that training our employees in technology and online tools is imperative, both to ensure they are used optimally and to create the right environment for collaboration and brainstorming.”

Zurich is also very explicit about the opportunities to work flexibly at the company: it recently reported a 20 per cent jump in women applying for senior roles after it altered the wording in its vacancies.

The businesses that offer true flexible working will be the ones willing to be

creative and try things out, as Zurich has. Timewise has been working with public service organisations, for example, that are reconsidering their opening hours and how this might offer both staff and customers more options to access them and, in some parts of the NHS, managers are taking team-based approaches to rostering using technology to assign hours based on employees’ preferences. “Ultimately it comes down to leadership having a unified view of what things should look like and having conversations early on about working patterns so they can build this into how they resource teams and projects,” says Campbell.

The pandemic has led many businesses to think they’ve cracked flexible working – but as the labour market begins to move again and employees vote with their feet, we’ll see whether they were right.

* Find out more about the CIPD’s #FlexFrom1st campaign at cipd.co.uk/FlexFrom1st, and see page 12

“People have found they’re a morning person, or they come alive at 10pm”



Mentoring with someone experienced can be useful for young career starters



HOW TO TREAT YOUNG RECRUITS PROPERLY (EVEN IN A PANDEMIC)

Career starters taking on their first jobs remotely have had it tough. But employers can make sure they don't miss out on vital experience

WORDS ELIZABETH HOWLETT

The first day of a new job is a ritualistic experience. You tentatively meet your new line manager, the rest of the team – most of whose names you fail to remember – and you're given a series of inductions. If you're lucky, there is some form of social gathering to welcome you into the fold, and you start to get a handle on the company culture as the weeks progress.

But the tried and tested blueprint for those vital first few weeks has been turned on its head during the Covid pandemic, as most places of work are closed and team meetings are confined to screens. Even experienced workers starting a new job are struggling through virtual inductions, networking on video calls and picking up snippets of the culture through emojis and instant messaging. "Many of us have done some form of online working or remote working before," says Stephen Isherwood, chief executive of the Institute of Student Employers. But what about those only just starting out?

There is, he points out, a new generation of workers who have little to no experience in a physical workplace: "Employers have taken on graduates, apprentices and early career starters who have been recruited online, onboarded online and are now working online – and they know no different. That's the reality at the moment, so this is a tricky situation for those hiring early talent."

It would be remiss of employers to overlook the advantages of being in a physical workplace for a new recruit in their first role, and early starters are already feeling the strain of the virtual workplace. Matthew Howard, undergraduate careers manager at Lancaster University Management School and a member of the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS), says in comparison to their experienced colleagues, young new starters are on the back foot when it comes to making connections online. "Students are struggling to grasp behaviours and practices [in the virtual workplace]. A lot of what you learn in those first few weeks of a new job is by seeing what other people are doing, but they can't mirror behaviours from more senior colleagues," he says, speaking from experience with his own students.

Isherwood highlights that employers must virtually plug the gap left by ad-hoc learning opportunities and general working know-how usually achieved by being in the workplace. "The challenge for new joiners, particularly those who have just started their career, is understanding the cultural aspects of an organisation, which are much harder to absorb when you're not on the premises," he says. "Especially the at-desk learning, the briefings you get from meetings, and all those water cooler moments that are difficult to replicate online." ▶

PICTORIAL PRESS LTD/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Future-proof your organisation

We partner with hundreds of organisations every year to build the capability of their HR, L&D and people management teams.

cipd.co.uk/employers

So how can HR show young recruits the ropes – both formally and informally – in a virtual world? Employers shouldn't be hoping for miracles when it comes to replacing face-to-face mentorship and learning, says Claire Oliver, head of HR at Troup Bywaters + Anders, which took on a cohort of 10 apprentices in July 2020. But she points out that there are digital workarounds with mentorships and buddy systems. "Our apprentices have an apprentice mentor, which is either a former apprentice or an apprentice who is further down the line in their apprenticeship journey," says Oliver. But, she adds, you can't replace a face-to-face relationship online: "Even just watching how your co-workers act and behave from a professional standpoint in the office can't be replicated virtually. Technology has allowed us to set up regular touch points between experienced apprentices and our new cohort, but face-to-face mentorship can't be replaced."

However, Kate Ross, manager of IBM's early professionals programme, explains that the company's take on welcoming early professionals has enabled it to "up the personal contact" and create a community of early career hires within the business. "Unlike our experienced recruits, we invite our early career hires to introductory group video calls and Facebook groups so they can meet people," says Ross. "If they're too nervous on day one they can't participate, and if they can't participate they can't learn. Our main objective with our early professionals is to make sure they are learning so they can perform."

Ross says IBM's induction period, which lasts 10 days, aims to "imbue the culture and spirit of collaboration, teamwork and self-reliance" so new starters come away feeling secure: "That's really different from an experienced hire; you wouldn't need to do that to the same extent for them."

These new ways of making connections and establishing mentoring schemes are vital during the pandemic, says Lucy Everett, employer engagement manager for The University of Edinburgh's careers

service and co-chair of the AGCAS employer engagement task group, because they help to replicate casual learning opportunities. "Establishing mentoring relationships, setting up explicit buddy systems or organising regular virtual tea breaks can enable ad-hoc, casual learning to happen," explains Everett. "We've all realised the benefit of those conversations over the desk or in the kitchen, and that is lacking in a virtual world. Employers need to put more thought into how they can create those opportunities."

Mentoring has also proved effective for Sharon Blyfield, HR business partner at Coca-Cola European Partners, who encouraged her apprentices to connect virtually. "We've been able to buddy up our new apprentices with existing apprentices to help them with learning about the world of work, because what they want is someone they can relate to," she says. "Some of our existing apprentices had to do quite a bit of their apprenticeship remotely too, so they have experience of what's needed in both a physical and virtual workplace."

But ensuring that new hires are connected, supported and still gaining casual learning experiences is only half the battle for businesses. Remote working in the pandemic has exposed inequalities, such as a lack of a proper working environment or tools that employers should be mindful of. Elaine Boyes, executive director at AGCAS, points out that the pandemic has given rise to the potential for inequality for early talent around digital poverty. "We don't yet know if it is going to make those inequalities worse," she says. "Employers need to ensure they are giving everyone the same opportunities when it comes to the digital divide. But not all companies are able to provide equipment."

