

People Management

March 2022

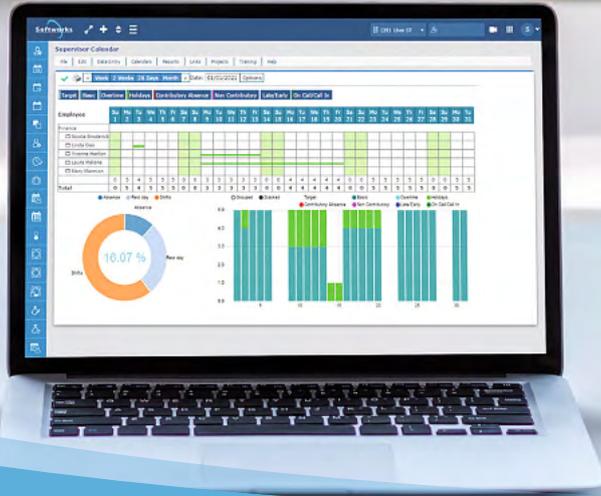
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March 2022

Following the success of *People Management's* 50 Over 50 list a few years ago, it seemed only fair to concentrate on a different section of the age spectrum. So I'm delighted to introduce our 30 Under 30 in this issue, chosen from a swathe of nominations as those who best display skill and talent, an understanding of the profession and embody the CIPD's values. Keep an eye out, because you're bound to see even bigger things from them before long.

Eleanor Whitehouse **Editor**

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Welcome

from the CIPD

The unpredictability of events



Peter Cheese
Chief executive

As the then prime minister Harold Macmillan was reported to have replied in the late 1950s when asked what was the hardest thing he'd had to deal with in office: "events, dear boy, events". It remains a very apposite remark as we look around us today. While in most countries, pandemic restrictions are lifting, the shadow from Covid will be with us for a long time, whether on hospital waiting lists or in economic recovery.

what interventions are needed, and their role in all these issues is part of how we share the responsibilities for change.

As I have said many times, this is an extraordinary time to be in our profession. We are at the heart of business, and at the heart of



p24

Recruitment and retention are top of the list of immediate concerns for many organisations, but we are also all finding ourselves in times of significant political uncertainty. Trust in political leadership is being damaged, and opinions on the important issues of our time are becoming more polarised and entrenched. This year may well be a year of more protest, particularly as individual circumstances for many will be harder.

All this has to place an even greater emphasis on creating open and inclusive cultures within our organisations. As we push for greater diversity, we have to ensure that people feel safe to speak up and to express their views and concerns, while at the same time being clear on principles and what we see as acceptable or unacceptable behaviours. Leaders have to be comfortable themselves in setting the tone and not being too afraid they may say the 'wrong thing'. In open cultures, we all learn from each other.

Our profession has always been interesting because it has to understand and balance the needs and expectations of the workforce with those of the business – and it's not always an easy balancing act. Almost everyone will have an opinion on how HR does things, and sadly HR can also be seen as a scapegoat when things are not working out. Toxic cultures, shortfalls in recruitment or high staff turnover, or poor performance or productivity can all be laid at HR's door. And, of course, these are some of the biggest issues we wrestle with, but cannot be solved by HR alone. Providing the evidence and the insights to managers about what is working,

understanding and shaping the future of work and organisations. We make a difference to people's lives, their wellbeing, their growth, and to how organisations survive and thrive. As we too struggle with the current challenges in recruitment and retention in our own teams, we need to inspire those coming into the profession and into our organisations, and to give them the opportunities to make a difference. Purpose is a strong motivator.

And we also need to apply the same principles to recruitment that we encourage others to think about. How we recruit on attitude as well as aptitude, potential as well as past experience, and how we really put inclusion and diversity at the heart of our outreach.

In this issue of *People Management*, we celebrate HR's 30 under 30 – the HR and L&D practitioners who are already carving a path in their journey to champion better work and working lives. The pandemic has created a turbulent start to their careers, but the unique experience gained in this time has equipped them with an incredible skill set and insights beyond their years. This will prove essential as our profession helps to build the new world of work.



Despite recruitment struggles, HR needs to inspire those coming into the profession and help them to make a difference

HANNAH J TAYLOR; PORTRA IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

This month we've learned...

The big lesson



The majority of UK employees are not happy talking about mental or physical health problems at work

{Health & wellbeing}

Personal issues go undiscussed

Some work conversations will always be awkward. Talking to your boss about pay is rarely a pleasant experience, and for many, office small talk can feel like pulling teeth. But some conversations are too important not to have – which is why experts are concerned with research revealing the majority of employees are not comfortable talking about a range of personal issues with their line managers.

A poll by BHSF of more than 2,000 UK employees who had been working remotely during the pandemic found that just 41 per cent would raise mental health concerns with the manager. Even fewer said they would feel comfortable discussing physical health problems (36 per cent), financial concerns (28 per cent) or issues around grief (22 per cent).

Perhaps these findings aren't surprising. But, says Ruth Wilkinson, head of health and safety at the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), there are still

“Creating a workplace that’s mental-health-friendly has to start from the top”

things business leaders can do to make it easier for their staff. “Creating a workplace that’s mental-health-friendly has to start from the top. There has to be a clear direction shown by those running a business if there’s going to be sustained positive change”, she says, adding there is currently a lack of understanding and training needed to provide proper support.

The report also found that half (50 per cent) of employees polled said they had not received health and wellbeing support from their employer during the pandemic. Similarly, 45 per cent said they had negative feelings about returning to work, including 9 per cent who were ‘deeply concerned’ about their return.

And just 5 per cent of respondents said their employer had put in extra employee support services to help staff return to a more normal working pattern, compared to three-quarters (73 per cent) who said their employer had not. (Another 22 per cent said they didn’t know.)

{Recruitment}

Insecure work rife for under-25s

The coronavirus pandemic has been a rollercoaster for young people in the workforce. Early in the crisis, they were one of the groups most likely to be made unemployed, but they were also one of the fastest to bounce back into employment when the economy opened up again – filling roles in the booming events and hospitality sector.

The unemployment rate for 18- to 24-year-olds fell to 9.8 per cent in the three months to November 2021, below the pre-pandemic unemployment rate of 10.5 per cent.

But, young people going back to work after a period of worklessness during the pandemic are far more likely to be in insecure or irregular work than their peers who worked throughout, according to a report from the Resolution Foundation.

The think tank, which polled 6,100 adults, found that young people aged between 18 and 24 who lost their jobs or were furloughed during either of the two national lockdowns were almost three times more likely to be in ‘atypical’ roles on their return to work compared to their peers who worked throughout.

This included being on temporary contracts, zero-hours contracts, agency work or working a job with variable hours.



A frustrated business owner was forced to spell out his need for staff who are willing to work hard

{Recruitment}

“Workshy snowflakes need not apply”

Managing expectations and being honest is a crucial part of ensuring new hires stay with a company. And that’s exactly what one building firm did when it advertised that a job was “hard work so snowflakes need not apply”.

Adam Weedon, owner of Kent-based Ad-A-Brick Building Services, told the *Daily Mail* he added the disclaimer to the listing, which was posted on the firm’s social media, because previous labourers he had hired were “not fitting the

bill” because they were “workshy”, and “wanted their mummy to pamper them”.

“I’ve had 10 people over the course of a year. They all love their phones too much and find the work, such as pushing a wheelbarrow, laying slabs and doing drives and pathways, too hard,” he told the paper, adding that he knew of other builders who were also struggling to find labourers and that the decision to write the advert had been “bubbling for a while”.

{Pay & benefits}

Pay gap struggles

Employers are finding it difficult to close both their ethnicity and gender pay gaps, despite firms supporting efforts to improve equality. A report from Mercer, which polled 130 UK employers, found that three-quarters (75 per cent) disagreed with the government’s decision to pause gender pay gap reporting in 2020 because of the pandemic, while a similar proportion (74 per cent) said they continued their commitment to inclusion in spite of the suspension. However, despite

this support, almost half (49 per cent) of respondents said they saw little or no year-on-year progress when it came to reducing their gender pay gap between 2019 and 2020.

Michelle Sequeira, diversity, equity and inclusion consulting leader at Mercer UK, urged employers to “look beyond their pay gaps”. In addition to collecting data, she encouraged employers to “widen the pools from which they recruit” and to take steps to reduce unconscious bias.

{Government policy}

‘Levelling up’ plans out

The government has been talking about ‘levelling up’ the UK for years – the phrase was first used by the Conservative party in its 2019 manifesto. Finally, in a long-anticipated white paper unveiled by Michael Gove, the newly minted levelling up secretary, the government has tried to explain what ‘levelling up’ actually looks like.

The more than 300-word white paper outlines plans to increase the number of adults receiving high-quality skills training by 2030, with an aim of 80,000 more people

completing courses in the lowest-skilled areas. It also includes plans to roll out more Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) across England following a pilot last year.

But the proposal received mixed reviews from businesses – many of whom lamented the absence of apprenticeship levy reform. However, Amanda MacKenzie OBE, chief executive of Business in the Community (BITC), said: “The levelling up agenda is everyone’s agenda, and we all want to play our part to make it work.”

{Health & wellbeing}

Work stress causing productivity drop

Living through a pandemic is undoubtedly stressful, but could employers be making it far worse? A recent poll has suggested they could, and that it’s hurting productivity.

The survey of 2,200 UK employees by Champion Health found that two-thirds (67 per cent) were experiencing moderate to high levels of stress. The same poll found that more than a quarter (28 per cent)

had seen their productivity negatively impacted because of stress within the last two years.

Additionally, more than half of employees said they felt fatigued, and a similar number (53 per cent) reported that tiredness was impacting their productivity at work. Workload, a lack of control and less support were the most commonly cited causes of workplace stress.

These findings should be a “wake-up call” for employers to take wellbeing and mental health seriously, says Harry Bliss, CEO of Champion Health. “We are seeing a workforce feeling the huge effects of the changes to workplaces and the heightening expectations placed upon them as individuals,” he says, calling for a significant increase in the amount companies invest in their wellbeing strategies.

Michael Gove recently unveiled the government’s levelling up white paper, while BITC’s Amanda MacKenzie called for collaboration to ensure its success





Having reskilled since the band's heyday, former Blur bassist Alex James is now a successful cheesemaker and runs a food festival on his farm

Apprenticeship levy: will we ever see skills training reform?

Changes to the scheme could be the answer to the skills shortage, but it was conspicuous by its absence from the government's levelling up white paper

WORDS CAITLIN POWELL

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The government's long-awaited white paper for 'levelling up' the UK landed to a muted response in early February. Proposals to increase the availability of high-quality skills training were largely welcomed – if met with scepticism over whether the available funding was sufficient. But there was one key policy notable by its absence: the apprenticeship levy. The 300-page white paper is nothing but “tinkering at the edges” without reform of the levy system, explains Kate Shoemith, deputy CEO of the Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC).

And it's a sentiment shared by many employers: a survey of 500 HR professionals, conducted by Survation on behalf of London First, revealed that less than one in five (17 per cent) employers felt the levy was currently working well. The same poll found that almost half (48 per cent) had returned unspent apprenticeship levy funding.

The levy system was introduced in 2017 to improve the provision of apprenticeships as an alternative to university, and employers with a payroll bill of more than £3m annually are required to pay 0.5 per cent of that bill into the scheme, which the government then tops up by 10 per cent.

Employers can use that fund to pay for accredited apprenticeship courses, and larger employers are also allowed to spend some of their funds in their supply chain. Funds that aren't used by the employer within two years expire and are passed back to the government. However, according to the London First poll, a third (35 per cent) of businesses felt that the apprenticeship levy funds could be better used if the deadline for spending levy funds was extended from two to three years.

The same percentage said the levy would be more useful if employers were allowed to use some of the levy to contribute towards the wage costs of new apprentices, while 35 per cent again said employers should be incentivised to convert Kickstart placements into apprenticeships.

“Against the current backdrop of skills shortages, failing to reform the apprenticeship levy continues to hold back employer investment in skills at a time when this has never been more

important,” says Lizzie Crowley, senior skills policy adviser at the CIPD. The professional body's own analysis also suggests that the levy in its current form isn't working for employers and, in some cases, is actually harming businesses' ability to invest in skills more broadly.

Instead, Crowley suggests the levy urgently needs reform into a “more flexible skills levy” to allow employers to invest in a wider range of accredited training – which is often a much less expensive and more effective and flexible way to upskill and reskill existing employees.

Nicola Inge, employment and skills director at Business in the Community (BITC), echoes Crowley's calls for reform: “The apprenticeship levy needs flexibility if it is to meet the evolving needs of employers and workers in today's post-Covid workplace,” she says.

“Businesses need this flexibility to upskill their current and future employees, and the levy should have the flexibility for employers to increase their investment in these skills.” Inge also advises that there needs to be specific focus through the levy for creating more accessible pathways to employment. BITC is not alone in its

reservations: HR consultant Gemma Bullivant also warns that retraining or career changes are “rarely successful” when they are reactive, highly emotive, or surrounded by urgency. Instead, she says it could be more sound with long-term planning. If HR is involved in strategic workforce planning, she suggests that “upskilling can then form part of the cultural fabric of the organisation” by introducing career pathways, secondments, interim step-up roles, and an integrated L&D framework.

The lack of details on the apprenticeship scheme was also noted by Tania Bowers, global public policy director at the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) who commented that the government “refuses to deviate” from a structure which was “devised years ago for a different labour market”. “If real change is to be driven, more is needed,” she says, adding that the apprenticeship levy should be broadened to cover administrative costs and ‘bench’ salaries to form a realistic and flexible scheme in which recruitment firms can fund ‘flexi-job’ apprenticeships.

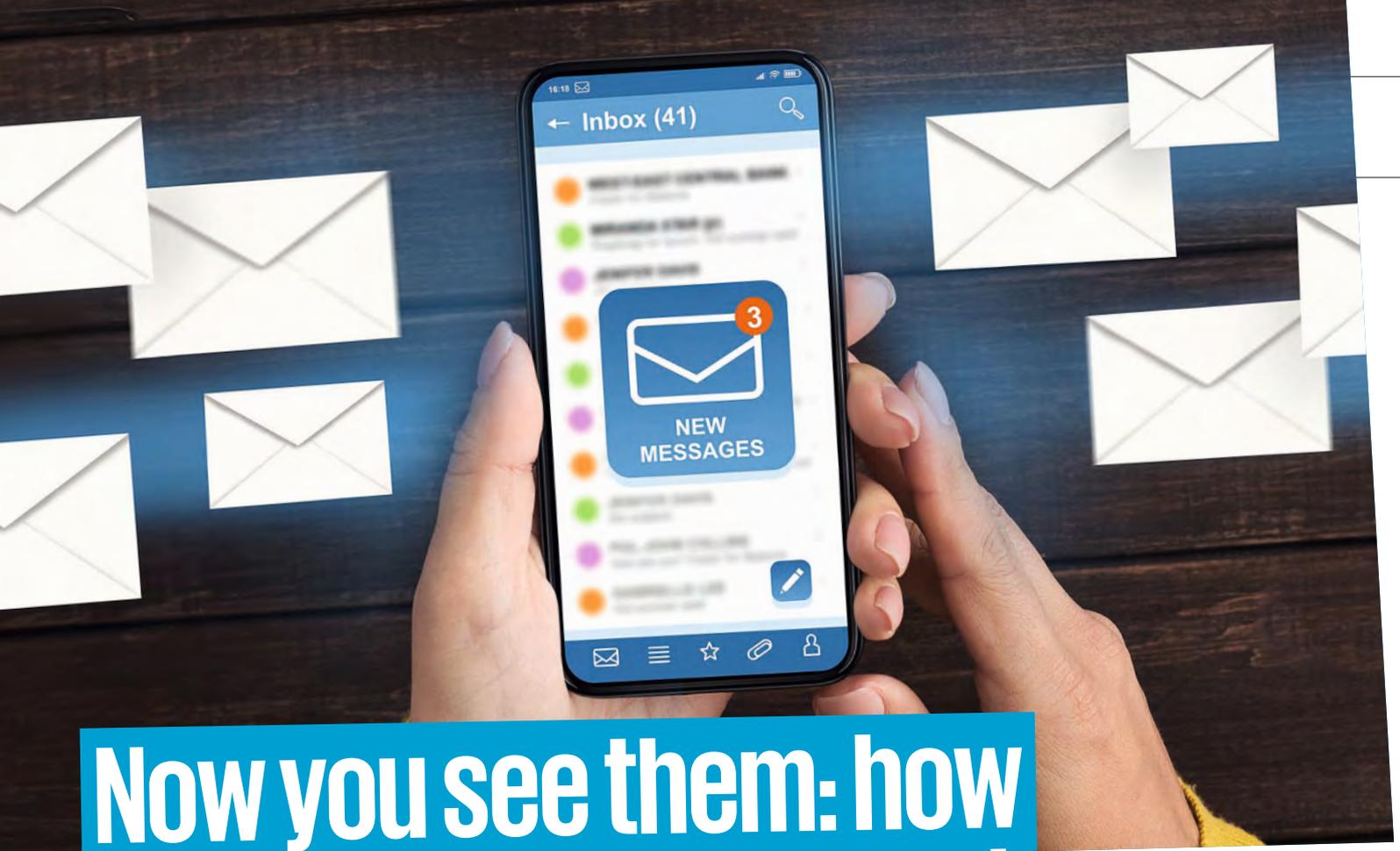


Experts are calling for an urgent review of the apprenticeship levy to bring the scheme up to date

“Investment in skills has never been more important”

The financial benefits of reskilling

A report released in January from the Financial Services Skills Commission (FSSC) and PwC UK revealed that financial services firms could save up to £49,100 per staff member when they reskill an employee, compared to hiring someone new with the relevant skills. The research found a financial services employee costs on average £31,800 to reskill, while the ‘redundancy and rehire’ approach carries an average cost of £80,875. Over a four-year period, the report projected that a company employing 30,000 people could save between £75m and £115m by upskilling current employees into the roles it needs filling. But despite this, just 14 per cent of financial services CEOs made significant progress establishing an upskilling programme to tackle this issue despite a “clear business case” in favour of reskilling and strategic workforce planning.



