

# People Management

October/November 2021

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# Contents

October/November 2021

Although the nights are drawing in and there's a definite nip in the air (yet still a long way to go until – dare I say it? – Christmas), there's still a lot to be excited about, with two flagship CIPD events back in person. As well as a face-to-face Annual Conference and Exhibition in Manchester very soon (see page 10), this issue we're celebrating the winners at the recent 2021 People Management Awards – particularly the achievements of you, the HR profession, as the overall winner. So make sure you give yourself a pat on the back. (After you've finished reading, obviously.)

Eleanor Whitehouse **Acting editor**

## News & analysis

**Welcome from the CIPD** p5

**This month we've learned...** p6

**NEWS: Ethnicity pay is coming** p8

**PLUS** Sneak peek at CIPD ACE; advertising jobs on social media; new Chartered Companions

**Legal lowdown** p19

**Columnist** Amrit Sandhar p21

## Case studies

**Childs Farm** p22

**Kettering General Hospital NHS FT** p24

## Features

**COVER** Meet the winners of the CIPD People Management Awards 2021 p26

We run down who took home this year's prizes at the in-person ceremony

**How HR stepped up during Covid** p32

The profession saw a boost in its reputation during the pandemic, but where should it go from here?

**Handy tech for hybrid working** p42

Video conferencing, social distancing alarms and virus-killing robots: the solutions organisations could turn to post-Covid

## Career path

**Who I am** Sophie Metcalf p49

**Reviews** p50

**The Fixer** p53

**People and posts** p54

**Research** p57

**CIPD Focus** p58

**Could HR solve...? Motherland** p62

p22

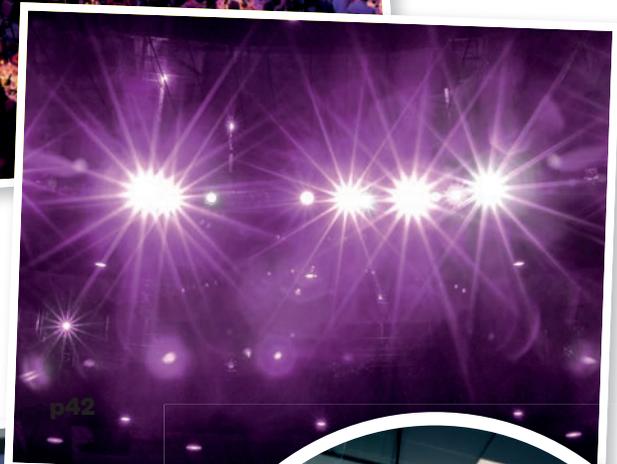


p24



p26

p32



p42



p42



p49



# HCM software for your organisation: Local, National or Global

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**Welcome**  
*from the CIPD*

# An inflection point of opportunity



Peter Cheese  
Chief executive



p32



This year's live awards event allowed the people profession to get together and celebrate the achievements of the past year

From the beginning of the pandemic and through the rapid changes every business had to make, I consistently heard and saw how our profession was at the forefront of the response. People really were being put at the top of the business agenda, and HR teams everywhere were being challenged to step up and innovate. They kept people safe, adapted to a rapid shift to home working, and supported those who had to be in workplaces, as well as those put on furlough.

As time has moved on, many businesses have been restructuring, and now the agenda is focused on new patterns of working and what we take forward from what we have learned. There is also more strategic planning, as organisations everywhere look ahead and recognise that labour markets are changing; people's expectations of work and a new deal are emerging, customer demand is shifting; and even supply chains appear more fragile. Technology investment is ticking up as part of the response, as is the need to create more organisational agility and resilience in facing up to a more uncertain future.

Crises always represent both danger and opportunity. They accelerate change and adaptation. And these times are perhaps a once-in-a-generation point of inflection, and very far from a short-term 'aberration', as some have described it. The climate crisis also is demanding more of businesses to change, and the drivers for more responsible businesses that understand and look after all their stakeholders have never been clearer. The growing push on ESG measures and transparency are strong indicators of what is being expected more by regulators, investors, and the public and society at large.

The last 18 months and all that we see ahead of us is putting our profession at the heart of business and business strategy more than ever before. So many of the issues are clearly related to people, to organisational culture and structures, to skills and job demand. We are seeing inclusion and wellbeing truly becoming central issues in support of talent

acquisition, retention, innovation and productivity. Hybrid and flexible working support this and have to become part of people strategy.

This is an exciting time for what we do. We have seen our profession step up and it was wonderful to see so many great

examples being celebrated at our recent CIPD People Management Awards held at Grosvenor House hotel in London. The event was also an opportunity to recognise our new Chartered Companions as our highest level of professional award – a great group of role models and influencers across the profession.