This view is echoed by Isherwood, who raises concerns around mental health ▶

Employers need to ensure they are giving everyone the same opportunities"

Hiring career starters remotely in practice: PwC

"One of the biggest challenges for early career starters is building a network," says Victoria Robinson, partner at PwC. To combat the difficulties new starters face with establishing working relationships and engaging with company culture while working remotely, the firm – having onboarded 1,400 graduates and school leavers since March 2020 – designed a virtual space called The Park to bridge the gap between the physical and virtual workplaces.

"Candidates can create avatars to explore The Park, which simulates an office experience. They can go into different rooms, listen to lectures and have breakout sessions with the community," explains Robinson, who admits she "danced on the beach" when she was last on the platform.

Having welcomed more than 7,000 students through its virtual doors, The Park replaces water cooler moments and has the potential to deliver casual learning opportunities thanks to a proximity feature enabling users to listen in to conversations. "If you are within hearing range of a conversation you can listen in, but if you choose to walk away the conversation fades out, as it would in the real world," says Robinson. The Park also connects students with their line manager, other employees and HR professionals to answer any questions they may have.

Robinson says the pandemic has meant early career starters are not easily able to build networks and lack the opportunity to learn by osmosis. "Even with the best will it is difficult to replicate some of those virtually, but I think they will catch up and adapt to new ways of working," she says. "They potentially have a head start compared to people who are further along in their career and used to working in more traditional ways."





Young recruits will benefit from one-to-one support, even if it can't be in person

and wellbeing for those not able to access suitable places to work. “New career starters have less access to somewhere where it’s easy to work from home, which is sometimes different to those later on in their careers,” he says. “It’s not just the technology, but the working environment, as they could be back home or in shared accommodation. It’s about recognising they may have different living circumstances that may get in the way of getting work done. Employers need to think about home circumstances and factor those in.”

Oliver’s apprentice cohort was able to attend the office and meet with IT to ensure they had the correct equipment, but further lockdown measures this year have meant closing the office to those who needed it. “We did encourage our apprentices who can’t effectively work from home to attend the office when they could, but now we are in lockdown that isn’t happening,” she explains. “We have learned the benefits of remote working, but equally the parts that have lacked, so there is a challenge to make sure apprentices are progressing in a remote environment, and not just standing still.”

Looking further ahead as Covid’s new starters progress through their careers,

their experiences of virtual workplaces, including digital poverty and unsuitable working conditions, while far from advantageous, could come with some

positives, and it’s possible the pandemic will create a new generation of workers with different skillsets and attributes. Graduates entering the pandemic workplace, says Howard, are likely to have higher levels of resilience and adaptability.

“The next cohort of

new starters will definitely be the most resilient,” he predicts. “Adapting to any recruitment process, transitioning to a remote workplace and starting a new job with ease will be strong skills for them. There will be elements of remote working after the pandemic and the new starters will be equipped to deal with the new way of working.”

Everett agrees that the experience of the pandemic, alongside completing any kind of degree or apprenticeship remotely, means they will be highly skilled in remote working compared to their older, more experienced counterparts. She adds, however, that employers “need to be mindful of the transition back to the office as it will be a very different experience for them”.

But above all, the new generation of workers’ heightened resilience, adaptability and proficiency in remote working will be advantageous for businesses, especially those struggling with their talent pipelines. The pandemic has impacted recruitment across all sectors and, according to Isherwood, transferable skills are going to be highly sought after. “Employers recognise that the graduates they are hiring now will be junior managers three years down the line, and they will need that talent pipeline there for when the market opens up again,” he says.

“The challenge for sectors that have been hit hard will be in several years’ time, when they need people at a more experienced level. You can always recruit raw talent coming fresh out of university or apprenticeships but, when you want people with years of experience, that’s when new hires that employers make now will start to pay back the investment made in them.”

Although it’s tempting to put early careers recruitment on hold until the Covid storm has passed, if industries don’t invest in early talent now, Isherwood says, they won’t have enough experienced people to take advantage when the inevitable recruitment upturn arrives. Quite simply, he adds, “they will be in trouble”. **PM**

“The next cohort of new starters will definitely be the most resilient”

Think you know it all? Think again.

Stay ahead of the curve with
the latest tips, tricks and trends
from HR game changers at:



Create your free account today

bit.ly/pminsight

WEBINARS | EXPERT REPORTS | SHORT READS | RESEARCH

Career path

Helping you get further

Reviews: Clive Lewis explains how firms can clamp down on toxic workplaces

p50

Masterclass

How to support bereaved employees



Ken Akers
Head of HR at
Marie Curie

The pandemic has brought to light our own mortality and wellbeing. As a result, there is a heightened focus on bereavement and grief in the workplace, which can impact people very differently. The reaction can be immediate, or happen unexpectedly or after a long period of time, and can also be triggered in different ways at different times.

This can lead to employees underperforming, being unable to focus or handle certain situations when they are under pressure, and it can put a strain on working relationships because people can become withdrawn. They may feel like they can't carry on with their work or, alternatively, may want to carry on as a distraction from the loss itself, but it can also alter the way a person feels towards their work and colleagues.

The variety of potential reactions to the loss of a loved one is what makes discussing the matter so worrying for both



colleagues and managers, but there are things we can all do to make sure that, if someone does experience a bereavement,

“Grief can impact people very differently”

the response is a good one. At Marie Curie we have tailored our bereavement policies to start from a position of trust, in which we encourage employees to feel they can trust us, and vice versa. There are a number of ways to establish a trusting relationship, such as not avoiding difficult talking points, having open and honest conversations and listening to what is going on. If you know, or even suspect,

someone has suffered a bereavement, you should sensitively ask the employee and offer condolences, but avoid making assumptions based on your own experiences or what you have read on grief.

First, managers should get that person's permission to communicate what is going on to the wider team so others can be supportive and understanding of the situation, especially if there has been a drop in their productivity or in the quality of their work.