Now you see them: how employers can prevent jobseeker ghosting

WORDS JASMINE URQUHART

Once confined to the online dating world, 'ghosting' has made its way into recruiters' lexicon – but how can employers fight back against the practice?

After an initial call, things are looking promising: on paper they're a great match and you definitely hit it off during your first phone conversation. You arrange to meet face-to-face, where you get on really well. Conversation is easy and your values align. Perhaps this is actually the one? But then it all goes pear-shaped: they stop answering your calls, your messages go unread and, without any explanation whatsoever, you're back to square

one, scrolling through a fresh batch of potentials.

The practice of 'ghosting' – as it's commonly known in the app-based dating scene – is happening more and more in the world of recruitment. A recent survey of jobseekers, conducted by Visier, found that

three-quarters (76 per cent) admitted they have ghosted a current or potential employer in the last year and a half.

But the picture isn't that simple. Despite

more than two-thirds (68 per cent) of respondents reporting they were concerned about the impact ghosting could have on their career, three in five (61 per cent) still said they would be comfortable doing so. To add more confusion, 59 per cent of jobseekers polled claimed they had been ghosted by an employer themselves, while a third (34 per cent) said they would be angrier if they were ghosted by an employer than if they had been stood up on a date.

According to *Psychology Today*, ghosters tend to experience a high

"76 per cent said they have ghosted current or potential employers"

level of cognitive dissonance in order to alleviate some of the guilt they may feel: perhaps they tell themselves the other party would prefer not to have a difficult conversation or be rejected, despite knowing that they themselves would be offended if the tables were turned.

Whatever the cause, baffled recruiters will want to know why they were rejected in the first place. The Visier study provided a number of suggestions: a negative first impression was cited by a quarter (25 per cent) of the jobseekers polled as a reason to ghost. A similar percentage listed inaccurate job descriptions and incorrectly advertised salaries as a reason to cut communication (both 24 per cent).

Other justifications included receiving a more attractive job offer (22 per cent); a company's bad reputation (19 per cent); and concerns about company culture (20 per cent).

The pandemic hasn't helped the issue either. Nearly half (46 per cent) of jobseekers polled said hybrid working had opened up more opportunities, making them more likely to ghost employers during the recruitment process. The pandemic has also made recruitment processes less personal: something that 45 per cent of respondents said led them to ghosting.

Jill Cotton, career trends expert at Glassdoor, says the pandemic had led to a "spike" in mentions of ghosting on its website. But, she said, despite the recent upheaval in the jobs market, company culture and values were still what mattered most to employees. Her regular advice to jobseekers is: "If an employer's vision and employee experience don't match your expectations, don't waste your time or that of the company by applying for a role."

This is echoed by Becky Schnauffer, senior director at LinkedIn, who says the main reason candidates drop out of recruitment processes early is because they feel they "didn't get a true sense of the company and what it can offer them"; candidates need to be able to "picture themselves in the role", she says. On a practical level, this means policies and benefits around key areas including flexibility, work-life balance and a supportive company culture need to be

placed "front and centre in everything from job ads and employer branding, to the very first interaction with a candidate".

Recruiters should also remain vigilant at the interview stage, says Schnauffer: this is a key moment for employers to "paint a picture of what they're like to work for, and interviewers play an important role in bringing that to life for candidates".

Claire McCartney, senior resourcing and inclusion provider at the CIPD, advises employers to start engaging with candidates well in advance of the onboarding process. "They should be providing information about the role and wider organisation beforehand" and demonstrate that they are following

a fair and inclusive recruitment process to potential new starters, she says. Line managers also need to play their part by making sure they are in touch with candidates on an informal basis and make it clear they are happy to answer any questions, she adds.

Collecting the right data can also help employers find out when candidates are dropping, allowing them to make targeted changes to their recruitment processes, says Daniel Mason, Visier's vice president for Europe. "By using data to highlight at which stage a jobseeker is most likely to leave the recruitment process, more emphasis can be placed

on improving the overall experience based on what the data is telling us prospective employees expect," he says.

Just like apps have changed dating forever, perhaps employers now just need to accept that ghosting will always be a part of recruitment that needs to be factored in. Either way, says Schnauffer, with so many roles at people's fingertips, recruiters need to expect that jobseekers will be more selective about the opportunities they pursue, and remember that for many candidates, priorities around what they want from work may have changed since the pandemic.

* For more resources on recruitment best practice, visit the CIPD's recruitment and induction knowledge hub at bit.ly/CIPDRecruitmentHub



"Employers need to accept ghosting will always be part of recruitment"

Are senior leaders more prolific ghosters?

People might assume that workers in entry-level positions are more likely to ghost, but research shows the opposite is true. In a poll of 1,000 UK jobseekers, conducted by Visier, nearly all (95 per cent) C-suite executive respondents, and more than four in five (84 per cent) mid-level managers, admitted to ghosting an employer or prospective employer in the last 18 months. This compares to 67 per cent of first-level managers and less than half (48 per cent) of entry-level employees.

Comparatively, a small 2019 study of online dating by academics from the University of California found that 65 per cent of participants reported previously ghosting a partner, while 72 per cent said they had been ghosted.



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Why supermarkets are facing equal pay claims – and how other employers can prevent them

Legal experts outline pre-emptive measures firms can take as Co-op becomes the latest retailer to see alleged disparities

On the surface, equal pay for equal work seems like such a simple policy to implement. But a number of retailers are being forced to contend with the claim that different parts of their workforce – often with a gender divide – ought to be compared to each other in terms of pay. Last month, Co-op became the latest to face unequal pay claims from its predominantly female retail staff arguing that the disparity between their pay and that of the firm’s predominantly male distribution centre staff amounts to unequal pay.

At the end of January, Co-op conceded a “comparability concession”, which will allow an employment tribunal (ET) to look at if the work done by the two groups of employees is of equal value or whether there is a reason for the pay disparity that is not gender related. (Co-op maintains that all staff are compensated fairly for the work they do and it will continue defending these claims.)

Co-op is in good company: last year both Next and Sainsbury’s

conceded on the issue of comparability in similar claims brought by their own workforces, while an ET ruled the same regarding two ‘similar’ roles at Morrisons. Before this, the Court of Justice of the European Union made a similar ruling regarding a Tesco worker. But why are so many retailers now facing such similar claims?

In part, it could be because

supermarkets tend to employ large numbers of generally low-paid individuals, says Maria Hoeritzauer, partner at Crossland Employment Solicitors. On top of this, the combination of historical pay disparity and greater transparency in salary between the two parts of the business – retail and distribution – also makes it easier for a

female retail employee to compare herself to a male colleague working in the warehouse, she says.

But, Hoeritzauer cautions: “Any organisation is potentially exposed to equal pay claims.” While the scale may be smaller, it’s perfectly plausible that, for example, a female

receptionist might compare herself or her role to a male working in the business’s post room.

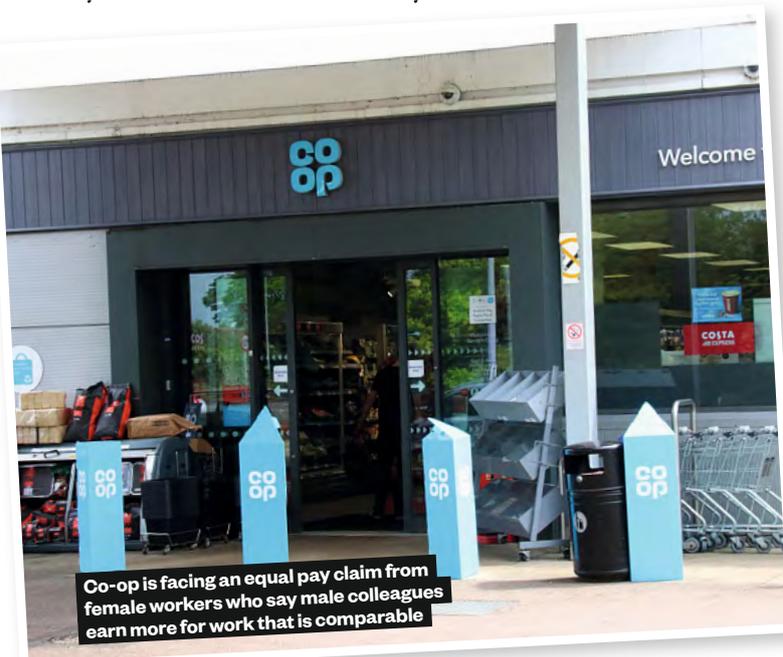
Should the Co-op employees be successful in their claims, Alan Lewis, partner at Constantine Law, warns that a tribunal has the power not only to make the retailer increase their pay to a comparable level, but also require it to backdate any pay rises. The aggregate awards would be “very significant” as arrears can be awarded going back six years in England and Wales and five years in Scotland.

What should concerned employers be doing now?

There are steps businesses concerned about equal pay issues can take, says Paul Holcroft, managing director at Croner. Clear salary structures and pay progression schemes can improve transparency and integrity within an organisation, he says. Pay gap reporting is also a useful way of evaluating the salaries of employees from different genders, and can help firms proactively take steps to ensure pay parity, he explains.

“Employers that pay their staff equally minimise the risk of pay-related grievances and discrimination claims,” says Holcroft. “Doing so also contributes towards an improved company culture, supporting diversity and inclusion, which helps to boost staff motivation, retention and productivity.”

CAITLIN POWELL



KEITH MAYHEW/SOPA IMAGES/LIGHTROCKET/GETTY IMAGES

How will the NHS vaccine U-turn affect you?

With the government backtracking on mandatory Covid jabs for healthcare workers, People Management looks at what that means for other firms contemplating such policies

The government's last-minute decision to axe plans to make vaccination against Covid-19 compulsory for all frontline NHS staff came as a relief for many in the sector. In an 11th-hour U-turn, and amid warnings that the policy could exacerbate existing staffing shortages, the government deemed it "no longer proportionate" to mandate the job for health service workers. "Vaccination is hugely important, but this was the wrong policy, especially as it added to the current pressure on NHS and care services," said Patricia Marquis, director for England at the Royal College of Nursing.

This U-turn is a good example of why the UK government, as a rule, does not insist on vaccination mandates, says Jules Quinn, employment partner at King & Spalding. Particularly now that rapid testing is freely available, it would be very difficult for any employer to show that a mandatory vaccination policy was proportionate or necessary. "If working in frontline healthcare with vulnerable patients is not sufficient justification for a mandatory vaccination policy, how do private sector employers go about constructing such a policy?" she asks.

Even a recent employment tribunal claim, involving a care worker who was dismissed because she refused the vaccine, found in the worker's favour (before the vaccination mandate was enforced in the



care sector in England). "Each case will turn on its own facts," says Quinn, noting that the dismissal in the case in question was during lockdown at a nursing home with high mortality rates. "Any tribunal will consider the environment in which the policy operates," she adds.

Anna Elliott, a partner in Osborne Clarke's employment team, says before the U-turn, employers may have considered

introducing a vaccine mandate on the basis that it aligned with the UK's direction of travel, "Requiring employees to be vaccinated may have seemed more of a reasonable approach to take where vaccination was becoming a legal condition of employment in certain sectors. However, this will be harder to rely on now," she says.

"This U-turn, together with growing evidence that Covid-19 vaccines are less effective at preventing the spread of Omicron, will mean that any employer seeking to make vaccinations mandatory will be even more closely scrutinised."

Employers that still want to go down the mandatory vaccination route should seek advice before they implement anything, stresses Claire Brook, employment law partner at Aaron and Partners. "HR teams should review policies regularly and carefully assess any new initiatives that could give rise to risks of claims," she says.

HR needs to consider long Covid

A recent poll by the CIPD and SimplyHealth found nearly half of firms report they have at least one employee living with long Covid, defined as symptoms that persist more than 12 weeks after the initial Covid infection, and include fatigue, breathing issues and cognitive dysfunction. The survey of HR and L&D

professionals from 804 organisations, which collectively employ 4.3 million people, found that 46 per cent had staff who experienced long Covid symptoms in the last 12 months, and also revealed one in four (26 per cent) firms now cite the condition among their main causes of long-term sickness absences.

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Employee sacked for refusing pandemic office return was unfairly dismissed

Tribunal rules dismissal was not in the range of reasonable responses

An employee at an asset management firm was unfairly and wrongfully dismissed for refusing to return to the office because of fears over contracting Covid-19, a tribunal has ruled.

Nicholas Quelch, a compliance analyst at Courtiers Support Services, was dismissed when he didn't return to work after the first lockdown because he was shielding for his girlfriend, who was 'clinically vulnerable' because of asthma and a heart condition.

The tribunal heard that, while some colleagues had problems working from home, Quelch's line manager, Stuart Richards, said he was working "effectively".

On 12 May 2020, Courtiers began a phased return to the office. Quelch was due to be included in the last phase of the return in July.

In July, the firm's head of HR made it clear Quelch was expected to return, and said he could book annual leave or live separately from his girlfriend if he was concerned.

However, Quelch maintained that he should follow government guidance and keep working from home, and was not willing to take either annual leave or unpaid leave.

When he did not return to work, he was placed on unpaid leave and, following a disciplinary procedure, was told in a letter dated 24 July that he had been dismissed for "gross misconduct". He appealed but failed.

However, an employment tribunal found it was "not reasonable" to demand an employee return to the office when the government's guidance at the time said staff who could – as Quelch had shown he was able to – should work from home.

It said Courtiers "failed to show there was a potentially fair reason for dismissal and that both the sanction and the procedures followed by the respondent fell outside the range of reasonable responses open to a reasonable employer."

It added that, even if Quelch had been guilty of misconduct, or if Courtiers had established a loss of trust and confidence, the tribunal did not consider it "within the range of reasonable responses" to dismiss Quelch.

Commenting on the case, Paul Kelly, head of employment at Blacks Solicitors, said employers need to take care when demanding employees return to the office even though the 'work from home' instruction is no longer in force. "While contractually, employees may be obliged to work from a designated place of work, employers must consider each case individually," he explained.

In a statement, Courtiers said that regulations throughout the pandemic met the approval of its local authority, and that current protocols for employee safety were in line with regulations and guidance.

Plumber allowed to claim back historic unpaid holiday pay

A worker who took unpaid leave because his employer did not believe he was entitled to holiday pay has been allowed to make a claim for his statutory holiday pay entitlement for the duration of his engagement with the firm, a court has ruled.

Overturning a previous judgment from the Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT), brought by Gary Smith against Pimlico Plumbers, the Court of Appeal found workers can only lose the right to roll-over paid leave if their employer has been transparent and encouraged them to take leave.

Lady Justice Simler said any employer needed to "meet the burden of showing [that] it specifically and transparently gave the worker the opportunity to take paid annual leave, encouraged the worker to take paid annual leave and informed the worker that the right would be lost at the end of the leave year."