So now is also the time for us to keep investing in our own skills and capabilities, to professionalise further, and to engage across business in a shared agenda for action and change. Being principles-led, evidence-based and outcomes-driven. And ensuring we drive positive change through people managers and leaders at all levels, all of whom are going to be under more pressure to manage and support more diverse teams and organisations with higher expectations, as well as working in more diverse ways.

At the CIPD, we want to do all we can to support all of you and to help shape the future. We profoundly believe in this opportunity to change the world of work for the better and to fulfil our collective mission of championing better work and working lives.

HANNAH J TAYLOR/ALEX DEVERILL

# This month we've learned...

## The big lesson



{Workforce planning}

## Firms not planning skills needs

As employers scramble to fill a record number of job vacancies, the CIPD has warned that many are failing to consider their longer-term skills and talent needs.

In its latest Resourcing and Talent Planning Survey, conducted in partnership with Omni, the HR body found just under half (46 per cent) of firms had a workforce planning strategy based on their current and future workforce needs. This compared to more than two in five (43 per cent) firms that were taking an ad hoc approach to recruitment and not planning ahead.

Similarly, out of the 1,000 HR professionals polled, just two in five said their firms were undertaking any retention initiatives; fewer than a third (31 per cent) were collecting data to identify future skills requirements; and 13 per cent were collecting data to assess their supply of talent.

The pandemic has meant employers haven't had the bandwidth to plan ahead when it comes to resourcing, says Claire McCartney, senior resourcing and inclusion adviser at the CIPD. But, she says: "That's exactly what they need to be doing if they're to survive and thrive, given the current recruitment difficulties and hiring crisis on our hands and changing dynamics of the labour market."

{Flexible working}

## Flex requests may be day-one right

As businesses start to return to normal and offices welcome back staff, there are already worrying signs that the stigma around flexible working – which was rife in pre-pandemic days – is already making a comeback. Analysis by New Street Consulting Group suggests the number of vacancies for remote roles has already plummeted from 130,000 in June this year to 99,000 in August.

For many, then, the government's long-awaited consultation on making flexible working the default couldn't come sooner. Under the proposals, published last month, employees will be given the right to ask for a flexible arrangement on their first day of employment. Currently, employees only have this right after 26 weeks of continuous employment. On top of this, businesses could find themselves only allowed to refuse requests for particular reasons and required to offer alternatives if the arrangement the employee asks for isn't suitable.

As burdensome as this might seem,

**"Currently, employees only have this right after 26 weeks of employment"**

proposals fall far short of a right to have the working arrangement of your choice. Firms will still be able to reject a request if they have sound business reasons, and specific flexible arrangements will not be prescribed through legislation. Still, while proponents of flexible working welcome the consultation, there are concerns that rule changes alone won't be enough to address the stigma.

Unless policies around flexible working requests are accompanied by an attitude change, "it may achieve nothing more than moving forward a potential 'no' decision," says Gemma Dale, lecturer at Liverpool John Moores University.

Dale added that if day-one flexible working requests did become a reality, employers would need to provide guidance for recruiters and carefully consider how they managed requests, and particularly trial periods of flexible working for those who are new to the organisation and still need to build relationships.



{Health & wellbeing}

## Most HRDs mandating Covid vaccinations

A survey of 400 HR directors, commissioned by Indeed Flex, found seven in 10 (70 per cent) were planning to implement vaccine mandates, including one in five (22 per cent) who said jobs would be mandatory for all workers regardless of any potential exemptions.

Separate research by the jobs board also indicated the number of job postings explicitly requiring workers to be vaccinated against Covid more than doubled between August and

September, increasing by 119 per cent. Jack Beaman, CEO of Indeed Flex, said the figures showed the majority of HR professionals were prioritising staff and customer safety by requiring vaccinations. But others have cautioned that employers still need to balance this with the rights of their workforce. In November the care sector will be legally required to have all staff and volunteers fully vaccinated against Covid, but this will not be the case for other industries.

{Pay & benefits}

## Creating a buzz

For many, the escape from the office has also been a return to nature. During the height of the pandemic, when outdoor exercise was limited to an hour a day, people flocked to parks and outdoor spaces, keen to get some fresh air, while many of those lucky enough to have gardens enjoyed working in the sunshine.

So what better way to get people back to the office than to entice them with a slice of the outdoors? One US company, Nuveen, has gone as far as installing two beehives

on its seventh-floor terrace – part of a multi-million dollar renovation of its Manhattan offices, the *New York Times* has reported. The arrival of the bees also means a new perk – beekeeping courses from the new resident apiarists. Just make sure to wear your bee suit to the office.