We've changed the rigidity around time off for bereavement – grief is not always a linear or immediate reaction, and some people may defer their true grieving if they are caught up in arranging the funeral, while others may not grieve until an anniversary comes around. We agreed a bereavement policy that time could be taken up to 56 weeks after the death, and also allowed bereavement leave before the death of a loved one. Ultimately, when someone they love has died, employees want their employer to say: 'Don't worry, we will make sure you are supported.'

Taking it further

Read
→ The CIPD's guide to compassionate bereavement support
bit.ly/BereavementSupportCIPD

Listen
→ Supporting bereaved employees podcast by XpertHR
bit.ly/BereavementSupportXpertHR

Watch
→ Three ways companies can support grieving employees Ted Talk by Tilak Mandadi
bit.ly/SupportTilak



Phone
→ Marie Curie's bereavement support line is available on 0800 090 2309

Who I am

Amy Winder

HR officer at The Skinners' Kent Academy

After I left university, I took on a customer service job in a housing association and was promoted to team leader after a year. All of the managers in the organisation had a huge amount of HR tasks delegated to them, so I was responsible for disciplinaries, handling sickness absence, completing appraisals, recruiting and being an administrator to the HR team. This job made me realise I wanted a career in the field.

When I inherited some money, I decided to invest part of it in myself so I signed up to do my CIPD qualifications. After I enrolled, I discovered I'd done a lot more HR than I realised. Not long after I started in my first HR job, Covid hit – it's certainly been an interesting introduction to the profession.

Working remotely since April has been odd, but it's been a nice way to start the job. I had a lot of time to learn the processes, and I could speak to people when I wanted to. At the time I was working on renewing DBS certificates for safeguarding, which is a big part of working in a school HR team. It's very process driven, but I feel it has helped me get to know my new colleagues.

Starting a new job during a global pandemic has been hard and I haven't been able to get to know people as well as I'd hoped. In my previous jobs, I got to know my colleagues through hot desking. At the beginning, it was a challenge not being able to meet people. But a highlight of my role is the people I get to work with, especially my HR manager, who is hilarious. You want to be able to laugh at work, and I feel like I do.

Working at a school is quite different from where I've worked before, but I like it a lot. It feels like it's got its own identity. Some of my neighbour's children go to the school so I often see them walking there through my window. When I mention where I work, people in the local area know exactly what I'm talking about. It's nice to be part of something positive in the community.

CV

Amy Winder began her career at West Kent Housing Association as a customer service adviser in 2013 and became a team leader in 2014. She joined The Skinners' Kent Academy Trust as administration manager and HR support worker in April 2020, and was promoted to HR officer in November. She gained her CIPD Level 3 Certificate in HR in 2017, and is currently studying for her Level 5.

“He explains how to identify a company’s problems and embed a culture of respect”

Reviews

Toxic

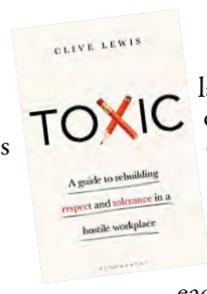
Clive Lewis, Bloomsbury Business, £20/£11.70 e-book

There have been many examples of famously ‘toxic’ workplaces splashed across the media in recent years, varying from accusations of bullying and manipulation to full-blown sexual harassment lawsuits. At the extremes, as seen in several cases in NHS hospitals, toxicity within organisations can directly lead to harm and even death to patients in their care. Indeed, a culture of conflict was linked to poorer patient outcomes in one London hospital in 2018. But what happens within a business for levels of toxicity

to reach such devastating levels?

In *Toxic*, business psychologist and experienced mediator Lewis takes a deep dive into what the term really means, and charts its rise to prominence in business vernacular over the last 30 years, culminating in Oxford Dictionaries naming it its word of the year in 2018.

He takes a step back and explains the reasons the changes we’ve seen in the world of work during the



last few decades can be directly responsible for causing hostile working environments: he points out technology’s role, and that this is the first time five generations – each with their own views and perspectives – have formed the same labour market. Lewis also includes plentiful examples of relatable everyday situations that, if left unchecked and not dealt with, can lead to toxic working relationships – even something as simple as a single misunderstanding

between an employee and their line manager.

But it’s the latter half of the book that will perhaps be most useful to those who have gone as far as to pick up a copy, when Lewis’s years of experience in mediation come into their own. He explains in simple, no-nonsense terms how to identify an organisation’s problems and embed a culture of respect, down to the minutiae of HR, board, line manager and employee responsibilities. There’s also a draft mediation protocol to help readers get started.



{Book}

WFH

Harriet Minter, Greenfinch, £14.99/£4.99 e-book

Most of us have made our peace – and some are even pleased – with the fact that more of our working lives going forward are likely to be spent in our own homes. But could the hybrid flexibility model many are aiming for be detrimental in the long term? Minter’s scrupulous assessment of how to make working from home work – from mental health to managing a team – is surely a must-read for post-Covid times.



{Book}

The Management Delusion

Matt Casey, DoThings Publishing, £11.99/£9.99 e-book

“Management is broken,” claims Casey, former managing director of website builder Moonfruit, in the opening paragraphs of this book. And he has a point. The first chapter is devoted to why we’re doing management wrong, before moving on to how to fix it, all the while drawing on research and Casey’s own experience. If you’re short on time, flip straight to the last section for a bare-bones explanation of the key skills managers should have.

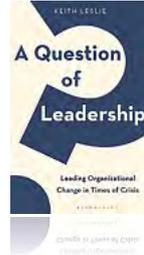


{Book}

Be the First

Caroline Flanagan, Known Publishing, £12.99/£5.99 e-book

As a successful former lawyer and now international speaker, coach and podcast host, not to mention mum of four boys, Flanagan appears to have it all. But as a woman of colour, she’s spent years trying to stand out against her majority white peers. Using her experience as one of the few female black professionals working in the City, *Be the First* is a powerful call to action for people of colour in overcoming imposter syndrome and breaking down barriers to success.