"If the employer cannot meet that burden, the right [to paid leave] does not lapse [at the end of the year], but carries over and accumulates until termination of the contract," she said.

The Court of Appeal also found that Smith had the right to compensation for leave he had taken unpaid – overturning the EAT's previous ruling.

While workers were already able to indefinitely carry over the untaken part of their four weeks' paid leave entitlement, Barry Ross, director of Crossland Employment Solicitors, explained the decision meant workers could now carry over leave that is taken but unpaid. "On termination, the employer is responsible for payment of the whole amount," he said. Ross added the ruling "also removes the two-year limit for recovery of unlawful deduction from wages," meaning employers "no longer have the backstop of believing their exposure could be limited to two years."

CIPD | HR-inform

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

Care worker who refused Covid vaccine was fairly dismissed

A care home assistant who refused to receive the Covid-19 vaccination when instructed to do so by her employer was fairly dismissed, a Leeds employment tribunal found.

Ms C Allette, employed at Scarsdale Grange Nursing Home from December 2007 until February 2021, told the court that taking "any form of non-natural medication" would go against her Rastafarian beliefs. However, the tribunal found the claimant refused

the vaccine because "she did not trust what [the care home's director] or the authorities were saying at the time about the safety of the vaccine".

While there was no contractual term requiring her to have the Covid-19 vaccine, the tribunal found the home's decision to make the job mandatory for all staff was a "reasonable management instruction" and her refusal amounted to gross misconduct.

Richard Fox, employment partner at Kingsley Napley, said the ruling would be of particular interest to private sector employers as the incident happened before vaccination became a legal requirement for care workers.

This was echoed by Nathan Donaldson of Keystone Law, who said that while the decision was not binding on other tribunals, it was "an early indication" of the approach they might take.



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We'll tell you something...

ENGINEERS AT BP

HISHAM HAMID & ANDY BRUCE

Organisations shouldn't underestimate the power of mentorships

Graduates stepping into the world of work have a tough path ahead of them. Employers are grappling with hybrid working, and younger employees are being asked to quickly develop resilience. We reflected on the start of our careers, and realised our mentoring relationship had really made a difference.

The mentee's view: Andy

Hish and I were paired up during my bp wells engineering summer internship in 2019, which was key in preparing me for a job post-graduation. As a first-generation university student, I didn't know what to expect from the transition into work. While I felt equipped with engineering skills, I wasn't sure how to best apply them.

Hish's genuine and approachable character immediately stood out. Although I initially felt insecure about my skill gaps, Hish helped me address them. By setting goals and taking a structured approach to my development, I gained a sense of urgency over my growth and sought out opportunities to gradually push my capabilities.

Hish and I also found common ground in our experiences as first-generation university students. Being able to identify with his story and having a visual of what my own trajectory could look like was vital for my self-confidence. His genuine passion for uplifting others, and particularly to see me



of direction. He also challenged me to future-proof my career skills and encouraged me to be open with my career stories and use platforms like LinkedIn to network.

Although I was initially nervous, seeing Andy take on feedback and improve throughout the internship gave me confidence in my teaching. Coming from a socially deprived community meant I had to jump through extra hoops while navigating higher education and my early career; however, mentoring has been

a great exercise in affirming both my knowledge and value.

succeed, not only made me feel that his guidance was trustworthy, it pushed me to invest in myself.

The mentor's view: Hish

Most people think of mentorship as a one-way relationship, yet valuing the joint expertise and insights we both brought to the table ensured our relationship was mutually beneficial.

After joining bp as an engineering intern in 2016 and starting my first role as a graduate completions engineer in 2017, I was eager to give back to the early careers schemes that supported my transition to full-time. Andy has helped me develop my technical and soft skill coaching while also learning how to advocate for himself when he disagreed with a certain course

Paying it forward

For us, mentorship allows us to develop and have the opportunity to develop others. Hish acts as the discipline lead for the wells early careers programme at bp, and Andy mentors young people in schools and universities to pursue STEM courses and break down social barriers.

It has also been instrumental for inclusivity – a massively important consideration for graduates who may feel that because of their backgrounds they are under-equipped to be successful in the workplace. At the same time, mentorship helps to challenge those beliefs, it also provides tangible pathways for upward mobility. Not only can mentoring be rewarding for one's career, it can also provide an invaluable opportunity to build friendships that last. **PM**

"Mentoring is instrumental for inclusivity and can provide pathways for social mobility"

“It was uncomfortable, but people wanted to learn”

Highlighting race and privilege has been key to wellbeing for the NHS trust

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets, stretching from the Tower of London and Whitechapel in the west to Bromley-by-Bow in the east, is a melting pot of cultures. According to the 2011 Census, at least 80 languages other than English are spoken by residents in the borough.

It's unsurprising, then, that a large NHS trust headquartered in the borough would also boast a workforce from many backgrounds. East London NHS Foundation Trust – which provides mental health, primary care and community health services to 1.8 million people across Tower Hamlets, as well as other London boroughs, plus Luton and Bedfordshire – has more than 6,500 staff, as well as many more bank workers also on its payroll.

In 2018, the trust began work to boost its wellbeing activities to take this diversity into account, using the ‘determinants of health’ approach, which uses factors such as lifestyle, finance and housing. At that point, explains chief people officer Tanya Carter, came the realisation that a better understanding of the issues affecting staff could help the trust support them.

Segmenting staff by gender and age to gain an idea of how many might be affected by menopause was the first project in this arena. “We might not have a significant proportion who are currently

menopausal, but there are those who are perimenopausal, and a vast number of women in teams, some of whom are managed by men,” she explains. “So it’s about how we start that conversation.”

Taking into account the pillar of the trust’s strategy that focuses on staff experience led Carter to draw the link between this segmentation work, and staff from ethnic minorities reporting via the staff survey a worse experience of bullying. “Overlay that with daily occurrences of discrimination, how are they going to show up to work?” Carter explains. “We needed to provide a safe space for staff to have those conversations.”

A series of initiatives followed, designed to shine a light on the experiences of the trust’s ethnic minority colleagues, including race and privilege sessions, during which staff told stories about their experiences. “The reaction from some white colleagues was disappointment and sadness,” says Carter. “They hadn’t realised people they work with every day had been going through that.”

Because storytelling “really works in our organisation”, says Carter, and with broadly positive staff survey results yet indicators around bullying, harassment

and aggression showing pockets of poor experience remained, later in 2019 the trust brought in the Empathy Museum to run a ‘Mile in my Shoes’ experiential exhibit, where staff could visit and were given another person’s shoes to literally walk in while listening to their story via headphones. An external facilitator was also brought in for sessions where staff told their experiences via drawings. “We wanted creative ways to keep the dialogue going,” Carter explains.

Armed with a catalogue of employees’ experiences, Carter raised the issue with the trust’s board. The stories were all then split into themes, including the

experiences of Black women and inconsistent application of the Bradford factor, and shared at a session with more than 1,300 managers, during which one senior leader shared an example of when she could have handled a situation differently. “There was this moment when people felt they had permission to talk

about what they hadn’t got right,” says Carter. The work further progressed with the help of a charity, which co-designed four monthly sessions with the trust’s most senior leaders to explain how the organisation could address white privilege and work towards becoming multicultural

“We needed to provide a safe space for staff to have those conversations”



Tanya Carter maintains supporting wellbeing is about understanding what staff really need and doing what it takes to help them achieve it

and anti-racist. “People were clearly uncomfortable, but there was also a desire to learn and get it right,” Carter says.

When Covid hit, having a proven disproportionate impact on ethnic minority communities, plus the events stemming from the murder of George Floyd, Carter saw this as the natural continuation of the trust’s race and privilege work. A recurring theme, she recalls, was people feeling they had to assimilate and change things about themselves – for example their name, hair or how they spoke. This led to the creation of the #MyNameReallyIs social media campaign, encouraging staff to tweet their full or un-westernised names. The campaign resulted in more than 22,000 impressions, and was the trust Twitter account’s second most popular tweet of 2020.

At the height of the pandemic, the trust also implemented staff wellbeing initiatives. The BAME staff network requested access to vitamin D supplements, a three-month supply of which the trust provided to any employee who requested them (more than half did so) free of charge, under the #SunshineInMyPocket campaign, which is running again this year. Spearheaded by Carter, the trust also hosted a full timetable of online classes for the children of staff who were struggling to work from home and homeschool their children.

Employing several agency teachers and helping more than 1,500 children across seven weeks, the project went from idea to the first lesson in the space of a week and a half, and remains one of Carter’s proudest achievements to date. “I didn’t have time to ask for permission – it was one of those ‘seek forgiveness, not permission’ moments,” she laughs. Plenty of people have called into question whether providing free supplements and lessons for workers’ children is part of the trust’s remit as an employer, but Carter remains steadfast as the trust continues to go above and beyond to support employees’ wellbeing in 2022. “We asked, people told us what they needed, and we found a way to make it happen. People were just so grateful we had thought about it.”

“We supercharged our strategy when Covid hit”

The water company was able to rethink and improve its long-term plans, despite initially being derailed by the global pandemic

Although it might be more synonymous with Ross Geller’s futile attempts to get a sofa up a flight of stairs in *that* episode of *Friends*, the word ‘pivot’ also unexpectedly became a buzzword for Severn Trent in 2020, after it was forced to rethink on its plans to improve employee experience when the pandemic hit.

The water company’s work had been in the offing since 2018, yet just a month before it was due to start delivering, Covid reached UK shores. Rather than waver or deviate from its plan, the firm instead worked to “supercharge” it and bolster support for its 7,000 employees.

“It really helped people during that time to know that, while everything outside was uncertain, when they came into work, we knew what we were doing,” explains group HR director Neil Morrison, who said the company’s approach remained steadfast: “This is the plan, no excuses. We’re going to deliver this.”

As a regulated company, Severn Trent presents a business plan every five years explaining how it will deliver for its customers and employees. For its HR department, the 2020-25 submission was focused on engaging colleagues and allowing them to feel like they own the company’s targets.

Part of this planning process was its ‘Bike on the Boat Tour’, the concept of

which was inspired by a New Zealand team that competed in the America’s Cup race with bikes on their boat: lateral thinking which revolutionised its performance. “The whole point was to look at a problem in a different way, with creativity and innovation,” Morrison says. “We wanted to ask all our colleagues how we should approach the way they think about the service we provide differently.”

The firm’s CEO hosted nearly 80 hour-and-a-half-long events over eight weeks, under the ‘Bike on a Boat’ project, speaking to employees about the innovation they wanted. Having set its KPIs and presented them to 1,000 senior management team members at an event held in an airport hangar, the company hosted another event to kick off the plan in 2020, only – mere weeks later – to be forced to “pivot” as lockdown measures were introduced.

With 40 per cent of staff unable to go into the workplace and the other 60 per cent deemed ‘essential’ workers, Morrison describes how this split the organisation into distinct groups – but that the company managed to make it work. “Very early on, we decided not to furlough anyone and not make any redundancies,” he says. “We would still pay bonuses if we

hit our targets, and that was also really important because people’s partners were being furloughed or losing their jobs.”

As the pandemic developed, Severn Trent ran a regular CEO video blog, a cross-company news bulletin and communications distilling government messaging on restrictions. “We tried to create experiential learning and communications to help people process information in a way that made sense for them,” Morrison explains. But because much of its staff are frontline workers who do not spend their working day in front of a computer,

not everyone was able to receive the emails, so Severn Trent also introduced ‘Comms Cells’, an area on the walls with information employees needed to know.

During the first year of all its changes, despite the challenges of the pandemic, employee engagement increased 2.5 per cent, with an average employee rating of 8.3 out of 10, putting Severn Trent in the top 5 per cent of utility companies globally. According to Morrison, this achievement has continued steadily, remaining at this high level. The company’s impressive work in this area also ensured it took home the trophy for ‘Best employee experience’ at the 2021 CIPD People Management Awards. “All of these measures indicate that people are enjoying what they’re

“We tried to create experiential learning to help people process information”

doing,” Morrison says. “The quality of feedback shows staff are invested in making things better and helping to deliver which, to me, is a sign of success.”

Prior to the pandemic, Severn Trent had also launched employee inclusion and diversity advisory groups for LGBTQ+, ethnic minority and disabled staff, and they too were “supercharged” after Covid’s emergence, quickly becoming key to the firm’s response. “We recognised that everyone was going through a different kind of experience in the workplace, so it was quite easy to take our ‘lunch and learn’ sessions or Black History Month celebrations virtual, for example,” Morrison explains. “The groups created communities working together to talk about what was going on, so people could share things that matter to them, rather than us telling them what to do.”

But when restrictions were lifted during the summer of 2020, Severn Trent was quick to bring as many people back to the workplace as possible. “Our performance is better when we are collaborating because of the nature of our business: a 24/7, 365-days-a-year essential service,” he explains. “Having people together is really important to be able to solve problems.”

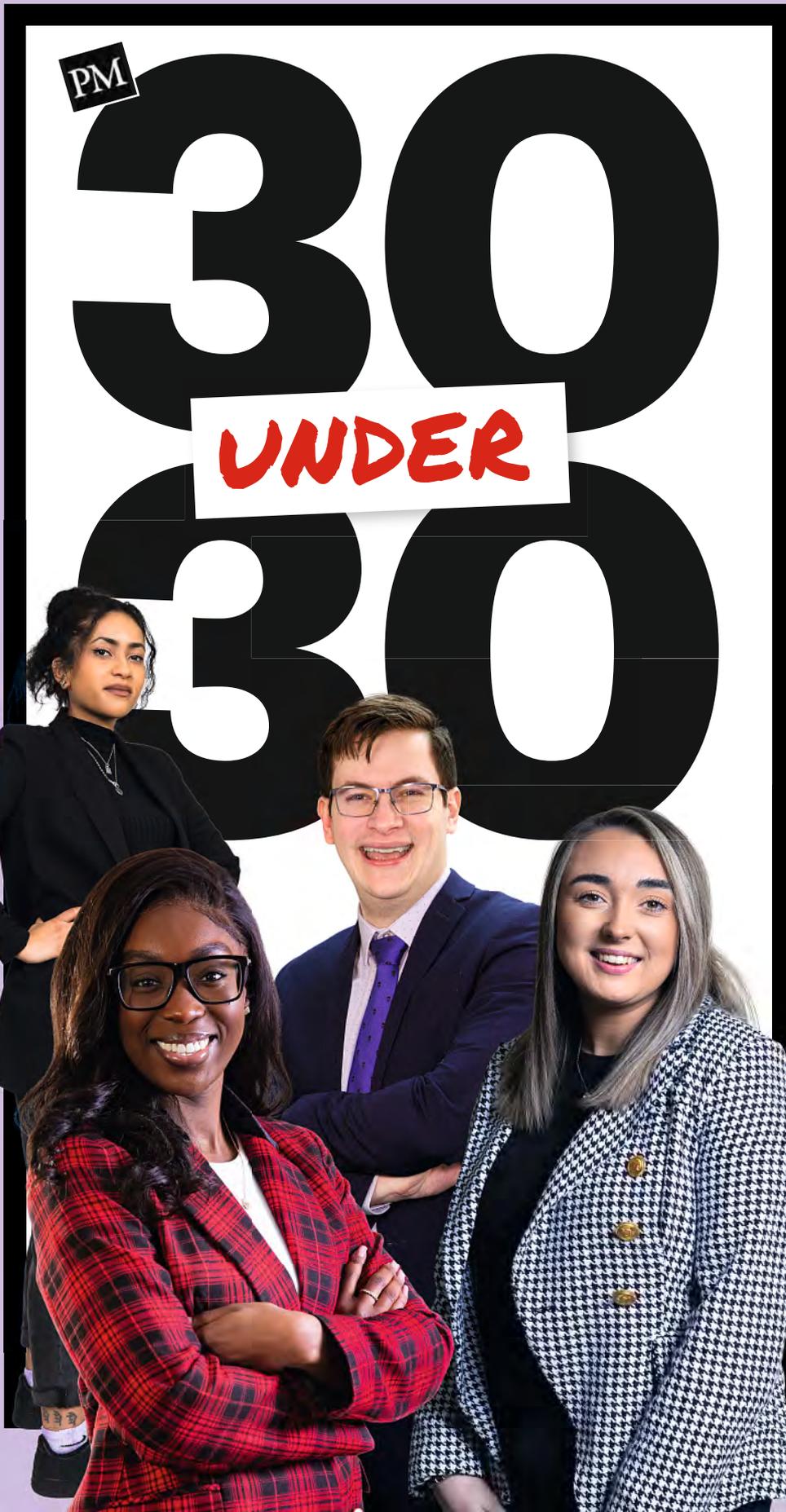
So, what next for Severn Trent? Excitingly, the company will be contributing to the Commonwealth Games, hosted in the Midlands later this year. Employees will be volunteering during the event but also act as baton bearers in the run-up. “This is a major sporting event taking place on our doorstep that should be something we’re all really proud of,” Morrison says.