Ken Akers says it's important bereaved employees don't return to work too soon; staff at Nuveen can now learn beekeeping at the office

{Health & wellbeing}

## Bereaved returning early

A survey of 1,000 employees who recently experienced bereavement found that half (49 per cent) were returning to work before they were ready because they could not afford to stay off work. Similarly, one in five (19 per cent) said they received no paid bereavement leave on top of their normal entitlement, while more than half (54 per cent) worried about their job security when taking time off.

Ken Akers, head of HR at Marie Curie, which conducted the research, said that while work can often

provide people with a routine and a sense of normality during a crisis, returning to work before you are ready can also complicate the grieving process. "Whatever [their] decision, employees must feel supported and trusted to do what is best for them," said Akers, who also urged employers to make sure staff feel supported to talk about what they are experiencing.

"It can be difficult to find the words or know how to support our colleagues but we must all find the courage to talk," he said.

{Employment law}

## 'Fire and rehire' rife in Covid contract changes

More than one in 10 employers who made changes to their employees' contracts during the pandemic did so using 'fire and rehire' tactics, a CIPD poll of 2,000 employers has found.

Between the first national lockdown in March 2020, and July 2021, 22 per cent of firms had made changes to their employees' terms and

conditions. And while the majority of the firms that made changes did so through negotiation, consultation and voluntary agreement (86 per cent), 14 per cent did so through dismissing staff and rehiring them on new terms.

In response, the CIPD has released new guidance for employers that are planning on making changes to their terms and conditions, stressing that they should always consult and seek voluntary agreement with employees, and take all steps to avoid fire and rehire practices except in exceptional circumstances.

"Fire and rehire should only be undertaken after extensive consultation and all other alternatives have been considered," says Ben Willmott, head of public policy at the CIPD.



# Ethnicity pay reporting is coming – are you ready?

*The government has yet to officially legislate data reporting requirements, but that doesn't mean employers can't start preparing now*

WORDS FRANCIS CHURCHILL

**M**andatory ethnicity pay reporting has been a long time in the making. It's been nearly five years since the idea was proposed in the McGregor-Smith Review, published in February 2017. Since then, there's been a 'one year on' follow-up report, commissioned by the government and written by Business in the Community, and a government consultation on the issue – the outcome of which is still pending.

Between all of that, the international

Black Lives Matters (BLM) movement, which threw renewed light onto issues of racial equality in all aspects of society – not least in the workplace – and ever-mounting evidence of the disproportionate impact the coronavirus has had on people from ethnic minority backgrounds, the only thing that seems to be missing has been government legislation on the issue.

Recently, that too came a step closer, after a petition launched in the wake of BLM blew past the 100,000 signatures needed to trigger a

parliamentary debate on the topic. An ethnicity pay reporting system, based on the current gender pay disclosure requirements, would be “one of the most transformative steps a company could take to address racial inequality at work and overcome practical difficulties in the workplace,” said Steven Bonnar, Scottish National Party MP, at the debate in September.

“Why, then, has it taken so painfully long for this government to respond to a report that was commissioned in 2018, more than two years after they

# News & analysis

released their consultations on the plans?” complained Bonnar. “No further developments have materialised.”

In response, Paul Scully, Conservative MP and under-secretary for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), said the government was “committed to taking action on ethnicity pay reporting... But we want to

ensure we are doing the right things to genuinely help move things forward.”

The challenge, at least as far as the government sees it, is that establishing a standard framework for ethnicity pay reporting is not as simple as creating one for gender pay. But many proponents of mandatory reporting are concerned that, without it, very little in business will actually change.

“Ethnicity pay reporting is an important lever for businesses and their stakeholders to assess if and where inequality based on ethnicity exists in their workforce. That’s why we believe it is so important that businesses both capture and learn from this data,” said Peter Cheese, chief executive of the

CIPD, in the run-up to last month’s debate.

The CIPD is calling for mandatory ethnicity pay reporting, similar to the rules in place for the gender pay

gap, to apply to all large employers from April 2023. Businesses with a headcount of more than 250 employees currently collect data on median and mean gender

pay gap, median and mean bonus gap, bonus proportions and quartile pay bands. The CIPD recommends that employers also publish these figures for their ethnicity pay gap, as well as the proportion of their total UK workforce from ethnic minorities and the proportion of employees who have disclosed their ethnicity.

And it isn’t just the CIPD calling for mandatory ethnicity pay reporting. Businesses are “crying out” for it, said Caroline Nokes, Labour MP and chair of the Women and Equalities Committee, at last month’s debate. “They want it to happen, but on a mandatory basis,” she said. The TUC, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the

**“It is important to assess if and where inequality exists in the workforce”**

UK’s equality watchdog, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), are also among those that have vocally backed mandatory reporting rules.