{Book}

A Question of Leadership

Keith Leslie, Bloomsbury Business, £20/£11.70 e-book

The concept of being a leader has changed irreversibly over time, but arguably not as much as during the past 12 months, and leaders need an almost impossibly wide-ranging skillset to be able to bring their teams effectively through ever-changing circumstances. Drawing on his significant managerial career history, Leslie explores what ‘good’ leaders and teams look like, as well as how to go about navigating incessant change, with a big focus on mental health.

What’s new

A group of 10 leadership consultants and a lawyer from the CIPD’s Thames Valley branch have come together to remotely write a book – **Good Work Good Business** – that aims to help organisations to thrive when the Covid pandemic subsides. All profits from sales of the book will be donated to food bank charity The Trussell Trust. Meanwhile, in **Outstanding in the Middle**, speaker, trainer and coach Birgitta Sjöstrand explores how often-lauded but integral middle managers can be the make or break for a business.

Your problems



Guest Fixer Helen Astill tackles your queries

Helen Astill FCIPD is an award-winning HR professional and MD of Cherington HR. She trained as a physics teacher before moving into L&D and HR roles at the UK Atomic Energy Authority and global engineering group GKN. Since 2006 she has run her own consultancy working with growing businesses, particularly in the professional, scientific and technical sectors.

Astill was the first person to enter our competition to find *People Management's* next Fixer to be successful. We'll be handing the reins to a new face every couple of issues. Her replies are written in a personal capacity and do not reflect the views of *People Management* or the CIPD, nor are they a substitute for professional legal advice. Not all queries submitted can be answered, and personal replies are not possible. To pose an anonymous query, visit bit.ly/pmfixer

How can I persuade bosses to award more generous pay rises?

Around half of the staff at the law firm I work for have been furloughed, and the rest are coping admirably with increased workloads. The firm recently awarded everyone meagre pay rises, which understandably went down like a lead balloon. But I have sight of the company finances, and I know they could've afforded to be far more generous. Is there a way I can convince my bosses they should take a more magnanimous approach to reward? Many employees will feel they have put up with a lot of inconvenience over the last year, so they will be expecting some form of recognition for their efforts.

It is difficult when you have some staff who have been furloughed while others have been working their socks off. This is bound to create some

division between the groups, but it's important to treat them equally, because some may have been furloughed for childcare or health reasons and giving different rates to each group could be challenged as discriminatory. Therefore, giving an award to

firm has the funds to give a higher award, but the partners may feel they need to keep cash reserves for the business to survive 2021.

Try talking to your line manager about your concerns to find out why they decided they couldn't afford more. If

"You could suggest looking at other forms of recognition that may be of value to staff but don't cost the business as much"

everyone is the only sensible way to tackle this.

However, your concern is the employees are not feeling valued by the size of the pay award. It is not going to be well received if you say to them they've saved on commuting costs by working from home or that they're better off than others who have lost their jobs or had pay cuts. You say you believe the

they cannot be persuaded to increase the award, perhaps suggest looking at other forms of recognition that may be of value to staff, but don't cost the business as much. For example, a one-off bonus or additional payment to employees' pensions, an extra day's leave, or increasing cash health plan or life assurance cover in recognition of their efforts in 2020.

Our staff aren't sticking to social distancing rules

I'm an HR manager for a manufacturing company, so lots of staff are frontline and can't work from home. We've been meticulous about putting measures in place to keep them safe but, after initially being very stringent, standards have started to slip and employees are getting complacent with their PPE and social distancing – so much so we had a minor Covid outbreak just before Christmas. I know lockdown

is getting to everyone and I feel guilty that they have to come into work, but how can we reiterate the importance of sticking to the rules?

You're right. We're all getting weary of the restrictions, even though they are vital, and complacency will lead to people cutting corners. The increased rate of transmission of the new virus variants means more infections are likely if we don't act. But the answer lies with the

employees – just telling them is not going to do the trick. They need to want to avoid catching the virus and understand how real the risks are.

I suggest you set up a representative group, if possible including some of those who have recovered from Covid and your safety representatives. Put the problem to them and see what suggestions they come up with. They are going to be feeling vulnerable – particularly those who have been ill – and so are more likely to be able to come up with ideas as to how to strengthen the measures. It would also be a good idea

to review the measures you currently have in place to see whether you can strengthen them further.

You are looking at changing behaviours, so this needs to be 'owned' by the employees. Those who have had the virus are likely to be better at explaining to their colleagues how awful they felt, and this will have a greater impact on others than simply reading staff notices. At the same time, you need to make sure managers are also setting a good example and are empowered to enforce the rules.

People and posts *Who's making HR headlines?*



1



2

Santander UK has appointed **Elaine Thomas** as chief HR officer. Thomas has more than 25 years of HR experience, most recently at Refinitiv as global head of people solutions and service delivery. She has also held various HR roles at Thomson Reuters and Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

Shaun McConnell, Chartered FCIPD (1), has been promoted to HR Director at Maritime Transport, and is now also a company director. He joined the firm in 2019.

Wendy Baines, Chartered MCIPD, has taken on the role of HR director at Evergreen Garden Care. She arrives from AkzoNobel, where she worked as HR director for the UK, Ireland and the Nordics, and has also held HR posts at firms such as The Coca-Cola Company and Mars.

Kate Fisher (2) is the new head of L&D at Leeds Building Society. She joins with more than 20 years' experience

in HR, talent and training operations roles at companies including Asda, Aviva and Goldman Sachs.

Europa Worldwide Group has promoted **Vanita Dass-Puri (3)** to head of recruitment. She was previously group talent acquisition manager.

Natalie Edwards (4) has taken on the role of chief diversity officer at National Grid. Before joining the firm she was global executive director of inclusion and diversity at The Estée Lauder Companies.

The Planet Mark has hired **Angela Murray-Brown** as its first people and culture manager. She previously worked as a freelance business psychologist, having also spent seven-and-a-half years at Thompson Reuters.

Capital People has recruited **Nick Carter (5)** as head of HR, and **Alexander Franklin** and **Jonathan Brooks-Jones, Assoc CIPD**, as HR consultants. Carter arrives

from Cardiff and Vale College, Franklin from Arup and Brooks-Jones from Cardiff University.