But despite impressive data and award wins, the firm isn’t done pushing employee experience further. “We’ve had real co-creation with our colleagues and our communities, feeling very much connected to what we’re doing, and I don’t see that changing at all,” Morrison says. “It’s a fundamental part of our DNA.”

* The CIPD People Management Awards 2022 are now open for entries. For more information and to download an entry pack, visit [cipdpmas.co.uk](https://www.cipdpmas.co.uk)



Neil Morrison says that all staff were challenged to look at problems “more creatively and innovatively”



Meet People Management's hand- picked selection of HR's rising stars

As we reach a milestone two years since the Covid pandemic first gripped the UK, the past 24 months have been tough for all of us, but young people have arguably had it especially difficult. In September 2020, Office for National Statistics (ONS) data revealed the number of 16- to 24-year-olds in employment fell by 156,000 in the three months to July 2020, and in April 2021, a Resolution Foundation report found the unemployment rate among 18- to 24-year-olds jumped 18 per cent between the second and third quarters of 2020.

More latterly, an Institute for Employment Studies (IES) report from November 2021 found that almost two-thirds (62 per cent) of people aged 16 to 24 said the pandemic had made it harder to find high-quality work. There were also significant reductions in apprenticeship starts, graduate schemes and work experience placements at the onset of the crisis.

To that end, *People Management* is proud to introduce the inaugural HR 30 Under 30 – a list of the best and brightest young HR and L&D practitioners set to become the next generation of leaders within the profession. Nominated by either themselves or a colleague, they are individuals who demonstrate talent and skill in their roles and an understanding of the profession and its place within organisations; show promise to lead the next generation of HR professionals; and embody the CIPD's professional principles: Work Matters, People Matter and Professionalism Matters.

From a significant number of nominations, the final list has been hand-picked by the *People Management* editorial team as those who best meet the criteria above. Congratulations to them all.

* The CIPD student conference is being held online on **Saturday 2 April 2022**, and is free to attend for student members. To find out more and register to attend, visit cipd.co.uk/studentconf

Dustin Hafki, Assoc CIPD

Business consultant, people and research at People Spark Solutions



Dustin joined the newly formed company on an internship in June 2020 before being offered a permanent role. He already has a range of diverse work under his belt, including leading a team of organisational experts to help a client become more customer focused. Dustin is a champion of Generation Z, and his research was recently shared at the CIPD's Northern Conference. The business's owner says clients specifically request Dustin's service, and that he has a bright future ahead.

Abiola Bello, Assoc CIPD

Interim head of HR at UBL UK

Abiola has overcome several challenges in her lifetime, including being diagnosed with retinoblastoma (cancer of the retina) aged one and not being expected to see her fifth birthday. After other setbacks, at 19 she began an HR apprenticeship, and has since completed her Level 5 CIPD qualification and a Master's in HR, and this year plans to undertake an LLM in employment law. She sees herself as successful because of what she's gone through and because she's defied odds, not just because of her job title.



Charlotte Seymour

HR advisor at St Barnabas Hospices

Charlotte was made redundant from her previous role due to Covid, and in the year since she joined St Barnabas has grown in confidence, according to her nominator. As one of only two advisors supporting 500 employees, ranging from clinical staff to retail workers, Charlotte is exposed to all HR-related functions, yet takes even challenging work in her stride and isn't afraid to go the extra mile. Now managing two recently appointed HR apprentices, Charlotte's energy, commitment and innovative thinking ensure she is an excellent role model.



Bethan McAulay

Recruitment specialist at Telespazio UK

As recruitment specialist, Bethan is in charge of identifying skilled candidates for technical roles in highly sought-after fields. Her nominator says she has learned about the business's STEM skills and gender diversity difficulties quickly, putting a stronger focus on diversifying its recruitment process and external and internal messaging. She has also used her role to champion stronger diversity within the industry, and supports those in under-represented areas to progress internally by supporting their confidence.



Daniel Anderson-Poore, Assoc CIPD

HR advisor at Vistry Partnerships

During his four years in HR, Daniel has already progressed to advisor. He spearheaded improvements to his former employer's onboarding process, as well as driving engagement through fundraising efforts. He currently supports HR activity among 600 employees, led a review of the firm's family-friendly policies and is driving several inclusion and diversity initiatives. Outside work, Daniel runs a mentoring scheme with the CIPD's Wessex branch.



Chloe Jordan, Assoc CIPD

Head of HR and change at Fosters Funeral Directors

Nominated by not one but two of her colleagues, Chloe joined the company as an HR assistant fresh from university in 2019 and has since carried out "intricate"

casework that many of her seniors have not. As well as redesigning the culture, Chloe has rolled out a new suite of policies and guided the business through a long period of change. Thanks to her recent promotion, she now sits as part of the senior leadership team. According to one of her nominators, she is "phenomenal".



James Williams,
foundation MCIPD
HR manager at Tayna

Since joining Tayna to lead its HR function after working in L&D for two years, James has focused on embedding the CIPD's professional principles, including clearly defining roles, developing new policies and

ensuring HR is visible within the organisation. He has introduced a new recruitment process, supported by an equality and diversity policy, and also boosted wellbeing support within the company for both managers and employees, including dedicated mental health support months and a new and improved employee benefits scheme.

Emma Hollands,
CIPD student
member



Talent manager
at Punch!

Emma originally began her career in sales at Punch! before being offered the role of talent executive. Now promoted, Emma leads a team of three and heads up HR, recruitment and L&D for the agency. When Covid hit less than a year into her role, she was challenged to implement Punch!'s remote recruitment and onboarding strategy, and she has been instrumental in growing the firm's headcount by 40 per cent. She has also put in place a unique training framework, by which each employee has a training journey linked to their own development and progression.

Jessica Dolphin, Assoc CIPD
HR service manager at Leeds City Council

Jessica currently manages the council's employee relations, and recently led on agreeing an updated consultation framework with trade unions to help mitigate compulsory redundancies and save the council £100m over five years. She previously ran initiatives to increase employee disclosure rates around protected characteristics, and used data to support the council's HR leadership team on changes required as a result of the Covid pandemic. Away from work, she also mentors local university students studying HR.



Martha Palk
HR manager at Birketts LLP

Promoted to HR manager from officer level in mid-2021, Martha is responsible for generalist HR, as well as health and wellbeing and development of trainee solicitors at the top 100 UK law firm. A particularly successful project of Martha's is the Thrive programme, which has been instrumental in breaking down the stigma attached to mental health conditions, and included senior members of staff sharing stories of their own mental health. Martha aims to be known as someone who promotes the positives of HR, including the variety of work and the technical skills required.



Tobi Omoode,
CIPD student
member

HR generalist
EMEA at Power
Integrations



Tobi discovered his passion for HR, as well as his skills in resolving conflict and problem solving, while studying psychology at university in Nigeria, and chose to relocate to the UK in order to pursue a career in the profession. Despite the challenges this brought, he managed to secure his first HR role while still studying through "networking and perseverance", and is eager to learn new skills and help HR become the "partner that management needs". He's currently studying for a CIPD Associate Diploma in People Management.

Eirini Triantou,
CIPD student
member

HR manager UK,
IR & Nordics at
Zadig&Voltaire



Despite only having a year of experience, Eirini is already leading the HR department at one of the world's most high-end luxury brands. She's responsible for recruitment, payroll, L&D and ER, including aligning the strategy from the brand's Paris HQ with her markets, and has implemented several projects to improve retail employees' experiences, such as better training, reward evaluation and initiating wellbeing discussions - all fulfilling her passion of making work more meaningful, particularly in such a fast-paced industry.

Victoria Brice

People and culture director at Gallagher

In the space of a year, Victoria has built a completely new people and culture team of seven from scratch to change the business's attitude towards HR, driving its approach and mindset forward to be able to grow, according to Victoria's nominator. Having been promoted, she is now responsible for multinational colleagues as well as the UK,

and has been recognised by the company's US parent for her "exceptional" work.

Victoria is determined to make Gallagher a better place for people to work and feel empowered to be themselves.



Faye Walsby, CIPD student member

HR and people advisor at MCFT

Having been offered an HR role with MCFT after completing work experience, Faye was given responsibility for the 'pathways to work' project, engaging with local schools and creating recruitment materials. Fast forward four years, and MCFT is now a key employer of young people, with Gold status from The 5% Club and Faye representing MCFT in the South East Apprenticeship Ambassador Network. Faye is looking forward to completing her CIPD Level 5 qualification later this year.



Vikki Back, CIPD student member

Head of people at SimplyCook

As SimplyCook's sole HR professional, Vikki has grown the workforce by 119 per cent since December 2020 and spearheaded reward and L&D best practice, as well as handling the company's many Covid-secure protocols – all alongside studying for her CIPD Association Diploma in People Management. The colleague who nominated Vikki says she faces some "steep learning curves", with the company recently having been acquired by Nestle, the world's largest food company, but that her compassion makes "the extra difference".



Tim Hardy-Lenik

Director of inclusion and workforce equity at CSG

At 29 years of age, Tim is already a key player in the inclusion and diversity sphere, having spent more than a decade in the field and previously holding senior I&D roles at international organisations including the British Red Cross. He's a frequent speaker at events including CIPD conferences, where he's shared his lived experiences of being gay and disabled, and has also set up his own consultancy offering his time and expertise to not-for-profits to develop their I&D expertise.



Rachel Lockwood, Assoc CIPD

HR advisor at Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (LTHT)

Rachel started working for LTHT in 2015 and has worked her way up to her current role. She successfully completed a postgraduate diploma in HR management in 2020, having begun the qualification while still on maternity leave. With the trust recently having adopted a personalised approach to ER, Rachel has fully leaned in to this new strategy, and sees her role as a counsellor, teacher, mediator and therapist, all rolled into one. She is proud of the journey she's been on to get to where she is today, and wouldn't dream of a different career.



Isi Onwukwe, Assoc CIPD

HR executive at Doughty Street

Within a year of Isi taking on Doughty Street's I&D initiatives, the barristers' chambers had won a UK Diversity Legal Award for managing diverse talent. As well as writing a new strategy that included

diversifying recruitment, resulting in 15 per cent better diversity among staff, Isi also updated the chambers' constitution to ensure representation across ethnicities and genders in all teams, and updated its election process, resulting in the first Black woman being co-opted onto the board within a year of this change.



Antonia Reed

HR business partner at St John Ambulance

Starting her career in the Royal Air Force at just 16, Antonia secured an apprenticeship and worked for senior staff at the MoD and RAF High Wycombe. One of her roles was looking after HR for deployments, with a highlight being changing the way these were managed to allow colleagues to spend more time with their families. After nine years,

Antonia was medically discharged with complex post-traumatic stress disorder (C-PTSD), and refused to let it define her. She is now settled in her permanent role and studying for a Master's in HRM.



Alexandra Humphries

Group L&D manager at Rentokil Initial

Alexandra joined Rentokil Initial on its graduate scheme in 2016, and joined its group HR function permanently in 2018. After spending time in Australia supporting an HR system rollout, she returned to take over digital learning, managing a team of six. Under her leadership, the team has surpassed all expectations and seen use of its learning management system jump to an all-time high. Alexandra's nominator says she has an ability to thrive in the company's complex, fast-paced environment, and that she adds real value to the organisation.



Emilie Parsons, Assoc CIPD

HR officer at SUEZ UK

Joining SUEZ UK just a month before the first lockdown meant Emilie's role got off to a challenging start. Undertaking her day job while also studying for her CIPD Advanced Diploma, Emilie has recently been involved in a project to switch to a new performance management system, as well as supporting the running of the firm's women's network. She also advocates for young people in the local area and encourages them into STEM careers, having hosted virtual work experience during lockdown, and acts as regional sustainability champion.



Megan Barr

HR advisor at Lockton

A former colleague of Megan's who nominated her says she has achieved a lot in her short career so far.

In her previous role, Megan was the primary contact for support with HR matters including disciplinarys, sickness absence and redundancies, and also channelled her passion for mental health by joining the wellness committee and taking ownership of several wellbeing initiatives. In her current organisation she's already supported the change of several policies and processes and continues to prioritise mental health and be a great role model for self-care.



Jack French, Assoc CIPD

Talent acquisition sourcer at Bloomberg LP

Jack is a British Army veteran who reskilled to pursue a career in HR.

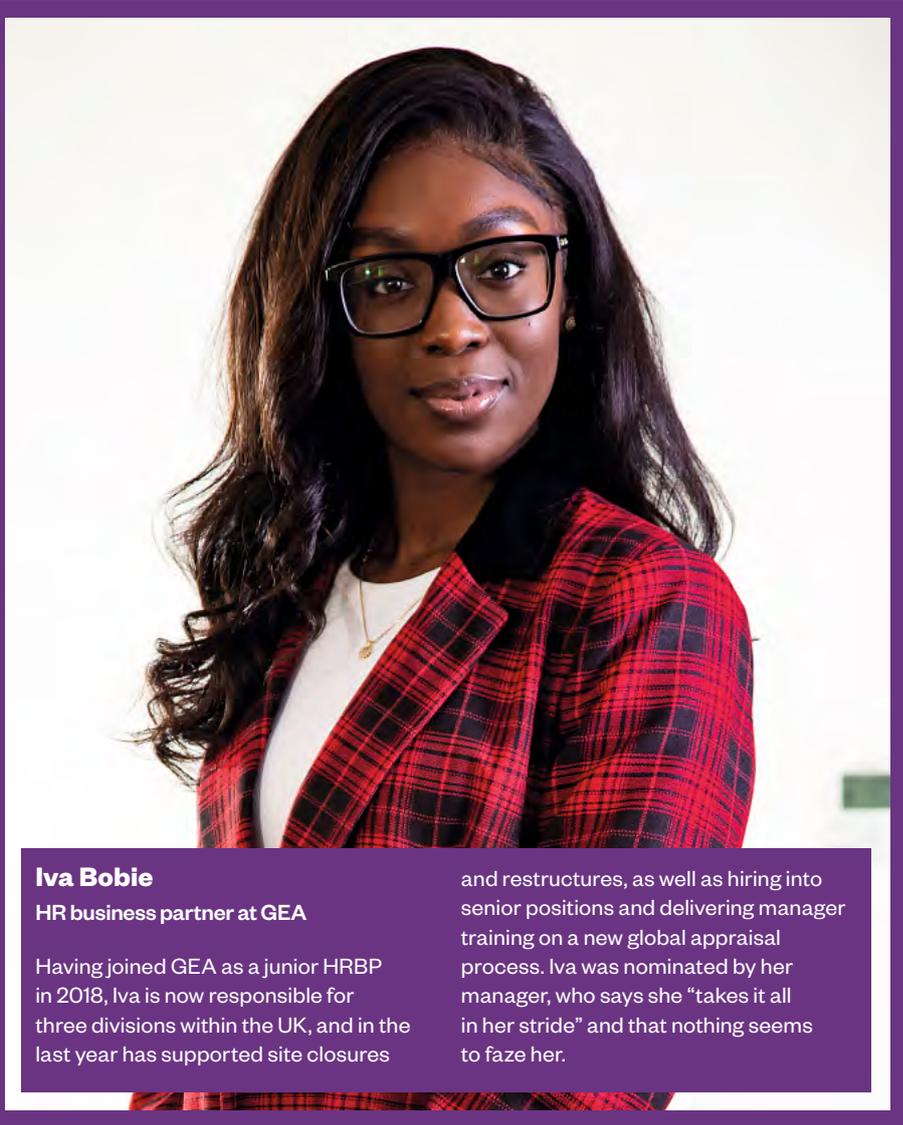
He specialises in talent acquisition, recruiting for the firm's global functions. An advocate of I&D in hiring, Jack was recently awarded Bloomberg's HR Newcomer of the Year. Jenna Follet, head of data, support and corporate functions recruitment EMEA and APAC, says Jack has "huge potential", and that he displays strong recruitment skills and knowledge of other HR functions, and works with HRBPs and I&D partners to drive true value for the business.