But businesses don’t have to wait for the legislation. The CIPD has published its own guidance advising employers who want to start reporting now on the best way to begin collecting, measuring and publishing their pay gap data (see box below). Similarly, Sandra Kerr CBE, race director at Business in the Community, says employers that are keen to get started can use the census categories as a framework to collect their ethnicity pay data. “It is the companies that voluntarily report their ethnicity pay gap data now that will be remembered as pioneers in the move toward an equal workplace,” she said.

Similarly, Efe Ekhaese, consultant at Russell Reynolds Associates, urged employers to start disclosing data before they are forced to by legislation. “While having the legal requirement would be a great next step, we should not wait until that happens before we feel compelled to act,” he said, adding the adage: “What gets measured gets done.”



## Don't call me grandma

It’s direct discrimination to call someone a grandparent at work, a tribunal has ruled – even if they are one.

After being referred to as a ‘grandmother’ in a car review she had helped conduct as part of her role in publishing, 62-year-old Anne Dopson filed a grievance, which was later rejected, along with an appeal, saying she didn’t “agree with what could be perceived as a dig at my age”. Dopson resigned in October 2017 and filed a claim to the tribunal, which ruled that the article was directly discriminatory towards her because of her age.

*“Jeans, chinos, sportswear or any other casual trousers are not appropriate”*

**House of Commons speaker Sir Lindsay Hoyle cracks down on MPs’ attire in the chamber with a new dress code**

## How can HR start collecting ethnicity pay data?

By all accounts, collecting and reporting ethnicity pay data can be a daunting process. That’s why the CIPD recently published *Ethnicity pay reporting: a guide for UK employers* to help firms that want to make the leap before mandatory disclosures are introduced. Here are some of the key suggestions:

- Use the same set of commonly defined statistics that are already

used for gender pay reporting to measure ethnicity pay. These include the median hourly pay gap, the median bonus pay gap, and ethnic representation in each quartile pay band.

- Create a supporting narrative that attempts to explain the nature and causes of any pay gaps through a more detailed analysis of the data that takes into account the broader

organisational context, including any existing policies and practices that are in place.

- Write an action plan based on this with clear steps that address issues including making job opportunities available to all employees and addressing access to learning and development opportunities.

**\* Read the CIPD’s full guide at [bit.ly/EthnicityPayGuide](http://bit.ly/EthnicityPayGuide)**



**the proportion of Brits would risk their job to go on holiday if they had to quarantine**

SOURCE: FACTORIAL HR



# It's back, it's hybrid – and it's better than ever

*Whether you join us in Manchester or online, don't miss the packed agenda at this year's CIPD Annual Conference and Exhibition*

**CIPD** | Annual Conference and Exhibition  
3-4 November 2021



Last year's flagship CIPD events were like no others. After the success of the online-only Festival of Work in June, a fully virtual CIPD Annual Conference and Exhibition followed in November in lieu of the usual live event.

But while lockdown restrictions have all but eased in most areas of the UK, the advantages of digital events for some people cannot be ignored, and the CIPD Annual Conference and Exhibition is delighted to be offering the best of both worlds this year, with a hybrid event being held both online and in person at Manchester Central on 3-4 November.

The conference itself is split into separate streams, exploring three aspects of people professionals' roles that are most pertinent right now: being pioneers of hybrid and flexible working; being promoters of inclusion and engagement; and being strategic planners.

Getting proceedings underway on

the first day of the conference, once CIPD chief executive **Peter Cheese** has officially opened the event, will be **Lynda Gratton**, professor at London Business School, future of work expert and author of the forthcoming book *Redesigning Work*, with a keynote on how HR can make the most of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to change the way we work for the better, and what to consider when doing so (see right).

From a practitioner perspective, later on the first day, **Sarah Blake**, HR director at TalkTalk, will join a panel discussion looking at how to manage employees' expectations when implementing a hybrid working model and deciding just how much flexibility to offer. **Bola Ogundeji**, deputy director of workforce and OD at Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, and **Matt Elliott**, chief people officer at the Bank of Ireland, will share the mental and physical health lessons they



learned from the pandemic's impact on their respective industries. And in the afternoon, a panel of experts including **Aneela McKenna**, diversity and inclusion specialist at the Scottish Parliament, will be discussing what 'wellbeing' really means in a post-Covid context, and why employers need to support it more than ever before.

On day two, **David Lammy MP** will begin a morning focused on diversity and inclusion, with his keynote on how HR can improve racial equality at work, followed by a panel session exploring how to address inclusion within the people profession and at senior level within organisations.