Sovereign Housing Association has welcomed **Sally Hyndman** as chief people officer. She previously held senior roles at Debenhams and Marks and Spencer.

Campden BRI has welcomed **Sarah Armstrong (6)** as HR director. She brings more than 20 years' business management and consultancy experience to the role, having spent time in companies such as Mars and Santander.

Sally Haran, Chartered FCIPD, has been promoted to director of HR at Hyman Robertson. She joined the firm in 2004 and has held various roles including HR manager and head of talent.

RSM has recruited **Candice Eaton Gaul** as global diversity and inclusion leader. She was previously head of HR and labour consulting at RSM South Africa.



3



4



5



6

The next step *We help you to help your career*

I have a degree in business administration management and HR, and I'm currently studying for my CIPD Level 5 Diploma. My career history to date is various admin jobs, most recently HR administrator in the logistics sector. I got some great experience in that role, including TUPE, grievances and large-scale redundancies, but was unfortunately made redundant in the summer because of Covid. I want to progress my career so have been applying for lots of HR assistant and coordinator roles as well as admin ones, but keep getting rejected because I apparently don't have the necessary experience. I'm aware the job market is difficult at the moment, but I don't know what I'm doing wrong.



It sounds like you have some fantastic experience on your CV and, as you say, the job market is difficult so don't be disheartened, advises Sally Bendston (left), founder of Limelight HR.

With a large number of people applying for most positions, the key is making it easy for recruiters to assess your suitability. Look again at the roles you're applying for, highlight the skills or experience they have in common and then make sure you include them on your CV – and be sure to draw out the HR-related tasks from your previous administration roles. You could also ask someone you trust to have a look and give you constructive feedback.

You may want to consider work experience or offering your

services to HR consultants, rather than businesses, in the short term. There are various online groups specifically for consultants, where you can explain what experience you have and what type of work you would like to be involved in. This would give you exposure to a variety of work in a short time, but would still give you the flexibility to go for interviews and start a permanent job with little notice.

Job hunting can be demoralising, so remember it's important to take time out to look after yourself. Make a plan at the beginning of each week so you know how long you are going to spend on it each day and then allow yourself to switch off afterwards. Be kind to yourself and know that you are not alone.

Let us
solve your
career crisis
bit.ly/pmnextstep

Research

Lockdown worsens parents' mental health

Single parents and families with a low income are more vulnerable to increased stress, anxiety and depression in lockdown, a study has revealed.

The latest report from Oxford University-led study Covid-19 Supporting Parents, Adolescents and Children in Epidemics (Co-SPACE) found parents' mental health has got worse since the latest restrictions were introduced.

In the survey of more than 6,000 participants, parents reported an increase in symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression from November to December 2020, such as feeling hopeless, having difficulty relaxing and being easily upset or agitated. This mirrored the findings from the

first lockdown between April and July 2020.

Parents with children under 10 living in the household reported particularly high levels of stress during the first lockdown. More than a third (36 per cent) said they were substantially worried about their children's behaviour at the time. In contrast, 28 per cent of those with children over 11 said they were worried about their children's behaviour, but 45 per cent were concerned about their children's future.

According to the research, parents in low-income

Those with children under 10 reported particularly high levels of stress



households – less than £16,000pa – were more likely to experience higher levels of stress, anxiety and depression. Single parents and parents of children with special education needs or neurodevelopmental differences were also particularly vulnerable to experiencing mental ill-health.

John Jolly, CEO of Parentkind, said:

“Given the disruption to family life, it is vital that policymakers consult and listen to the concerns of parents on issues that directly impact them and their children's futures.

“The negative mental health consequences of lockdown are revealed to be most acute among single parents, parents of children with special education needs and disabilities and those on low incomes. Policymakers must give urgent consideration to how additional support for families most in need can be provided, before the disadvantage gap grows wide enough to create a lost generation.”

* bit.ly/CoSpaceMentalHealth

Employees perform better when work is fun

Seeking out challenges and making work more fun helps to increase job performance, new research by BI Norwegian Business School has found.

The study investigated the relationship between job crafting, playfulness in work and job performance. The participants were asked to complete a diary questionnaire and to rate the daily achievement of a colleague at work for 30 consecutive days.

Job crafting was characterised as when employees refine their job tasks by increasing demand, such as looking for new

challenges or asking for feedback and support – referred to as seeking job resources. Playful work design, according to the research, is where the employee creates conditions at work that foster a joyful experience, such as challenging themselves to complete a task in record time.

The research found that looking for job resources, setting more challenges and engaging in playful work helped employees boost their performance in their jobs on a daily basis. It also found that making work fun was most effective when the pressure was low. In contrast, reducing job demand was found to be linked to poor performance.

* bit.ly/FunWorkForBetterPerformance

Turnover shrinks with better communication

Good communication can reduce staff turnover by a quarter in the retail sector, according to research by the University of Cologne and ECONtribute.

The long-term study, conducted by Professor Matthias Heinz, analysed the rate of turnover in shops after the CEO wrote a letter to half the store managers asking them to take better care of their employees.

In the following nine months, store managers who received the letter spent an average of 20 minutes extra per day with their staff, which led to fewer resignations. With those who did not receive a letter, nothing

changed. When the CEO wrote a second letter to those managers reminding them of their goal to reduce staff turnover rates, the number of resignations dropped again.

The study concluded that personnel turnover can be reduced with simply good communication between upper and middle management and from store managers to workers. Heinz said: “The research emphasises the importance of choosing good managers. In principle, they should be able to communicate and interact well with people to keep quit rates as low as possible. However, even the uncommunicative, poor leadership style of some managers can be positively influenced by a simple request from the executive floor.”

* bit.ly/GoodCommunicationTurnover

CIPD launches campaign to end flexible working inequality

#FlexFrom1st is urging businesses to make requesting flexibility a day-one right for all employees

The CIPD has launched its #FlexFrom1st campaign, which aims to address flexible working inequality and promote fairness, inclusion and wellbeing at work.