Iva Bobie

HR business partner at GEA

Having joined GEA as a junior HRBP in 2018, Iva is now responsible for three divisions within the UK, and in the last year has supported site closures

and restructures, as well as hiring into senior positions and delivering manager training on a new global appraisal process. Iva was nominated by her manager, who says she "takes it all in her stride" and that nothing seems to faze her.



Amelia Darling, CIPD student member

Head of OD at Barking,
Havering & Redbridge
Hospitals NHS Trust



Having held her role at the north east London-based trust for the past four years, Amelia has been at the forefront of its response to the pandemic, with its four hospitals facing one of the highest Covid rates in the country and a huge impact on staff. Amelia led a wellbeing programme for more than 9,000 staff, including organising a dedicated 'thank you week' in June 2021. According to the trust's deputy CEO who nominated her, Amelia's talent has made a "massive difference" to her challenged part of the NHS.

Charlotte Fordyce, CIPD student member

Global head of HR at Triptease

Charlotte was somewhat thrown in at the deep end, having joined travel tech start-up Triptease the week before the UK went into lockdown in March 2020.

Since then, she has managed redundancies and furlough, hired and onboarded 60 people, facilitated temporary pay cuts, taken on payroll

following the payroll manager's redundancy, and implemented new HR, recruitment and payroll systems and a benefits plan, plus much more – all in less than two years.



Jake Brown, Assoc CIPD

HR business partner
at TK Elevator

Jake has been with TK Elevator for just over a year, and in that time has wowed with his

stakeholder management, ability to partner with colleagues and his generalist HR knowledge despite being just 21 years old. Jake has supported projects including two system implementations, a full contract review, a TUPE process and a full piece of OD work, as well as taking on payroll responsibilities after a colleague's departure despite having no prior knowledge. Jake's nominator describes him as a "truly exceptional HR talent".



Liam Clancy, Assoc CIPD

HR business partner at Ford
Motor Company

Liam has been with Ford for six years, during which time he has held a number of different HR roles – most recently, he was

promoted to management level, at which he's supporting the company's commercial vehicles team, as well as standing up the new Ford Pro organisation. His greatest achievement at Ford, he says, is forming the firm's innovation lab, which he has been setting up for the past two years.

Mary Jo Cabanes-Book, Assoc CIPD

HR manager at Network N

During her time at Network N, Mary Jo has set up the company's HR function from scratch, as well as implemented an extensive people strategy that has helped it double in size in the space of a year. She is currently studying for a Master's in HR Management at the University of the West of England, Bristol, and has ambitions to

become an HR director and a Chartered Member of the CIPD within three years. A colleague who nominated Mary Jo says she "always looks at different ways to support her employees".



Naya Inyama

HR advisor at SHP

Despite only being in her second role in the people profession, Naya has already impressed the team at SHP, according to her colleague who nominated her, with her "high level of maturity, resilience and discipline". During her time with the company, she has efficiently led a large caseload of employee relations issues and sickness absence management. She takes the time to ensure employees, managers and HR have honest conversations, and has coached managers to achieve better outcomes around performance concerns, regularly receiving praise, including from the company's directors for her consistently good work.

There are better ways to recruit good HR people

Hiring is difficult across the board right now, but the people profession can be an exemplar when recruiting its own

WORDS KATIE JACOBS

Samantha Lubanzu recently went through a recruitment process for a senior role at a global organisation. Over six long months, she sat through eight rounds of interviews. She met everyone from executives to every member of the team with whom she'd be working. After interview number eight, she was told the role was moving to London (she's based in Manchester) and therefore she was no longer suitable.

If that candidate experience makes you wince, does it make it even worse to hear Samantha is an HR professional? With recruitment meant to be one of the profession's core competencies, surely we can do better than this? As David D'Souza, CIPD membership director, puts it: "We need to hold ourselves to a standard of recruitment experience that we would want friends and family to pass through as a candidate."

A combination of drivers – the economic bounceback, Brexit, pandemic-driven lifestyle changes and so on – means the general recruitment market, to quote one CPO, is in "the craziest state I've ever known". The same could be said of the market for people professionals. "The HR recruitment market has never been more buoyant and is extremely candidate-driven," says Louise Sorrell, business director for HR at recruitment firm Badenoch + Clark. "We have gone from redundancies and furlough to fighting a battle to find top talent."

Data from the Hays *Salary & Recruiting Trends 2022* guide shows 85 per cent of employers plan on recruiting



Samantha Lubanzu says, from a diversity perspective, it is “shockingly hard” to get into HR

HR staff over the next 12 months. “HR [is at the] forefront of employers’ minds as the function has been a key driver and support of workplace changes,” says Yvonne Smyth, who leads the HR practice at Hays. Yet despite high recruitment intentions, employers are struggling to attract those with the required skills and experience. More than half (54 per cent) of employers say these skills shortages and the strain they are placing on teams is lowering morale.

As the UK economy reopens and rebuilds, the need for HR is clear. With many organisations chasing growth-inducing transformation, leaders recognise the need for stronger people teams. The changing shape of UK plc adds another competitive element, says Deloitte’s resourcing director Simon Hallett. “There is more competition in terms of employers now,” he explains. “We are seeing more non-traditional businesses including rapidly upscaling tech businesses that need to grow their HR functions quickly. That creates movement in more established areas.”

Then when you think you’ve found the perfect hire, they may be snatched away at the last minute. Sorrell has noticed an increase in counter offers, as

organisations dig deep into their pockets to retain staff with cold, hard cash. It’s something Jennifer Hulme, HR director at Marlowe Fire and Security, has been burned by. “I made a terrible mistake hiring a candidate who joined, then left on day three,” she says. “They had multiple offers on the table and waited for an alternative firm offer before leaving.” Hulme has also had to fill an HR officer role twice in a year, after her original hire was offered a pay rise elsewhere, and experienced multiple no-shows for interviews.

Such tough conditions mean no one can afford to be complacent. It’s a great time to examine your recruitment processes: can they keep up with the market? “Ensure you can act quickly, as the market is moving at pace,” says Sorrell. “Good candidates are being snapped up.” She advises making sure the process has no more than two or three stages.

It’s also worth reviewing and benchmarking your pay and benefits offering. But Hulme, whose people team has grown from four to 14 since she

joined in June 2020, advises thinking holistically rather than getting too hung up on numbers, because candidates are becoming increasingly interested in the broader package. “You need to approach with a competitive salary, then spend the rest of the time discussing the other elements – development, style of leadership, CSR initiatives, the social side, holidays, benefits and colleagues,” she says. “You can no longer offer a great salary and pension and expect that to be enough. You need to understand the needs of your candidates and, to

an extent, tailor the package to them.”

She also focuses on painting a picture of HR’s contribution to the business and her vision for the future. “I am adamant that each person understands the role they will play in the journey and can see their accountability for it,” she

says. Some might see spending time on the vision and strategy before making an offer as too much effort, but Hulme believes it’s worth the upfront investment. “Candidates have been enthused by the

“You can no longer offer a great salary and pension and expect that to be enough”

HOW TO MAKE HR RECRUITMENT A BREEZE

Louise Sorrell, business director for HR at Badenoch + Clark, offers top tips for hassle-free hiring

- Ensure you can act quickly with your recruitment processes. Review your current process and keep it to two or three stages.
- Avoid using multiple agencies at once and meet good candidates as they apply, rather than waiting for a closing date.
- Ensure your onboarding process is engaging (especially for those working remotely) and maintain contact with candidates between the offer/acceptance stage and start date.
- Review current pay and benefits and compare with your competitors. This is often a deciding factor when candidates are making a decision on multiple offers.
- Sell your career progression opportunities and internal and global mobility options at interview stage, as many candidates feel the pandemic had an impact on their career development. Sell the organisation, your culture and your values at interview stage as well – if you have a great culture, it could make the difference between a candidate choosing a higher-paid role over yours.
- Choose your best brand ambassadors to interview – those who are able to engage and articulate your employer proposition with enthusiasm. More than ever, recruitment is a two-way process and employers need to sell themselves just as much as candidates if they want to attract the very best talent.
- Ensure your employees feel part of a shared identity. You can differentiate yourself in a candidate-short market by making sure your employees feel recognised and valued and that their wellbeing is supported.
- Be more open-minded when shortlisting. Can you consider candidates with no HR experience for junior roles? Does the role demand someone who already has their CIPD Level 7 or can you offer this as part of the benefits? Can you consider someone more senior who is looking for a better work-life balance or from a different part of the business who can transfer their commercial skills into HR?



idea of a departmental journey with clear goals and direction,” she says.

It’s an approach that Karen Saunders, an interim chief people officer who recently finished an assignment in the higher education sector, also takes. Like Hulme, she found recruiting an almost entirely fresh people team a challenge, and also focused on offering candidates a full picture of the people strategy: “Time consuming, yes, but beneficial in terms of getting people productive much earlier.”

But how does that match up with the need for speed? Hulme has experienced poor recruitment processes where candidates have been offered roles out of desperation. “You can’t do this in HR: you have to be sure and take the time you need,” she says. “That doesn’t mean a quick decision can’t be made, but you need to have strong recruitment mechanisms in place to ‘test’ the candidate.”

Hallett believes it’s about finding a balance between speed and human connection – something many hiring managers and candidates will have been sorely missing since March 2020. He also advises making judicious use of psychometrics tools: “If you understand people’s natural preferences and traits, you can compare them against the requirements of the role and have a higher quality discussion. It’s a good way of ensuring a 50/50 approach – as much about the candidate understanding if the role is right for them.”

When it comes to reaching top talent, having a strong employer brand is more important than ever, says Sarah Dewar, CPO at Concern Group. “We have done a lot in the past year to show our employer brand, values and commitment to our people externally, which has led to increased interest from people who are keen to work in an organisation where the people function is valued,” she says. “You need to stand out as a forward-thinking and dynamic function. Show potential candidates how you invest in people.”

Sorrell has noticed a decline in the number of candidates applying for roles through traditional job adverts, while Saunders tried “every type of recruitment

approach”, from direct recruitment to agencies, but found the best outcomes came from networks. However, people professionals need to bear in mind that diversity can suffer when recruiting via networks and mitigate accordingly.

Even if you have the perfect recruitment process, it doesn’t mean you’ll be able to find the perfect hire. Saunders has found herself underwhelmed by the quality of candidates. “Perhaps I was looking for unicorns – but as a profession that should be at the forefront of change, we seem to see a lot of people who can’t see the horizon and the opportunities for creating great places to work,” she says. Hulme says she has at times been disappointed by a lack of passion and enthusiasm from candidates.

Perhaps one answer to recruitment woes is for the people function to become many of the things it advises the business to be: more open-minded, more flexible and more inclusive. “So often in our profession you see limits placed by organisations only seeking candidates who have experience within the same sector” says Emma Louden, hub people lead at AND Digital. “By restricting the candidate pool, organisations are missing out.”

AND Digital is one of those fast-growth tech businesses Hallett alluded to earlier. In 2021 alone, 500 new people joined, including 12 people leads. Louden credits being open-minded about experience as one of the reasons why recruitment hasn’t been too painful. “We don’t restrict ourselves to recruiting only those with sector experience: we want to bring a breadth of experience to support diverse thinking,” she says. “The most challenging part of hiring

the right person for the role is their approach to the people profession. The world of work is changing at a rapid pace and HR professionals are still taking a traditional approach, which is not always fit for purpose in hyper-growth, agile organisations.”

“We reduce the level of fresh thinking in organisations and the breadth of talent available whenever we default to only

“People are keen to work in an organisation where the people function is valued”

“There is a far bigger market for entry-level roles if we don’t demand prior experience”



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hiring people with sector experience,” agrees D’Souza. “There is value in sector knowledge, but it is only part of most roles. It is given too much weighting.”

Taking the experience debate one step further, is it even worth questioning whether your next hire needs any HR experience at all, particularly for junior roles? Helen Asher, director of people and culture at environmental planning consultancy LUC, passionately believes not. “With the exception of recruitment roles, I’ve always tried to bring in people who want to start a career in HR but have been hitting a brick wall of not having any experience,” she says. “I still remember what it’s like – having started my working life in retail and admin.”

“There is undoubtedly a far bigger market for entry-level roles if we don’t demand prior experience, and good candidates can be attracted through inexpensive direct advertising on generic jobs boards,” she points out, adding: “I suspect the obsession with previous experience has contributed to the barriers to diversity in our profession.”

It’s something Lubanuz has experienced. Years before the eight-round interview debacle, she moved into HR from a commercial role at a large financial services organisation. It was an experience that was anything but easy, and something she thinks has a lot to do with being a Black woman. “I’d meet all the benchmarking and still get told I didn’t fit,” she recalls. “One time, I was the only person to apply and I still didn’t get the job. I was told I was a ‘risk’. From a diversity perspective, it’s shockingly hard to get into HR. We don’t practise what we preach.” It’s a damning indictment of a profession supposed to champion inclusion and diversity, and something people professionals need to keep in mind when making recruitment decisions.

Greater responsibilities, accelerated business transformation, a challenging recruitment market: in many ways the current landscape for HR is the perfect storm. But that doesn’t mean people leaders can take their eye off the ball of what ‘great’ looks like in recruitment. As D’Souza puts it: “We know better. We are the experts in what is better, so we should commit to delivering better.” **PM**

When I grow





Getting a foot in the people profession's door is rarely child's play, but employers that invest in practitioners early on stand to reap the benefits

WORDS KATIE JACOBS

The pandemic has not been kind to anyone, but in terms of employment prospects, young people have been hit particularly hard. A 2020 survey by the Sutton Trust found three in five (61 per cent) businesses had cancelled work experience placements, with a further two in five (39 per cent) graduate employers saying they expected to hire fewer, or even no, graduates over the next 12 months. There were 166,000 fewer young people in work in June 2021 compared to March 2020, and according to CIPD research, 43 per cent of young people feel the pandemic has harmed their long-term career prospects.

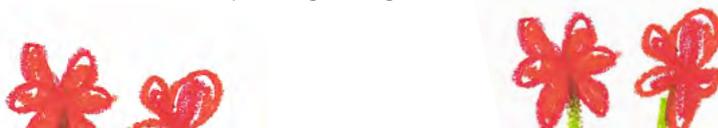
It's been just as challenging for those hoping to launch a career in HR. Giulia Falconeri graduated from her postgraduate degree in HRM in the summer of 2020. "I thought companies would never hire again," she recalls. "I was getting interviews, but I never got jobs because they said I didn't have as much experience as other candidates. It was disappointing, as I had invested so much in getting my master's."

Falconeri has since secured an HR advisor role, but her experience shows how timely it is for the HR profession to examine how it approaches early careers among its own. How can we offer the best experiences to those starting out, whether they're just beginning their careers or

joining the profession later in life? *People Management* has spoken to employers, experts and early career professionals to compile this guide.

Routes into HR

There are various routes into the profession, says CIPD membership director David D'Souza: "The first, and most obvious option, is a range of qualifications supported by your professional body – CIPD qualifications have recently been updated to ensure their relevance and credibility. Other options include graduate development programmes, apprenticeships, internships and organisations that might hire directly into entry-level roles." ▶



Level 3 apprenticeships offer structured entry-level routes into the profession and allow new starters to 'learn as they earn'. Dean Corbett, chief people officer at Avado, says apprentices are often able to progress more quickly: "We see that they are fully ingrained in the company culture and are able to pick up activities much quicker than those from alternative education routes."

It's something Emma Dunning, people director at William Martin Compliance, experienced herself, coming into HR as an apprentice and progressing through the ranks to land her current position. "I'm a huge advocate of apprenticeships," she says. "They give you a great opportunity to gain key qualifications, while getting years of hands-on experience under your belt. I had a headstart compared to more traditional routes, as I had the experience on my CV, alongside the qualifications."

Lauren Routledge, people manager at Lewco Holdings, is currently undertaking an apprenticeship. "Gaining on-the-job experience backed up by research and assessments gives you a rounded view of the subject and the opportunity to look at how your learning is implemented into a business environment," she says.

If you're interested in setting up an apprenticeship programme, Corbett advises first engaging with your people to understand what skills are required, then reaching out to learning providers to find out what apprenticeships will best support your organisational strategy.

When it comes to graduate programmes, the content of learning is evolving to keep up with the changing world of work, says Emma Parry, professor of HRM at Cranfield School of Management. "As technology evolves, so do



Pairing new starters with a peer mentor can be invaluable during their first months in role

the needs of HR students, from needing to understand basic HR information systems to the application of emerging approaches such as machine learning and AI. The level at which HR professionals are expected to operate has changed. Qualifications need to equip practitioners with the ability to understand the business and include aspects such as finance."