Later that morning, learning experts from the **LEGO Group** and **Unilever** will be looking into how organisations

can adopt a human-centred approach to learning in the wake of the pandemic, and a panel including **Sandra Kerr CBE**, race equality director at Business

in the Community, and **Saeed Atcha MBE**, commissioner for young people and vulnerable groups at the Social Mobility Commission, will address how initiatives such as apprenticeships can help boost the younger generations' careers.

The closing address will be given by journalist and author **Caitlin Moran** (see right), when she'll provide insight into how HR professionals can learn from their past failures and mistakes, and have faith in their own ideas at work.

Both online and in-person delegates will receive on-demand access to the conference sessions and keynote speakers (subject to speaker permission) for three months following the event. And there's still plenty of time to bag your ticket if you haven't already – just visit [cipd.co.uk/ace](http://cipd.co.uk/ace) to book.

## Need to know

### Hybrid setup

Following the success of last year's online event, this year's CIPD Annual Conference and Exhibition will be held both in person across two days at Manchester Central, as well as online, so you can choose how to engage with the event.

Delegates who join online will have access to 20 hours of conference sessions, live and on demand for three months after the event; discussion groups; Q&As and live polls with speakers; online networking; and two stages of Insights free learning (see page 59).

Those who attend in person will also be able to access the Engagement Zones, including the People Library (see right), Legal Drop-in Clinic and the Refresh and Recharge area; as well as Big Questions Live and social drinks events, plus much more still to be announced.

### Tickets

Tickets for the in-person event at Manchester Central cost £695 for CIPD members, £445 for CIPD student members and £895 for non-members. Tickets for the online event cost £495 for CIPD members, £445 for CIPD student members and £695 for non-members. Tickets can be booked via the website at [cipd.co.uk/ace](http://cipd.co.uk/ace).

### Covid security

The safety of those attending the in-person event is top priority. Delegates are asked to take a lateral flow test prior to the event.

If you get a positive result or are unable to attend because of another Covid-related issue, you can be transferred to an online ticket and receive a refund for any difference in ticket price.

Attendees are also recommended to wear a face covering in busy or confined areas.

## DON'T MISS



### David Lammy MP

Day two, 9am

The Labour MP for Tottenham for more than two decades, Lammy is a prolific commentator on crime and justice. The day two opening keynote will see him explain how HR can help close racial diversity gaps and make workplaces equal.



### Caitlin Moran

Day two, 3.40pm

Journalist, author and broadcaster Moran has been a *Times* columnist since she was 18. In the closing keynote on day two of the conference, she will speak to the CIPD's membership director David D'Souza about how HR can develop the confidence to step up and innovate.



### Professor Lynda Gratton

Day one, 10am

Regarded as one of the most eminent experts on the future of work, Gratton is passionate about seeing organisations get hybrid working right. Opening day one of the conference, she will explore how HR can embrace this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity while safeguarding purpose and productivity.



### Bernadette Thompson OBE

Day two, 9.40am

As part of a panel discussion, Thompson, deputy director for inclusion, wellbeing and employee engagement at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, will be discussing the systematic problem of diversity at C-suite and board levels. (See page 40 for a more in-depth interview with Thompson.)

### People Library

Days one and two, 11am-12pm and 2-3pm

Available at the in-person event only, the People Library isn't your average library. Browse the stories available and pick a storyteller who intrigues you, and they'll tell you their tale of the people profession, whether it's tackling challenges, facing adversity or growing in different ways.

# Future-proof your organisation

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Lossing over the six-hour outage at the start of October that rendered three of the world's most prolific platforms unusable, social media is an obvious place for businesses to advertise vacancies. Not only is it far reaching, but many platforms have sophisticated algorithms that promise to make sure the right people see adverts. However, a charity has warned this could land employers in hot water.

An investigation by Global Witness last month revealed that job adverts on Facebook were disproportionately being shown to the genders stereotypically associated with those roles. To make matters worse, this was being done by the platform's automated 'optimisation for ad delivery' system, and without the advertising organisation specifying who it wanted the adverts shown to.

More than nine in 10 (95 per cent) of those shown an advert for nursery nurse jobs were women, while 96 per cent of the people shown an advert for mechanic jobs were men. Similarly, three-quarters (75 per cent) of users shown an advert for pilot jobs were men, and more than three-quarters (77 per cent) of people shown posts for psychologist jobs were women.

A Facebook spokesperson told *People Management*: "Our system takes into

## Is advertising vacancies on social media discriminatory?

*Facebook's algorithm is in hot water, and employers could be liable if they use such platforms to promote their roles*



account different kinds of information to try to serve people ads they will be most interested in, and we are reviewing the findings within this report." The company also said it had been exploring expanding limitations on targeting options for job, housing and credit ads to other regions

beyond the US and Canada.

However, employment experts have warned that firms using such services could be opening themselves up to legal claims.