#FlexFrom1st is calling for staff to be given the right to request flexible working from day one of employment, and is urging organisations across the globe to work more collaboratively with their employees to find flexible solutions that work for them. It is also asking employers to stipulate that roles can be done flexibly in job adverts, to attract more candidates who are looking for flexible roles.

Research shows that organisations are still behind on flexible working uptake, with nearly half (46 per cent) of British workers saying they do not have flexible working arrangements

– an inequality highlighted by the shift to home working as a result of the pandemic. Yet employees who have flexibility at work report higher levels of job satisfaction and a better work/life balance, and feel more in control of their work. As a result, businesses that embrace flexible working reap the benefits through increased productivity, employee retention and attracting diverse talent.

In order to make real progress, UK law also needs to change. At present, employees can only request to work flexibly after 26 weeks of employment, with a limit of one request per 12 months. This is not a fair system. It excludes a whole cohort of highly skilled individuals – those who require an element of flexibility because of other commitments – from entering the

workforce. To that end, the campaign is urging the UK government to make the right to request flexible working a right from day one for all employees.

Peter Cheese, chief executive of the CIPD, says: “Being able to build in flexible working arrangements, such as changes to hours, term-time working or job shares, will empower people to have greater control and flexibility in their working life. This is good for inclusion and opening up opportunities to people who have other constraints in being able to work standard-hour weeks or in getting to a place of work.”

* You can pledge your support for #FlexFrom1st at cipd.co.uk/FlexFrom1st



#FlexFrom1st aims to promote fairness, inclusion and wellbeing at work

WORDS KRISTIAN ADAMS AND NATALIE BAKER

EXTRA
EXTRA

Building your career in 2021

The CIPD is committed to supporting people professionals to navigate each stage of their career. You can find expert advice to help you identify and achieve the next steps of your journey with the CIPD's 'Building your career 2021' webinar series.

* bit.ly/CIPDCareerBuild

Covid-19 vaccine and the workplace

While the Covid vaccination has been welcomed by many, receiving a jab is not mandatory, and employers should be aware that there are some who are hesitant or medically exempt. You can find practical support and guidance to help your organisation through the vaccine rollout with the CIPD's guide for employers.

* bit.ly/CIPDVaccineGuide

CIPD tackling racism resource pack

Racism has no place in our society and businesses must be part of the change we all need to stamp out prejudice and build diverse and supportive cultures. The CIPD's 'Tackling racism in the workplace' resource pack offers practical guidance and advice for HR and business leaders.

* bit.ly/CIPDRacismPack



The CIPD has put together a guide to support employers through the coronavirus vaccine rollout

CIPD podcast: is the profession too risk-averse?

Is it time to tear up the HR playbook? Join Nigel Cassidy and guests – including Yetunde Hofmann, managing director at Synchrony Development Consulting – on the latest CIPD podcast to explore how people practitioners can shake off the risk-averse tag to take well-calculated risks and seize opportunities.

* bit.ly/PodcastRiskAverse

HALFPOINT IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

Employers must do more to create inclusive cultures that have zero tolerance of bullying and harassment

Perspectives on LGBT+ working lives

While workplace inclusivity is fundamental to good, fair work and positive employee outcomes, many organisations have been slow to make headway in this area.

New research from the CIPD exploring the workplace experiences of LGBT+ workers reveals that they experience higher levels of work-based conflict, and almost one in five trans workers feel psychologically unsafe at work, compared with one in 10 heterosexual workers.

Mel Green, research adviser at the CIPD, says: "It's particularly concerning to see how many LGBT+ workers have experienced conflict and that, more often than not, these conflicts are not resolved. This must stop. Everyone has the right to feel safe, to be themselves and to flourish at work. Employers must do more to support these groups and create inclusive cultures that have zero tolerance of bullying and harassment of any kind."

* Much more needs to be done at an organisational level to support LGBT+ workers, and you can better understand the barriers and drivers to sustaining an inclusive workplace by reading the full report at

bit.ly/CIPDLgbtPerspectives

New People Development Partner

The Electricity Supply Board (ESB) has a longstanding relationship with CIPD Ireland, contributing to research and providing representation on the national committee. Now it is the latest business to join a roster of exceptional partners committed to growing the next generation of people professionals.

To qualify as a CIPD People Development Partner, organisations must champion better working lives by aligning their HR and L&D capability and practices against the CIPD's international standard of excellence. In doing so they will raise the capability and credibility of their people function.

The ESB's HR team has in recent years made sure that competencies and people-focused learning programmes are in harmony with the CIPD's standards and new Profession Map.

Mary Connaughton, director of CIPD Ireland, says: "CIPD Ireland sees the ESB as an outstanding example of an organisation that is committed to continuously raising the bar of HR professionalisation."

* bit.ly/CIPDDP

Take charge of your career development

Whether you want to make an impact in your current role or you're looking for a new one, you can move your career forward with confidence using the CIPD career hub. This members-only support resource is packed with regularly updated career-based support, from CV and cover letter builders to career assessments, helping you to identify and conquer key development areas and giving you the best chance of success.

bit.ly/CIPDCareerHub

People Management

People Management is published on behalf of the CIPD by Haymarket Business Media, a division of Haymarket Media Group Ltd. Registered office: Bridge House, 69 London Road, TW1 3SP

EDITORIAL

PMeditorial@haymarket.com
@PeopleMgt
Acting editor Eleanor Whitehouse @elliehousewhite
Managing editor Jyoti Rambhai
Art editor Aubrey Smith
Production editor Joanna Matthews
News editor Francis Churchill @fchurchill
Staff writer Elizabeth Howlett @bloggybalboa
Junior staff writer Maggie Baska @MaggieBaska
Picture editor Dominique Campbell

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

020 8267 4970
PMsales@haymarket.com
Business director Angela Hughes
Sales director Jade Scaffardi
Account directors Lindsey Westley, Simon Churchill
Recruitment sales director Samantha Johnston
Senior sales executives Tom Melvin
Sales executive Rosie Henshall

PRODUCTION

020 8267 5378
Senior production controller Lee Brister
Head of production operations Trevor Simpson

PUBLISHING

Editorial director Simon Kanter
Managing director, Haymarket Business Media
Philip Swinden
Editor in chief Robert Jeffery