"While pay and progression are important, people new to HR want to have an impact"

Finding talent

Where candidate attraction at this level is concerned, a focus on meaning and purpose is critical.

According to CIPD research involving students, the main reason for being attracted to a career in the people profession is the ability to make a positive difference to working lives. Parry has noticed similar: "There is much more of a desire to do something meaningful. While pay and progression are obviously important, particularly in the early stages, people new to the HR profession also want to understand how they can have an impact in the organisation."

James Frost is about to embark on a graduate

HR scheme at a large construction firm. He describes his experience of graduate recruitment as "variable". Out of the 16 organisations he engaged with, he only received feedback from two. "You can't be successful in all of them, but you need to hear what you did well, less well and an outcome," he says, adding that he still hasn't heard anything from an assessment centre day he attended in November.

When it came to deciding which job to accept, he was attracted by how his new employer brought its values and culture to life. "They were able to give clear examples of how HR cascades those values throughout the organisation, which made it real, not just words," he says.

When Falconeri was job hunting, she was looking for an organisation with a great reputation, international presence and high employee satisfaction levels. "It was most important to find a job in an organisation where employees feel valued and where employers invest in developing their internal talent," she explains.

Both Frost and Falconeri urge employers to consider how they can open doors to those without work experience. “Not having HR-specific experience is a big barrier,” says Frost, who encountered this himself when he first graduated, but was lucky enough to get a job in a recruitment firm to boost his CV. “It can be a problem for those who don’t have access to work experience opportunities. People might have the skillset and personality, but not the opportunity.”

It’s also worth considering how someone from a non-HR background might be a great addition to your team. Kiran Grewal recently entered the profession as an HR advisor, moving from a career in social work. “[Those from different fields] bring another perspective and transferable skills that can improve an organisation’s processes,” she says. “My previous career meant when I worked on a wellbeing page, I was able to bring new ideas such as considerations for debt management, honour-based violence, homelessness and domestic abuse.”

Getting on

Once you’ve hired someone, development opportunities are key to enable them to add value fast and to retain them in a competitive talent market. L&D should be part of the induction process, believes Robert Rees, head of L&D at people services provider Rocko. “The compliance elements of induction learning are important, but so is the ‘how,’” he says. “The skills of the new HR professional enable them to get things done – collaboration, communication and project management. We should focus on supporting the development of these skills, as it will push the performance and potential of the professional upwards, impacting the organisation in a positive way.”

With much work still taking place virtually, it’s more important than ever to build a sense of human connection and to be intentional in helping new starters forge strong relationships within their team and across the wider

business. Deloitte hires graduates and apprentices at scale, including into the people function. Resourcing director Simon Hallett says connecting people with their peers and other supporters is key: “We appoint a buddy: someone else in the early stage of their career who can explain how things work and we connect them with their fellow joiners to build a sense of camaraderie.”

At Rocko, pairing new starters with a peer mentor has been invaluable. “It provides some guidance while allowing the new person to be in the driving seat,” says Rees. “As they grow, this mentoring relationship tends to organically move to a coaching or colleague relationship.” Falconeri echoes the importance of this kind

“Moving away from fixed career paths to experimenting is attractive”

of support: “The learning opportunities I find most useful are those situations that go outside and above my level, where I can learn from more experienced colleagues.”

If a junior member of staff is undertaking qualifications, you’ll need to support that

learning. Routledge says embedding “uninterrupted time” for online learning has been vital. Corbett adds that companies that benefit the most from apprenticeships are those that “support and encourage their learners from start to finish. Ensuring learners are given the time needed to excel is a priority, and you reap the benefits in the long run,” he says.

Helping your new potential HR stars to see how their role contributes to the wider organisation is also key, advises Parry, thinking about how starter jobs can be tweaked to move away from compliance and administration, and instead offer opportunities to develop their skills for the future. “People want more flexibility, so moving away from very fixed career paths to those that allow people to experiment can be attractive,” she says. “It’s important to allow people to gain experience outside of HR, so they gain a broader understanding of the business.” ^{PM}

* The CIPD’s Career Hub offers tools for managing your career, including a CV toolkit, assessments and e-learning resources. Visit the Hub at bit.ly/CIPDCareerHub

WHERE TO BEGIN YOUR HR CAREER

Natalie Ellis, founder of Rebox HR and author of Launch Your HR Career, offers tips for those starting out

“I began my HR career using transferable skills in customer service to gain an entry level HR position. I did my Level 3 CIPD in HR practice, followed by my Level 5 qualification, working in an HR role alongside my studies. Experience and qualifications are equally important.

“I’ve worked in large corporate roles, but it’s in the smaller companies where I was presented with challenges that many professionals might not get the chance to experience, thinking on my feet and building purposeful relationships. I got to experience every part of HR rather than becoming a specialist, giving me strong foundations and the confidence to create my company.

“When looking for your first HR role, never look

purely at a job title. Always read the job description fully, look at how the advert is positioned and see if it aligns with your values. Being a generalist at first allows you to experience everything, then you can decide to specialise later.

“Get to know others outside your department – speak to everyone as you make your way to your desk. This helps to gain that essential commercial experience, as well as becoming someone people in the business trust. The more you know about how departments work together, the more you get to know your people and the more effective your HR support will be.

“Those entering the people profession today are looking for more flexible working, a better work-life balance and a supportive and inclusive environment. If you’re an HR manager hiring entry level talent, I’d look at motivations and passions – someone who doesn’t just want a job but who wants to succeed in a career they are passionate about.”



Natalie Ellis advises those new to HR to gain general experience before specialising

*Flexible working,
bonuses, heating bills,
salary benchmarking,
London weighting, exec
remuneration, gender pay
gap, fertility treatment...*

All your pay and benefits questions answered

Many firms are struggling to get their reward offer right in the wake of Covid. We put readers' most pressing problems to our panel of experts

Meet the expert panel



Charles Cotton
Senior policy
adviser, reward
at the CIPD



David Dodd
Partner and UK
mid-market leader
at Mercer Marsh
Benefits



Eva Jesmiatka
Rewards director
at Willis Towers
Watson



Chadi Moussa
Principal consultant
and senior business
psychologist at
Peoplewise

Given a large chunk of the world's working practices have changed unrecognisably in the last two years, it's only natural that HR's pay and benefits practices should change to reflect those. But with many organisations still grappling with what exactly their new 'flexible' model looks like beyond Covid and the demise of the five-days-a-week commute, as well as an increasing number of employers upping their benefit game with family-friendly perks like fertility treatment, and younger

workers looking for their employer's reward offering to put sustainability high on its agenda, it's no surprise many people professionals are unsure where to go next. To help allay some confusion, *People Management* asked our team of reward experts to answer readers' most pertinent questions.

How can I work out how much enhanced maternity/paternity pay to offer so we can remain competitive?

David Dodd: Interestingly, as businesses change and transform, we are seeing companies in certain sectors now competing with non-traditional competitors and needing to enhance their benefit offering to remain competitive – an example being a UK bank that is competing for tech talent. Part of this review to attract and retain is heavily based on maternity/paternity leave, so it's an important consideration. **Chadi Moussa:** The business case for going above and beyond statutory should lie somewhere between motivating and retaining employees and being a good employer, and affordability. Start by reflecting on what kind of employer you want to be and how you can reflect this in your people policies.

Most people now expect flexible or remote working – is it still worth offering as a 'benefit'?

Charles Cotton: It's important to remember that home working doesn't equal flexible working and employers should look at all forms, eg. job shares, part-time hours and compressed hours, to see if they could help attract and retain talent. All employees, regardless of whether they can work remotely in their role or not, should benefit from greater flexibility and choice. Flexible, hybrid and remote working should still be advertised as part of the overall job offer. While many organisations are starting to offer these arrangements more commonly as standard, there are some that don't and so it's always best to be upfront with potential candidates about the options that are available

Eva Jesmiatka: Flexible working is seen as an important part of the employee experience. The pandemic has accelerated companies' abilities to offer remote and flexible working and most employees expect this going forward. It can support employees with their mental wellbeing, their ability to better balance

work and family commitments, or other personal circumstances. Showing that flexible working is part of the package and is something that the employer supports and believes in is typically considered as a positive sign, not only for potential future employees but also existing employees.

CM: The pandemic has turned flexibility from an expectation to a demand, and weighing up business needs and employee contracts (physical and psychological) when deciding on the extent of flexibility offered is sensible. However, policies should balance what is practical and expected, and what the market is doing. The risk, for example, of allowing one executive's personal view about presenteeism to overshadow the sentiment of a whole organisation is risky business.

More companies seem to be offering family-friendly benefits like fertility treatment. Is this worth considering, and how do we get it right?

DD: Definitely – this is a core component of any wellbeing strategy. The recent emergence of providers in this space has been positive and take-up has been strong, recognising the impact this can have on the physical and mental health of the workforce. In terms of getting it right, it would be prudent to do due diligence on the providers in this space, work out how it aligns ►

Family-friendly benefits are increasingly in demand and can have a positive impact on staff wellbeing



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to your existing wellbeing strategy, how it can be delivered and how it would be communicated effectively.

CM: Jumping on a bandwagon is dangerous. Consulting employees on their changing needs and sensible, data-driven benchmarking is hugely beneficial. There are lots of reliable sources that can offer impartial and useful advice. None more so than organisations who have implemented the benefits in question. Also, surveying suppliers on the client success stories that they collect will help you match the right benefits to the needs of your people.

Some staff have asked whether we can pay their commuting costs now they're required to come into the office three days per week. Are we obliged to cover this?

DD: This will depend on the contract of employment – if this still states that the primary place of work is the office, then businesses would not be obliged to fund the commute to work. If employees are on home-based contracts, then typically travel to an office would fall under the travel policy and be reimbursed. This is a challenge at the moment as the cost effectiveness of commuting is being challenged as there is little value in once valuable benefits such as season ticket loans.

How should organisations be setting pay bands now that geographical differences (eg. London weighting) don't matter as much and we're hiring people who are remote only?

CC: As the economy continues to recover and organisations look to recruit more, salaries based on location could be something that is considered. It's unlikely that existing staff will have their location top-up taken away, but new staff might be offered a salary that reflects the new realities of remote working. The CIPD's Reward Management Survey found only half (49 per cent) of companies vary pay by geographical location, such as through London weighting, and only 7 per cent of those are changing pay to reflect home working or have plans to do so.

Offering new staff a salary to reflect remote working could potentially have ethical and legal consequences, especially if some jobs are done by workers based overseas. As well as the cost of living, pay tends to be higher in certain UK locations, such as London or Edinburgh, because of the kind of jobs that tend to be located there. Pay in these regions would only fall if these jobs were spread more evenly across the country, something that flexible working may facilitate, but the 'going rate' for the job is likely to remain broadly the same.

With the increase in working from home, should we be contributing towards people's internet and heating bills?

CC: The cost of living is going to be a huge issue for many employees going forward. There is no obligation for employers to contribute to energy bills. However, as part of your organisation's financial wellbeing strategy you should consider offering advice and support to employees on how to reduce their energy bills, which will be helpful financially and from an environmental perspective.

EJ: At the start of the pandemic, we saw a number of companies making one-off payments to contribute to office equipment as a way to support employees with setting up their home offices. Yet we haven't really seen any companies making ongoing payments to contribute to internet and utility bills in response to the increased level of home working. But this could likely be due to the availability of home working tax relief from the government.

"The cost of living is going to be a huge issue for many employees going forward"

It's difficult for us to award bonuses after such a difficult two years, but we still want staff to feel valued – what could we do instead?

CC: It's important to be upfront with your staff about your organisation's financial position and why bonuses are not possible. Early and clear communication can make a huge difference to how people feel and react to news like this, as well as giving people the chance to ask any questions they might have. Think about the non-financial benefits you can offer, such as flexible working, additional leave, educational or wellbeing workshops or social activities.

EJ: There are a range of ways in which you can make people feel valued, beyond paying bonuses. Among my clients I have seen some very successful examples of recognition programmes that made people feel valued at relatively low cost. ▶

JAMES OSMOND/GETTY IMAGES

Covid has encouraged many staff to escape cities and move to the country, making commuting less desirable and season ticket loans less valuable





Initiatives have included things like ‘thank you’ notes, public recognition, gift vouchers, and an extra day off.

CM: I would start by asking employees what benefits they would value. Increased flexibility, early Friday finishes, days off on your birthday, learning and development opportunities are just a few examples of free benefits that employees value.

Some employees are (rightly) upset at the firm’s executive salaries, especially after the pandemic. How can we start rectifying the huge discrepancies?

CC: Organisations should be open and transparent about how pay is determined for all staff to help put CEO pay in context, as crude comparisons between figures is unlikely to be useful. An organisation’s financial wellbeing strategy should outline its commitment to paying a fair and liveable wage and any opportunities to share in the success of the organisation, such as employee shares or profit sharing. It’s worth re-communicating this information with your staff.

Take-up of some perks we offer (like cycle to work) have dropped off because of the pandemic. What’s the best way of reassessing what we’re offering and avoiding upsetting the people who use them?

CC: It’s good practice to review your benefits package regularly to ensure the business is getting the best value for money and you’re offering a range of benefits to suit your staff. To get an overview of which benefits are being used and which would be most valued by your staff, you could run a survey. This will provide an evidence base to support any decisions to withdraw certain benefits if they are no longer financially viable or wanted by the majority of your staff. Decisions to withdraw any benefits should be clearly communicated to your employees.

EJ: Companies need to assess which of their benefits might have become redundant due to the pandemic, but also assess which benefits might see a resurgence in uptake, now more people

have started to return to the office again.

Taking away a benefit can be upsetting but the actual impact often depends on what you might offer in return. It can help by providing clear communications around any changes, such as explaining why benefits offerings are being revisited and reinforcing that you’re acting with your employees’ best interests in mind and that it’s not just a cost-cutting exercise.

We’re keen to be transparent and put salaries on all our job adverts, but are concerned about highlighting discrepancies. Is this a good idea?

CC: Displaying salary on job adverts is good practice. It shows that you’re being upfront, helps to reduce the risk of pay gaps and also meets younger generations’ growing calls for openness and transparency. There are of course some reasons why employers might not wish to disclose salaries, such as commercial sensitivity and the possibility of scaring off candidates who have a real passion for the job. However, on balance the pros outweigh the cons and transparency is vitally important for businesses.

EJ: We see the pressure for greater pay transparency increasing from many different angles, including through increased legislation, expectations from shareholders and investors but also employees themselves. More countries are introducing legislation that requires employers to provide greater transparency around pay equity. Many companies might not be where they want to be when it comes to their fair

Companies are still struggling to address gender pay gaps but it is important to persevere and to report consistently

pay agenda, but it’s necessary to take action and

define how you are going to deliver fair pay to all employees in the organisation. Most companies have the intention to become more transparent, but they recognise this can’t be achieved overnight.

CM: Stop right there – prioritise addressing those discrepancies. Pay and benefits vary in roles that cannot be compared like for like, for example a senior lawyer can earn multiples more than a junior lawyer. However, reading that your new team mate is being rewarded significantly better for performing exactly the same role is a recipe for disaster.

We’ve put initiatives in place to reduce our gender pay gap, but of course it’s a marathon not a sprint, and it looks like we’re not working hard enough to fix it. What else could we be doing?