"An employer could be acting in breach of the Equality Act because of the way Facebook's algorithm operates," said Alan Lewis, partner at Constantine

Law, citing Section 39(1)(a) which requires employers not to discriminate against a person in the recruitment arrangement including through practices such as advertising.

When asked if employers inadvertently undermine their own diversity efforts by advertising on Facebook, Lewis said: "The answer is a resounding yes."

Yvonne Gallagher, employment partner at Harbottle and Lewis, added that if any website or media provider were known to operate an algorithm that limited access for particular groups on the basis of a protected characteristic, the employer themselves could be liable under the Equality Act.

But, she added, knowledge about the adverse impact of a particular algorithm would "likely to have to be widespread for a claim [against an employer] to succeed".

Lewis also warned that employers could be liable even if they were unaware or did not approve of a recruitment agency or social media platform's actions, noting that the Equality Act specifically says that "anything done by an agent for a principal, with the authority of the principal, must be treated as also done by the principal".

### What can employers do?

Alan Lewis, partner at Constantine Law, suggests employers advertise in a range of publications, both online and offline, that "appeal to viewers on a basis which is much more in line with equality" and are targeted at men and women

and readers of different ages. Meanwhile, Yvonne Gallagher, employment partner at Harbottle and Lewis, also advised employers to keep an eye on any criticisms levelled at social media sites in order to avoid facing claims.

Global Witness has filed complaints to both the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Information Commissioner's Office for investigations into whether the algorithms used to promote job ads infringe the Equality Act and GDPR.

### Correction

In the September issue of *People Management*, we stated that at the start of the pandemic, Tim Martin of JD Wetherspoon reportedly said his company wouldn't pay its staff until it received government furlough funds, and that he had suggested staff take jobs at supermarkets to cover the loss. We accept that the company did not withhold or delay staff wages, and Martin in fact said he "understood" if workers chose to take a job in a supermarket if they were offered one.

# “You got out of bed this morning – here’s £100”

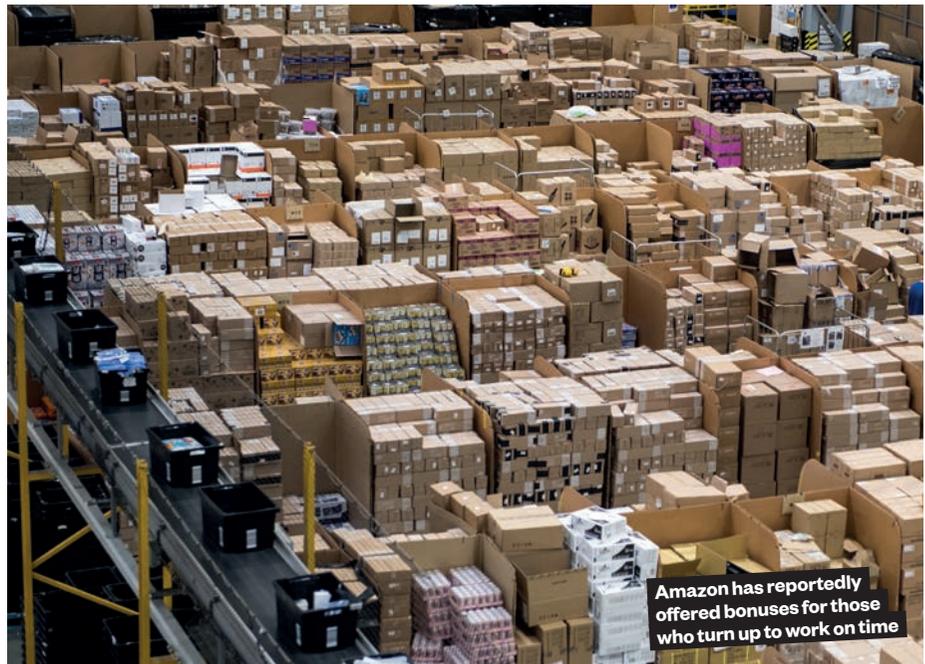
*The trend for employers to pay signing-on fees or attendance bonuses may seem like a perk, but experts warn it could be a short-term solution to a long-term problem*

**W**ith the UK recently hitting a record of more than one million job vacancies, it’s no surprise that many employers are upping the ante when it comes to attracting talent.

William Joseph, a London-based design agency, offers £250 to all unsuccessful candidates that apply for a role at the firm, and a bonus to successful applicants.

Tess Cooper, founder of Collaborative Future, who works with William Joseph on its hiring process, said: “We work a lot with marginalised people who are undervalued in their work and those who might experience more hurdles than others in finding the time to engage in recruitment processes.