SUBSCRIPTIONS

01604 828702
People Management is sent to all CIPD members, and is available on annual subscription to non-members. All member enquiries should be directed to the CIPD (see below). For subscription enquiries from non-members, see help@shop.haymarket.com or purchase one from bit.ly/PMsubscription. Alternatively write to People Management, Haymarket Business Media, 3 Queensbridge, The Lakes, Northampton NN4 7BF. Annual subscription rates are: UK £140, Europe £219 (airmail only), rest of world £239, surface rate, or £333 airmail. Single copies £13.30. Periodicals postage paid at Jamaica NY 11431. US Postmaster: Send address changes to People Management, Worldnet Shipping Inc., 156-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA

CIPD ENQUIRIES

161 The Broadway, London SW19 1JQ
020 8612 6208 cipd@cipd.co.uk
If you're a CIPD member and your home or work address has changed, please contact the CIPD on 020 8612 6233.
CIPD is a registered charity - no. 1079797

COPYRIGHT

© All rights reserved. This publication (or any part thereof) may not be reproduced, transmitted or stored in print or electronic format (including, but not limited to, any online service, any database or any part of the internet), or in any other format in any media whatsoever, without the prior written permission of Haymarket Media Group Ltd, which accepts no liability for the accuracy of the contents or any opinions expressed herein.

CIPD | **haymarket**

PRINT AND DISTRIBUTION

PEOPLE MANAGEMENT - ISSN 1358 6297 - is published monthly. **Printed by** William Gibbons. People Management is printed on PEFC certified stock from sustainable sources. Haymarket is certified by BSI to environmental standard ISO14001. See page facing inside back cover for US distribution details.



Business Opportunities

Do you dream of starting your own HR business?

We can help you achieve your dream of starting a business with our proven business model and support from a network of like-minded HR professionals.

Contact The HR Dept to find out how to start your own business.

Call 0345 208 1120 Visit www.hr-profs.co.uk/pm



Job Evaluation

easy grading

Things are getting more exciting!

In response to feedback from clients we have extended the reporting functions to make it much easier to discuss evaluation outcomes with line managers. There is also an employee feedback summary to improve engagement and enhance transparency. Feedback has been fab!

Why not find out what the excitement is all about – visit www.easygrading.com

Career Coach Training

TRAIN AS A CAREER COACH WITH THE SUPPORT OF AN ESTABLISHED BRAND

- Part-time and full-time options
- Franchises now available across the UK
- Full training and support



Recommended by and partners with: [The Guardian Jobs](#) [telegraphjobs](#)

As seen on: [BBC NEWS](#) [sky news](#)

To apply or for more information contact the franchise team on 01753 888 995 or visit www.personalcareermanagement.com



Career Counselling

Career Coaching Accreditation Training

'the best development event I have been on'

- Five day training course, accredited by the Association for Coaching
- Option to continue to Kingston University Postgraduate Certificate in Career and Talent Management

www.career-counselling-services.co.uk Career Counselling Services



HR and Payroll Outsourcing

CAPITA

Creating better business outcomes together



HR & Payroll Outsourcing

Flexible Benefits



People Analytics



Health & Wellbeing

Resourcing Optimisation



Diversity & Inclusion



Employee Engagement

0207 960 7769

capita.com/HRsolutions

hrsolutions@capita.co.uk

@CapitaHRS



Employability Skills Training

Learn to Code!

Using Free Microsoft Visual Studio download.

A practical approach to learning a much sought-after skill in the workplace.

Includes library of code for a quick and easy introduction to computer programming. £4.95 a month.

eptsoft.com

HR Consulting

The impact of people management practices

A systematic approach for reviewing how your people management practices impact on your business objectives.

OurPeopleReview.com

Or contact Dr. Peter Fargus, Chartered Fellow, on 01423 566035



Talent Development

MANAGE STRESS

BUILD RESILIENCE

IMPROVE PERFORMANCE

■ Coaching ■ Assessment ■ Training



www.edison talent.com
talent@edisonuk.com
+44 (0) 208 1339750



CHECK OUT THESE HR JOBS AND MORE



BPIF
EST 1901

**REGIONAL HR ADVISOR
SOUTH EAST**

**SALARY: UP TO £37,000 PER ANNUM
+ CAR ALLOWANCE**

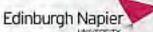
Expiry Date: 1st Mar 2021

**HEAD OF BUSINESS PARTNERING
CARDIFF WITH FLEXIBILITY TO WORK
FROM HOME PART OF THE TIME**

**SALARY: GRADE 8 £46,718 - £54,132
PER ANNUM**

Expiry Date: 9th Mar 2021



**HEAD OF HR OPERATIONS
CITY OF EDINBURGH**

**SALARY: GRADE 8, £64,603 - £73,630
PER ANNUM + EXCELLENT PACKAGE**

Expiry Date: 7th Mar 2021



**HR MANAGER
LONDON**

**SALARY: £45,000 - £50,000 PLUS PENSION
AND OTHER BENEFITS**

Expiry Date: 1st Mar 2021


University Hospital Southampton
NHS Foundation Trust

**DIRECTOR OF ORGANISATIONAL
SOUTHAMPTON, HAMPSHIRE (REMOTE &
FLEXIBLE WORKING CONSIDERED)**

SALARY: BAND 8D- £75,914 - £87,754

Expiry Date: 28th Feb 2021

**HR BUSINESS PARTNER
CARDIFF WITH FLEXIBILITY TO WORK
FROM HOME PART OF THE TIME**

**SALARY: GRADE 7 £40,322 - £45,361
PER ANNUM**

Expiry Date: 8th Mar 2021

pmjobs.cipd.co.uk 

After wrongly being declared guilty of theft, Johnny Castle could launch a claim against his employer

ARCHIVE PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES



Could HR solve...?

DIRTY DANCING

Two bosses accuse an employee of theft without conducting an investigation

The problem

Hotel owners Max and Neil Kellerman suspect their lead dancer and entertainer, Johnny Castle, of theft. In what should have been a private conversation, the pair share their suspicions with hotel guests and – without conducting an investigation – declare Castle guilty. But what HR processes should they have followed?