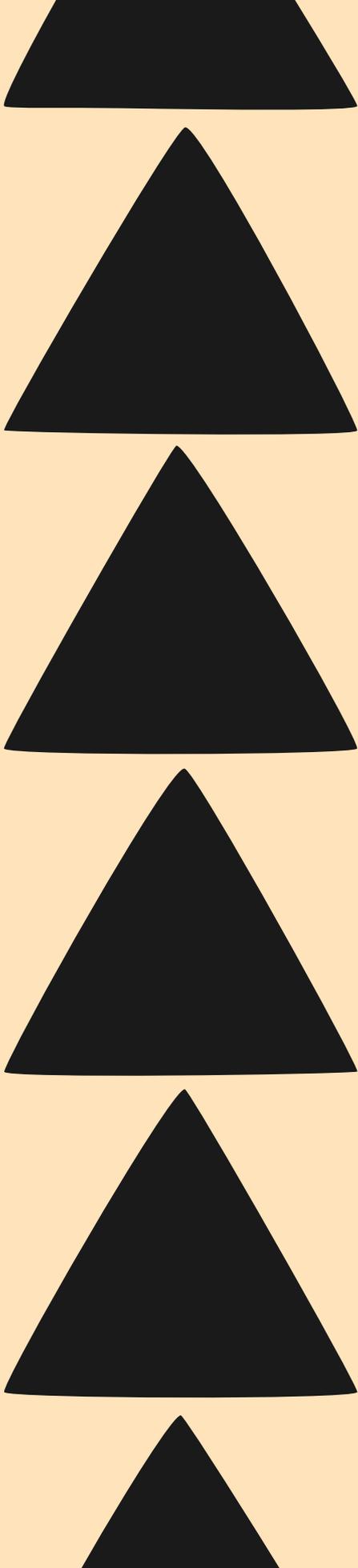
CC: Identifying gaps and bringing in initiatives is a great place to start, but what’s really important is that there is genuine commitment from senior leaders to address gender pay gaps and that you clearly communicate the reasons behind any gaps, plus the steps you’re taking to reduce this, with your staff and external stakeholders. Highlighting that there are initiatives in place and consistent reporting on progress, including the reasons behind failure to meet targets, can make a huge difference in helping people to understand the work that is going on. The government also offers advice on actions to close the gender pay gap, which could be worth reviewing. **PJM**



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Career path

Helping you get further

Research:
Majority of firms
say artificial
intelligence has
not caused a net
loss of jobs
p53

Masterclass

How to create a sense of belonging at work



Arran Heal
Managing
director of CMP

Research by behavioural scientists published in the *Harvard Business Review* claims 40 per cent of staff “feel isolated at work”.

Feelings of being left out (“akin to a physical pain”) lead to serious consequences, says the report. Carrying out experiments among more than 2,000 employees, the BetterUp researchers found that a strong sense of belonging was linked to a 56 per cent increase in job performance and 75 per cent fewer days of absence. Staff were also 50 per cent less likely to leave their employer.

Meanwhile, employees are becoming less attached to physical workplaces, and in many ways, also to each other. The pandemic has accelerated changes already underway in terms of the use of video calls and digital interaction. Remote conversations have become the default option, while face-to-face meetings have become the exception. The consequence is



that employees are less rooted in the codes and identities provided by a daily place of work and its routines. And all of this means

“Open conversations need to be part of the culture”

that the usual to and fro of work conversations is different.

The authors emphasise the value of mentoring schemes in trying to cultivate that sense of belonging: having team leaders who can help their direct reports feel included and act as a “fair-minded ally” by sharing stories of how they’ve coped with difficult workplace dynamics. But how does mentoring work when there is a culture of

reticence where staff aren’t used to speaking openly?

Building a sense of belonging is founded on the quality (not just quantity) of workplace conversations. There needs to be more ‘conversational integrity’ among staff – skills that equip us to be resilient and adaptable, to appreciate the benefits of different views and different people.

Conversations only improve through being a regular – and also natural – part of working lives. Not when we are summoned to a meeting, or into a weekly team slot. Frequent, open and trusting conversations need to be part of the culture.

Digital conversations can be superficial – instant but lacking the ingredients that encourage rapport, active listening and empathy, like body language.

Common sense says that levels of engagement and motivation are going to be undermined without the essential feeling of ‘belonging’ within a workplace. Encouraging that feeling doesn’t need to involve grand strategic change, but it does need to mean a ‘clear air’ culture of conversations.

Taking it further

Read
Study results, published in the *Harvard Business Review* bit.ly/BetterUpResearch



Watch
Psychologist Shawn Achor on how to achieve more and be happier at work bit.ly/HappyWorkTED



Listen
The CIPD’s podcast *Building back better post-pandemic* bit.ly/BetterWorkPodcast

Who I am

Sinead Hall

Head of People at Evolved Search

You have to be a special kind of person to work in HR – you have to support people and run projects, but also think about business. I started on reception and would support transactional, admin HR while our company worked on the Commonwealth Games. While speaking to people, I enjoyed seeing how their job impacted them and, as a result of that work, I was offered an HR assistant position. I fell into the role but I knew I wanted to have an office-based job that was people focused.

The bottom line is that people need support from time to time and, even if they don't suffer from bad mental health, many will have people around them that do. It's important to provide the skills to deal with life, whether that be their personal life or other people's. At Evolved Search, we recommend during induction that people share because the more information we have, the more we can support them, and we tell them from the start that we have mental health processes.

I hope a lot of employers continue with hybrid working from this year onwards because from a gender equality point of view, women now have all this extra flexibility in roles. I now get to take my kids to school and pick them up. I can work earlier, I can work late, and it works for the business that I'm flexible. The flexibility has also given people options to apply for roles that might have been out of reach for them because of personal circumstances.

In the future, I would like to be an HR director, be approachable and a forward thinker. I read, listen to podcasts, attend webinars to grow in my role and never slow down because it's fast paced, but I love that. As a company, we try to do the best for people, provide the best opportunities and benefits, and it would be great to see others say, "Evolved Search is doing this, we should think about doing that too".

One of my biggest achievements was developing my own strategy and having people believe in it. I dealt with imposter syndrome in my first year, but my managing director pointed out that we've achieved more than I originally aimed for. One of the best aspects of HR is when you see other people do well and know you've given them that opportunity to thrive.

I left school and went straight into a business development apprenticeship. Later, I re-did my A Levels, which allowed me to do my Level 3 and Level 5 CIPD qualifications. However, while the training is vital, you also need to understand how HR deals with people day to day. When hiring someone to support me, I didn't just look at qualifications, I looked at experience in the role because you need to be able to understand what HR does in practical terms.

CV

Sinead Hall started her career at The Protector Group in 2009 where she worked as a receptionist and then HR assistant. From there, she worked as an HR officer and senior people advisor, before becoming head of people at digital marketing agency Evolved Search in March 2020. During her HR career, she has worked across a range of sectors including finance, social care, logistics and security.

“Straight white men are part of the diversity problem, but most want to be part of the solution”

Reviews

How to Get Your Act Together

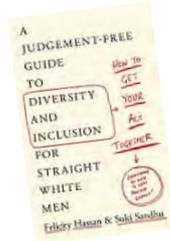
Felicity Hassan and Suki Sandhu, Penguin Business, £14.99/£9.99 e-book

It’s an eye-opening title to say the least, but to its credit, *How to Get Your Act Together: A Judgement-free Guide to Diversity and Inclusion for Straight White Men* does exactly what its cover promises to deliver.

The authors (Sandhu, who was awarded an OBE in 2019 for services to diversity in business, and Hassan, who serves on the board of the Women’s Business Collaborative) explain early on that having been born with inherent privilege, straight, white men are part

of the diversity problem faced by businesses, but that most also want to be, and are, part of the solution – they just don’t know what action they’re supposed to take.

Cue 10 informative, enlightening chapters taking the (presumably) straight, white male reader on a journey, first explaining the basic fundamentals of understanding inclusion and diversity, including key terminology such as



‘intersectionality’, and the difference between ‘equality’ and ‘equity’. Sandhu and Hassan then go into detail about each minority individually, such as ethnic minorities,

LGBT+ people, and women, each time explaining the context behind that particular group’s inclusion issues, and why it’s important to address them to lead positive change.

Rather than being pitched at an organisational level, where readers may not have much clout, *How to Get Your*

Act Together refreshingly focuses on what they can do personally, to be an ally to their diverse colleagues.

Coupled with thought-provoking case studies from straight, white, male leaders at some of the world’s biggest companies – many of which detail epiphanies about representation within their businesses and how they subsequently worked to fix it – this book is obligatory reading for anyone – straight, white and male or otherwise – who wants to do better but doesn’t know where to start.



{Book}

Digital Talent

Matt Alder and Mervyn Dinnen, Kogan Page, £17.59/£19.99 e-book

In the current jobseeker-friendly labour market, recruiting is tricky enough, but hiring people with the right technical skills is even harder. Stalwarts of the talent sphere in their own rights, in this invaluable guide, Alder and Dinnen successfully demystify the ever-increasing focus on digital capabilities, and how that translates into getting the right people through a business’s door to enable it to navigate the increasingly technology-rich business landscape.



{Book}

Inclusion Revolution

Daisy Auger-Dominguez, Seal Press, £25/£10.99 e-book

Despite the murder of George Floyd in 2020 putting racial inequality on the map like never before, many businesses – although well-intentioned – are still failing to tackle the problem effectively within their own walls. From overhauling recruitment to improving psychological safety, Vice Media Group chief people officer Auger-Dominguez’s no-nonsense guide is a rallying cry for organisations to be proactive and not reactive when addressing institutional racial bias.



{Book}

The HR Business Partner Handbook

Glenn Templeman, Kogan Page, £23.99/£21.59 e-book

The role of an HR business partner can be one of the broadest in the profession, yet is neatly summarised in Templeman’s comprehensive (and surprisingly humorous) guide. From the basics of being a reliable HRBP, such as empathy and ethics, through to the more advanced strategic elements, any new or existing HR business partner aiming to be brilliant need look no further.



{Podcast}

Digital HR Leaders

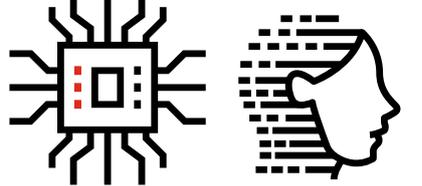
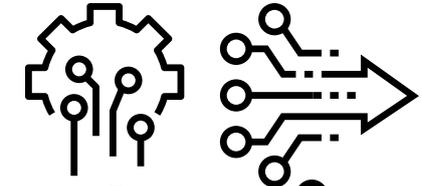
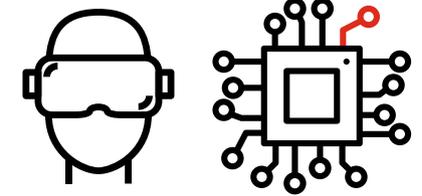
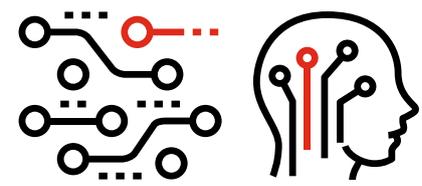
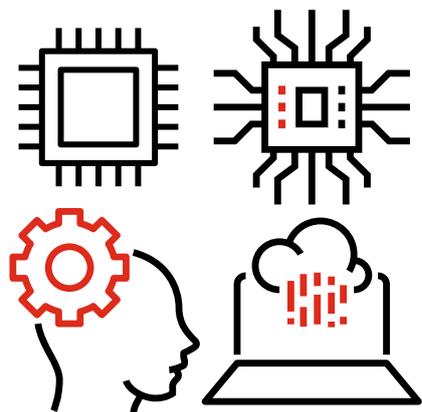
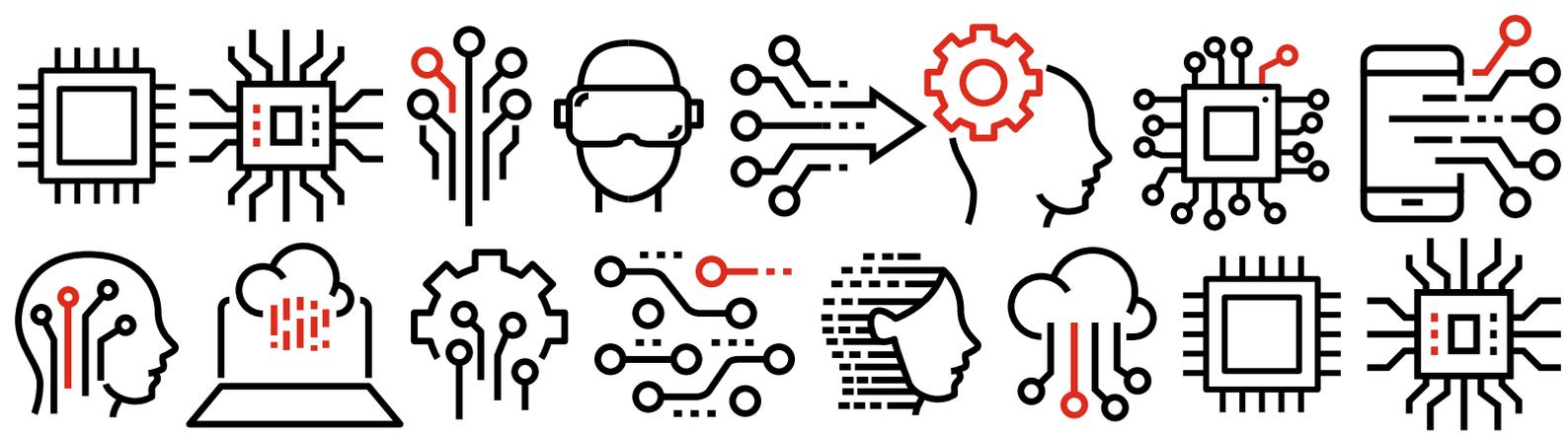
David Green, available via all good podcast providers

Now boasting almost 100 episodes, people analytics consultant, speaker and author Green’s series hosts conversations with senior HR practitioners who advocate a data-driven approach. It drops weekly and offers insights from people leaders at organisations such as Microsoft, Standard Chartered Bank and Degreed, as well as academic experts. Topics include everything from measuring culture change and workforce planning to learning strategies and wellbeing.

What’s new

In **How to be an HR Superstar**, managing director of The HR Dept, Sandra Porter FCIPD, offers straightforward guidance for each and every generalist HR activity, be it recruitment, redundancies or putting together a people strategy, complete with insights from other people experts.

Meanwhile, in **The New Political Capitalism**, Joe Zammit-Lucia, founder of think tank RADIX, explores the influence that politics has on business practices, citing political analysis and real-life case studies, and what businesses can do to tackle the growing divide between the two.



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Your problems



Guest Fixer Idris Arshad tackles your queries

An experienced HR professional, Idris Arshad is currently a people and inclusion partner at south-east London-based hospice St Christopher's. He has previously worked with a number of faith-based charities, as well as with housing and homelessness organisations, and also lectured on a part-time basis at London Metropolitan University. He was recently mentored as part of CIPD's Aspiring HR Director Mentoring programme.

His 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 begin to rectify new organisation's rotten culture?

I started an HR manager role at a new organisation six months ago, and after getting to know the team and running a few initial engagement surveys, it's become apparent that the company has quite a toxic culture, which is perpetuated by those at the top. We have a very high attrition rate, and engagement rates are pretty poor. Something needs to change but I don't know where to start. Would it be best for me to tackle this internally, or should I just go straight to getting help from a third party?

I will start by saying you are in a responsible HR role that can make a difference, so try to tackle this internally. External help often supports good internal work rather than the other way around.

To begin with, take a step back and ask yourself

what it is you are trying to fix: engagement, culture, attrition, leadership, or all of them? From this, you can then gear your efforts towards solving the problem(s). Everyone wants to have good engagement levels, and you can get there through

“Leadership and management are likely to be aware of the problems – and key to fixing them”

good people management. It sounds simple, but this covers every aspect of the HR sphere and begins with that first interaction somebody has with your organisation, all the way through to – and even beyond – when they have left.

Leadership and management would be a sensible place to start. They are already in the organisation, likely to be aware of the problems and will be key to fixing them.

In theory, if people are well managed, developed and motivated, they are likely to stay longer and this will showcase itself in higher engagement levels. Whether they need development is a separate question, but their buy-in and involvement is key.

Labelling the situation a 'toxic' culture is something you may want to avoid. Good data and evidence on what the problems are will give you credibility. With this in mind, challenge your current view and see where you can find wider qualitative and quantitative data that tells you a story of what is going on, then deliver that message to your senior leadership team and work with them to resolve the problems.

Staff member unwilling to move to hybrid model

Like many others, my company implemented a hybrid working arrangement since Covid, where staff are required to be in the office two days a week. However, during the pandemic when we were full-time remote, one employee moved further out into the countryside – not really a commutable distance to our office – and now refuses to follow the arrangement like everyone else. He's a good worker and we don't want to lose him, but I don't feel it

should be one rule for him and one for others. What can I do?

Generally, I feel it's important to have flexibility within any rules an organisation sets. We live in such ever-changing times that it can be impossible to get everyone to follow one rule. A decision to move home, while they may have their own reasons for doing so, is the responsibility of the employee and not the organisation. Start off by looking at what matters more: the

employee or the precedent this could set. I would say neither: the organisation should always be at the heart of everything you do. Look at the impact on the business and don't be afraid to be honest with yourself if it goes against current practice.