“Paying people to participate in a recruitment process makes it more accessible to everyone. We’ve found that adopting a paid task as part of the process makes it easier to assess people based on a more level playing field rather than focussing on the paid work they’ve



had the privilege of accessing in the past.”

William Joseph is not the only firm giving candidates an incentive to apply for a job. OneStonegrove, a north London charity, offers £50 to all applicants for its vacancies, and Amazon was also recently reported to be offering a £1,000 signing-on fee for anyone who joined before 18 September. The online retail giant is now also offering permanent staff in some UK locations a weekly bonus of £50 for simply turning up to work on time, for those who have a 100 per cent attendance, excluding any sick leave taken that is linked to Covid or a disability. Amazon said it hopes the reward helps meet demand.

And in a bid to combat the shortage of HGV drivers, Tesco has also offered candidates a £1,000 joining bonus.

But while incentives can have a positive impact, Gemma Dale, lecturer

at Liverpool John Moores University, warned that they can also have unintended consequences. “You tend to get what you seek,” she explains. “If you pay an attendance bonus, people who want the bonus will come to work, but they might come to work sick. If you incentivise being on time, that’s what you’ll get, but that doesn’t guarantee that someone is undertaking valuable work.

“Incentives like these tend to have a short-term impact, which might be enough. But too often we head for the quick fix or easy option when there is a bigger problem beneath. For example, the shortage of HGV drivers has many causes, including Brexit and in some cases poor employment conditions. In the short term, bonus payments or golden hellos might tick some boxes, but more longer-term sustainable solutions would be better.”

## Incentives in practice

### Amazon

£50 for turning up on time for shifts

### McDonalds (US)

\$50 for turning up to a job interview

### William Joseph

£250 for unsuccessful job candidates

### Sainsbury’s

Up to £500 extra for delivery drivers doing shifts over the Christmas period

### Australian Venue Co

\$1,000 drinking and dining vouchers, free flights, plus hotel quarantine for two weeks to UK workers joining the firm

# CIPHR CONNECT

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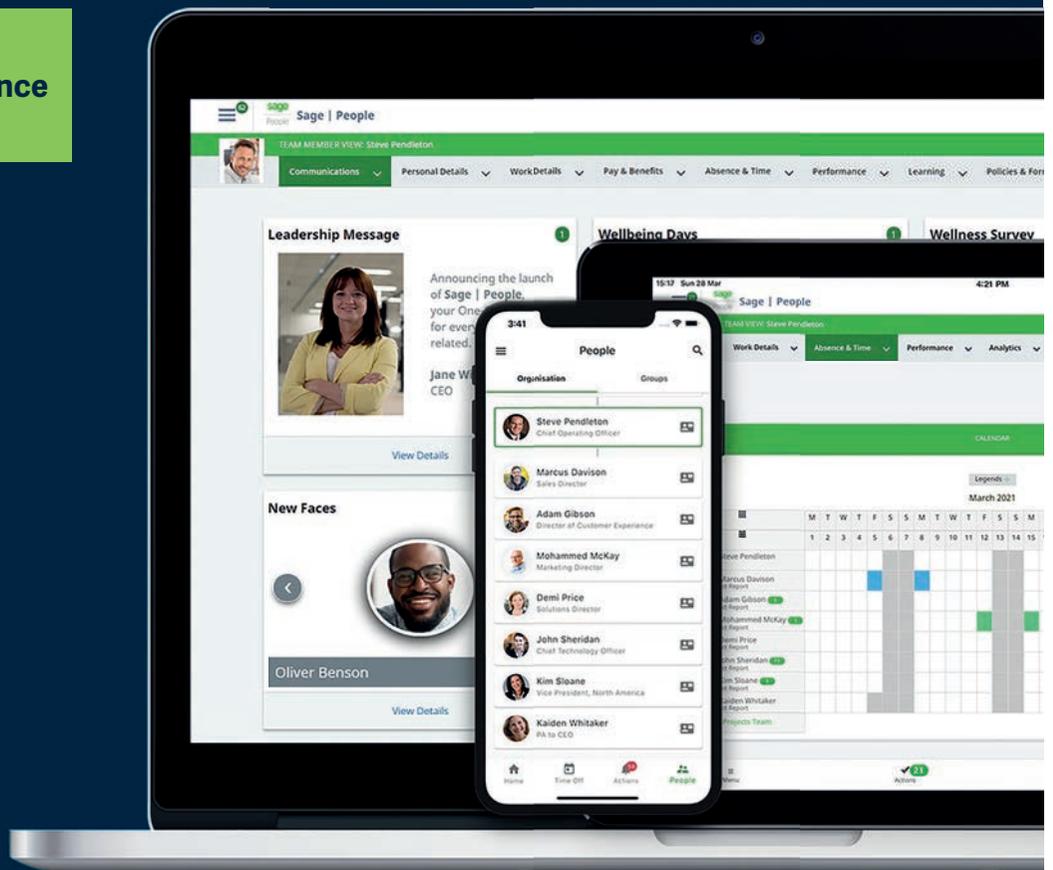
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# CIPD announces 2021's outstanding HR leaders

*Third cohort of member-nominated Chartered Companions is unveiled*

**W**hile the events of the past 18 months have challenged the HR profession like never before, they have also provided significant opportunities to change how organisations work for the better and improve working lives for everyone.