The solution

Theft is a serious accusation to make, and can destroy employees' trust in the organisation, says Gayatri Panda, HR business partner at Themis Technologies (below). The Kellermans did not consider the negative repercussions when accusing Castle of theft, she says: "Despite the presence of an alibi and an eyewitness, they dishonestly declared him as guilty. This leaves them open to litigation."



And while the owners have a legal right to launch an investigation, the enquiry must demonstrate fairness and impartiality, Panda points out.

The Kellermans should also have appointed either an in-house member of staff or an external investigator, as per the hotel's HR policy. "If the evidence demonstrates Max and Neil's suspicions to be groundless, then the situation should be dismissed, and Johnny should be informed accordingly," she says. "And if required, he must be provided with the evidence that presented the grounds for suspicion."

Panda notes that if the investigation proves the suspicion to be true, Johnny should be invited for an interview as part of the process of fairness and impartiality, and offered the opportunity to present his side.

US distribution: People Management (ISSN 1368 6287) is published monthly by Haymarket, Bridge House, 69 London Road, Twickenham TW1 3SP. The US annual subscription price is \$392. Air freight and mailing in the USA by agent named WN Shipping USA, 166-16 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA. Periodicals postage paid at Jamaica, NY 11431. US postmaster: Send address changes to People Management, WN Shipping USA, 166-16 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA. Subscriptions records are maintained at Haymarket Network, Bridge House, 69 London Road, Twickenham TW1 3SP. Air Business Ltd is acting as our mailing agent. USPS ID number 7010

INVESTORS[®] IN PEOPLE

Letting apprentices know how they'll be supported, motivated and where they can grow.

Challenging ourselves and our colleagues to create that space.

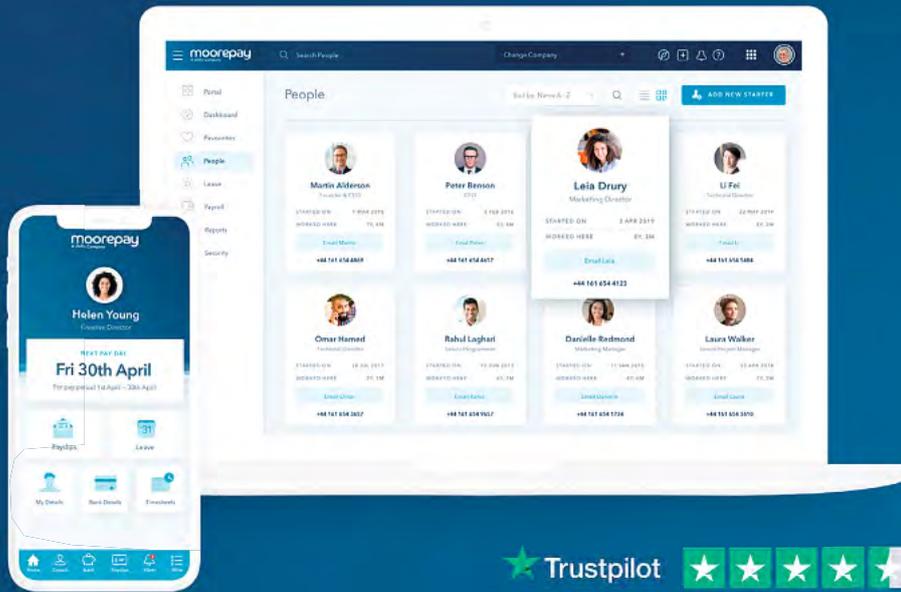
That's what it means when...

We invest in apprentices

To find out more about We invest in apprentices, and how you can become a pioneer, visit

www.investorsinpeople.com

Take the stress out of switching with our simple switch guarantee.



At Moorepay, we do the leg work so you can focus on the most important thing: looking after your people.

- ✓ Easy 5-step process
- ✓ Your own UK-based account manager
- ✓ Work to a time frame that suits you
- ✓ Training and support every step of the way
- ✓ 5-star service, as rated by our customers

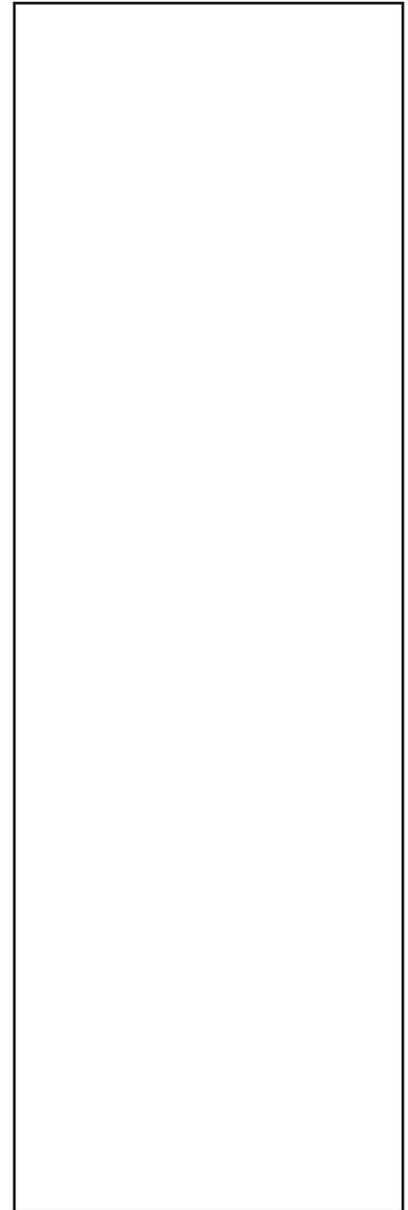
Making payroll & HR easy.

moorepay
A Zellis Company

CIPPD

Return address
Chartered Institute of Personnel and
Development
9 Parkway Close,
Parkway Industrial Estate,
Sheffield
S9 4WS

IMPORTANT: To ensure that you continue to receive your magazine, please notify us of any changes to your membership details by contacting membershipenquiry@cippd.co.uk



ONEPOST