Then objectively look at the role without thinking about the person – can it be done 100 per cent from home? What is your reasoning for having this role two days in the office? Once you have these answers, it will equip you well in managing this situation with the employee.

Start off by speaking with them with an open mind.

Find out the reasons behind why they moved and why there are refusing to come in. Depending on these answers, you should get more of an idea of what you are dealing with.

To manage this, it would seem the employee should submit a flexible working request. This should be considered objectively and reasons given for accepting or rejecting the request or coming up with a compromise.

On a broader point, it will be worth monitoring and reviewing the current hybrid arrangement and adapting this where necessary.



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



1



2

Joanna Breen, Chartered FCIPD (1) has moved on from Raytheon UK, where she held a senior HR position for 10 years, to co-found personal and professional development services consultancy Breen & Associates.

Sarah Steel, MCIPD is moving to a new role as head of HR and OD for housing association Hanover Scotland. She leaves Hillcrest Homes, where she was HR manager.

British Airways has appointed **Michelle Lydon (2)** as its new chief people officer. Lydon joins from aerospace and defence firm Qinetiq, where she worked for six years.

Samantha Clarke, MCIPD has recently started her own consultancy, Harji HR, after leaving ventilation equipment specialists VES, where she worked for the past four years.

Hannah Padfield (3) recently left Royal Mail, where she was head of HR –

Corporate Centre, and started at social mobility charity IntoUniversity as head of people and culture.

Food and agriculture banking firm Rabobank has appointed **Lisa Atkinson** as its new head of HR in the UK. Atkinson has worked for the company for more than 22 years, and was most recently its head of people advisory and development.

Dawn Robertson (4) has joined BTO Solicitors in Edinburgh as partner in the firm's team of employment law specialists. Robertson is an experienced tribunal practitioner with more than 20 years' private, public and third sector experience.

IT services management company ServiceNow has announced the appointment of **Karen Pavlin (5)** as its chief equity and inclusion officer. Pavlin joins from Accenture, and previously spent more than 23 years at Xerox.

Black and White (B&W) Engineering has appointed **Rachel Ovington, Chartered FCIPD** as its global HR director. Ovington has more than 15 years' experience, and was previously at KP Snacks.

Stephen Moir, Chartered CCIPD (6) has left the City of Edinburgh Council, where he was executive director of resources, and started as chief executive of Cambridgeshire County Council in February.

Jacqui Woodhouse, MCIPD has joined as area director at ourHRpeople, joining from SKA Organisation. Woodhouse brings 23 years of HR experience in private and public sector organisations.

Railpen has announced the appointment of **Paula Brack** as its new chief HR officer. She has been with the company since 2018.

The Institute of Student Employers has appointed **Anne-Marie Campion** as its new chair.



3



4



5



6

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

I work in recruitment as part of an HR department. I got to a high level early in my career, which is a fabulous position to be in. However, my goal is to become an HR business partner, though I lack operational experience. I've completed my CIPD Level 7 qualification and I would love to go into an operational role, but I can't take a step back in terms of salary. I don't feel I have the experience necessary for an HR advisor role, for example. If someone gave me the chance I would be a quick learner, but I'm wondering how I can make myself more attractive for operational roles.



draws employers in is personality, says Rachael Knappier, director of service at Croner (pictured).

It's good to set out a plan of what you want to achieve, so even if it takes a few years, you can speak with your business and explain what it is you want to do.

It's also important to talk to the people that work in your business, whether that's your line manager or a mentor. Sometimes, you might find a business has soft skills training opportunities and the employee doesn't know about them.

See if there is anyone that does a similar role and ask whether you can spend time with them. Could they be your mentor so you can get that experience? It will provide you with much more confidence when moving forward with job applications.

You've done incredibly well to get CIPD Level 7; it's an achievement you should be really proud of and I see no reason why you can't use that to your advantage to go into an operational role because it's a strong selling point when moving into any job. By mentioning the CIPD qualification, you're showing that what you bring with you is experience and a demonstration that you can work to a certain level.

But it's not all about the work experience that's on your CV; there's so much more to a well-rounded person than just what we do in our day job, so it's important for you to remember that and see if there are opportunities in your spare time or weekends, such as volunteering, which would help you when looking to move into another role.



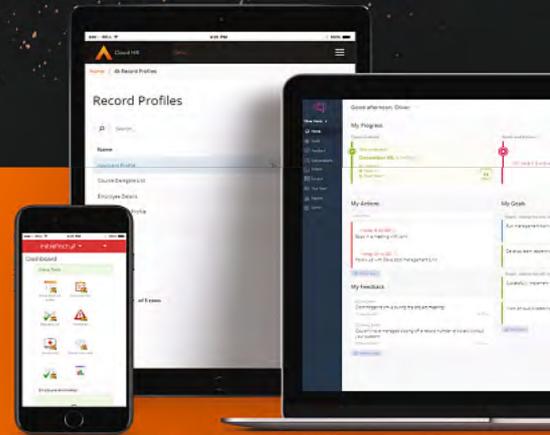
Be confident in your own ability and really sell yourself when it comes to a job application because a lot of what

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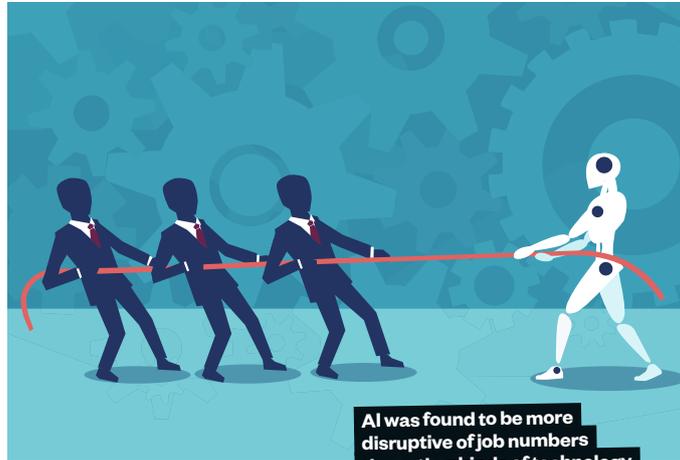
Research

Artificial intelligence has not caused loss of jobs

Less than a quarter (22 per cent) of firms that have introduced AI technology over the last five years say that it has led to a net loss of jobs, according to a recently published study by the University of Warwick's Institute of Employment Research and the University of Sussex Business School.

Academics collected data from 759 respondents via a YouGov panel in 2018, and found that 22 per cent of firms that introduced AI had seen net job destruction, where the number of jobs lost is higher than the number created.

It found that AI technology is more likely to be disruptive to job numbers than other non-AI based technology: 4 per cent of respondents that had introduced other forms of technology in their



AI was found to be more disruptive of job numbers than other kinds of technology

organisation saw net job destruction, while 9 per cent of those organisations saw net job creation.

The study, which compiled data from business leaders in organisations with more than 10 employees across the private, public and

third sectors, found that AI is 28 percentage points more likely to be linked with job creation than other forms of technology, but also 26 percentage points more likely to be associated with job destruction than other technologies.

It also found that of the 81 per cent of respondents who had introduced a form of new technology over the past five years (up to 2018), a quarter (25 per cent) had introduced AI-enabled technology; 69 per cent had introduced new IT hardware; and 59 per cent had introduced new online networking platforms.

Dr Wil Hunt, research fellow at the Institute of Employment Research, said the study points to the need to focus on AI's potential for job creation through labour saving and improved productivity levels: "Future research would do well to pay heed to specific applications of AI and the motivations behind adoption as well as the scale of job creation and destruction effects."

* bit.ly/AIJobsResearch

Friendliness favoured over skill in teammates

People who are friendly and trustworthy are more likely to be picked for teams than those who are only known for being skillful, a study has found. Academics at New York-based Binghamton University School of Management studied 87 full-time, final-year MBA students, and randomly placed them into 20 teams. They were assigned a project to work on and, at the end of term, students were asked to form their own teams.

Researchers measured the students' human capital (their ability to perform tasks well)

and their social capital (their ability to work together).

Academics found that students with high levels of trustworthiness and competence were the most in demand. However, those with trustworthiness were more sought after than those with high skill competency.

Cynthia Maupin, assistant professor of organisational behaviour and leadership, said the findings show people may sacrifice competency in order to have a cohesive team: "When people feel like they can trust you, even if you're not necessarily the best worker, they're going to be more likely to want to work with you."

* bit.ly/CompetencyStudy

Half of UK firms struggling to recruit

Around half of businesses are experiencing a shortage of workers, according to a survey by the Centre for Economic Performance (CEP) at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

The figures, drawn from the monthly Confederation of British Industry survey, found that a fifth of firms are experiencing staff retention issues, with one in 10 reporting that the UK's points-based immigration system is causing labour shortages. Most firms had also increased their volume of

business since April 2021, and with rising wages reflecting the rising average prices of firms, the study shows that the economy has experienced a rebound since summer 2021.

However, the survey found that total output and hours worked had not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. It also found nearly one in five firms cited long-term skills gaps as a factor in their labour shortages, while one in seven said lack of available staff due to sickness or self-isolation had caused the issues.

CEP's Josh De Lyon said: "Economic activity has been on the rise... as vaccines have been rolled out. Yet the recovery in the UK has been restricted."

* bit.ly/LSERecruitStudy

Code of Conduct breach: plagiarism

The CIPD's Code of Professional Conduct team shares learnings from a recent case



The CIPD Code of Conduct is a vital component of membership. Alleged breaches are taken very seriously, and it's critical we learn from these through insight sharing, for the benefit of the profession and to avoid repeats.

The Code of Conduct team recently investigated a plagiarism case. The CIPD was made aware of a series of breaches, in which a member repeatedly submitted assignments that had been copied from an online source and claimed it as their own work. As a result, the member was disqualified by the centre where they were studying a CIPD qualification. Following this, the member used a social network to admit to plagiarising in discussion about their academic malpractice.

Furthermore, the member had given their membership status on their CV

and LinkedIn profile as 'Chartered Member' when they were actually a Student Member. When contacted about this, they changed the reference to 'Associate Member'. The CIPD informed them that as the qualification had not been completed, they were not permitted to use this term.

The investigation panel concluded there was sufficient evidence of a breach of numerous sections of the code, and referred the case to a conduct hearing.

The conduct panel considered sanctions and decided that the member should be expelled from the CIPD.

The panel also advised the member that rather than focusing on the threshold of plagiarism, they should avoid any plagiarism; and that they should consider the known and unknown audiences of social media.

Posts on social media platforms can be retrieved years later and may cause reputational and professional damage.

At the conduct hearing, the panel was satisfied that the member breached the following sections of the code:

- 1.3 accept responsibility for their own professional actions and decisions.
- 2.2 exhibit and role model professional and personal integrity and honesty at all times.
- 3.1 always act in a way which supports and upholds the reputation and values of the profession.
- 3.2 uphold their responsibilities as professional people towards the wider community.
- 3.4 exhibit personal leadership as a role model for maintaining the highest standards of ethical conduct.

* bit.ly/CIPDCoCodeOfConduct

EXTRA
EXTRA

Soundbite or science?

"We need to adopt a growth mindset." Tune into enough Ted Talks and conferences and you'll hear this phrase trumpeted like a clarion call. But is it just a buzzword? The CIPD's latest podcast explores the genuine benefits of developing and nurturing a growth mindset.

* cipd.co.uk/podcasts

Long-term health conditions

More than 15 million people in the UK live with a long-term health condition, and the number of people with multiple conditions is increasing. Government statistics estimate that 32.5 million work days were lost in 2019-20 because of work-related ill-health. Explore the CIPD's latest guide to help you manage and support employees with long-term health conditions.

* bit.ly/CIPDLongTermHealth

CIPD Ireland Awards

Join the CIPD Ireland HR Awards 2022, being held on 25 March at Dublin's Mansion House, to recognise and celebrate outstanding achievement in people management and development. The awards honour the valuable contribution that HR and L&D make to the success of every organisation. Learn more about the finalists and book your tickets via the website.

* bit.ly/CIPDIrelandAwards

Early bird tickets
are now available



Festival of Work 2022

Secure your place at the CIPD Festival of Work 2022, which this year is being held on 15-16 June at London's Olympia, and immerse yourself in a world of inspiration and discovery designed to develop you, your people and your business. Early bird tickets are available until 8 April.

* festivalofwork.com

“CIPD student members can secure their place at the conference for free”

Investing in the CIPD's volunteers

More than 4,500 people volunteer for the CIPD across programmes and branches, which serve member communities. Going above and beyond to champion its work, the CIPD's branch network of volunteers is firmly committed to reaching a growing number of members at a local level; supporting in numerous ways, from running and delivering events, hosting committees and groups that engage its wider membership, to running valuable mentoring schemes.

In recognition of these efforts, the CIPD is stepping up its commitment to champion volunteering by growing the level of service and support provided. It is vital that volunteers can flourish, feel valued and feel included. The CIPD is working towards 'Investing in Volunteers' accreditation for branches, with the aim of enhancing the quality of volunteer experiences.

Alexandra Carr, head of branch community development, said: “We are proactively improving our connection with our branch volunteers and enhancing the level of service and the experience that we offer them. The process will also give us an opportunity to promote the organisation's awareness of our volunteers' contribution and how they are helping to make the world of work a better place.”

CIPD Student Conference 2022

Whether you're looking to start your career or move it to the next level, the CIPD Student Conference 2022 is designed to inspire you to take your next step into the people profession.

This year's conference welcomes opening keynote speaker Valerie Todd CBE from Siemens UK&I and closing keynote speaker Olive Strachan MBE, author of *The Power of You*, to explore the future of the profession and triumphing in the face of adversity.

This year's conference tackles key and emerging workplace themes, from inclusion and diversity to exploring new ways of working, helping you to start making a difference towards better work and working lives.

CIPD student members can secure their place at the conference for free, joining hundreds of CIPD students and early-career professionals from across the UK, Ireland and beyond. This year's event will take place digitally on Saturday 2 April 2022.

Members can also seek tailored career support and find personal development and study plans via the Career Hub.

* bit.ly/StudentConf2022
* bit.ly/CIPDCareerHub

Member benefit: Learning Hub

The CIPD Learning Hub offers an ever-changing portfolio of online programmes and courses to address the challenges facing the people profession today, as well as interactive tools to put individuals in control of their own learning journey. The hub makes it easier than ever to make professional development a day-to-day, career-long priority that helps you maximise both your career potential and your business impact. Access to the Hub and core learning is free for members.

* bit.ly/CIPDLearningHub

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Christine Quinn's colleagues rallied against her while she was on maternity leave, but tensions could have been addressed sooner

NETFLIX/PAT BANNON PHOTO



Could HR solve...?

SELLING SUNSET

A high-end estate agent is threatened with dismissal while on maternity leave

The problem

Queen bee of LA real estate Christine Quinn leaves boutique agency Oppenheim Group to go on maternity leave, safe in the knowledge that she has a job to return to. But in her absence, her colleagues gossip about the controversial agent, whose toxic behaviour often causes drama. Meanwhile, the business's owners recruit Emma Hernan, Quinn's long-term rival, who soon rallies the entire office into a campaign to have Quinn fired. How could HR have stepped in to defuse the situation?

The solution

"If only management had dealt with the toxic behaviour when it first arose," says Amanda Arrowsmith, HR director at ADEY Innovation (pictured).

There's nothing to stop employees raising issues about colleagues on maternity leave, she explains, but it's essential they aren't related to their maternity leave. However, when a group of employees is complaining, senior leaders and HR must work together to deal in facts.



"As the colleagues have not raised it with senior leaders collectively, HR needs to consider this as a grievance,"

she says. "This should always start with mediation. If it can't be resolved they will need to put their complaint in writing. The grievance will be dealt with in one meeting and result in one outcome, so HR needs to ensure no one feels bullied."

"After the investigation, if there's a disciplinary case, the employer can take action," says Arrowsmith. "An employee on maternity leave can still be dismissed."

However, she adds, this case shows the importance of dealing with disruptive behaviour when it occurs – leaders need to step in long before a situation becomes toxic, and HR should always support and encourage this.

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A photograph of two men lying on their backs on a lush green lawn, laughing heartily. The man on the left is wearing a light blue tank top and a white bucket hat. The man on the right is wearing a white short-sleeved shirt with a colorful tropical print. Their hands are resting on their chests, and their eyes are closed in laughter.

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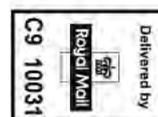
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