The CIPD's nomination process for Chartered Companion status – the highest level of membership – recognises exceptional leaders who have had a demonstrable impact on the wider HR profession. After a round of nominations at

the start of the year, the third cohort of Chartered Companions has now been revealed, with Valerie Hughes-D'Aeth, the CIPD's new chair, highlighting the impressive standard.

Very sadly, Peter McLinn Chartered CCIPD passed away last month after a long illness, shortly before it was announced that he was one of this year's recipients (see page 58). The 18 Chartered Companions for 2021 are:

**Paul Boustead**, director of people at Lancaster University

**Dr Duncan Brown**, reward expert and High Pay Centre board trustee

**Wendy Cartwright**, portfolio HR and non-executive director

**James Cullens**, executive vice president for HR at SNC-Lavalin

**Karen Dumain**, national OD lead for the NHS

**Daniel (Don) Hegarty**, former chair of CIPD Ireland Southern branch

**Debbie Hewitt MBE**, chair of Visa Europe and White Stuff

**Alison Hodgson**, vice president of people at Virgin Media Ireland

**Yetunde Hofmann**, founder of Solaris and former CIPD non-executive director

**Peter McLinn**, co-chair of the CIPD Northern Area Partnership

**Rupert McNeil**, chief people officer for the UK government

**Angela O'Connor**, founder and CEO of The HR Lounge

**Eugenio Pirri**, chief people and culture officer at the Dorchester Collection

**Gary Rees**, head of organisational studies and HR management at Portsmouth Business School

**Olive Strachan MBE**, founder of Olive Strachan Resources

**Hayley Tatum**, executive director and senior vice president for people at Asda

**Valerie Todd CBE**, UK HR director at Siemens

**Dr Neil Wooding**, chief people officer at the Ministry of Justice

\* Nominations for 2022's Chartered Companions open on 1 January 2022.

For more information, visit [bit.ly/ChartCompNoms](https://bit.ly/ChartCompNoms)

## Meet the Chartered Companion...

### Eugenio Pirri



#### How did you start out in HR?

I was 23 and had worked in some management positions in hospitality, but I reached a point where I wanted to do something different. The head of HR said, 'Genio, you're so good with people, have you ever considered HR?' and that's exactly what happened.

#### What are you most proud of in your

#### career so far?

Every time I've left a job or been promoted, my number two was promoted to replace me – 11 times in total. It's really important to continue to develop people and have people trust you.

#### Who has helped you the most during your career?

I definitely have to mention my parents and grandmother, who went through many struggles during their lives but were always so positive. I feel really

blessed that they instilled that in me. When the world is blowing up around you, you have to find the opportunity and crawl out of it. It serves you really well in the people profession. I also have to mention my current CEO – I consider myself a nice person, but he's really taught me that you can lead through kindness.

#### What makes you proud to work in HR?

People don't realise the

wonderful responsibility in what we do. By giving someone a job or a promotion, we're giving them an opportunity to live. We help people experience things. Saying 'you're hired' or 'you've been promoted' means much more than just what's happening on the job. I think if more HR professionals really thought about that breadth of responsibility and what it means, we'd take even more care to make the right decisions.

#### What opportunities has the pandemic brought HR?

I think we'll do our profession great harm if we don't learn from how we've had to step

up and manage difficult situations and people's mental health. I genuinely believe we won't return to the world the way it was before. The companies that say they're going back to normal are really missing a beat.

#### What do you hope to achieve as a Chartered Companion?

It's made me realise even more my desire to want to learn more, both from the other Chartered Companions and other businesses. I love learning from other organisations outside hospitality, because hospitality is my world. I really want to see HR recognised as operational teams – that's really going to make us stand out as a profession.

Eugenio Pirri's CEO at the Dorchester Collection has taught him how to lead with kindness



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Yvonne Hoggarth, Senior Leader Apprenticeship Scheme Director

\*via Apprenticeship Levy

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# Worker sacked over chicken nugget disagreement was unfairly dismissed

*Judge finds investigation's focus on only two witnesses was unreasonable*

**A** customer service advisor who was accused of becoming “aggressive and violent” after receiving what he saw as a small portion of chicken nuggets in his office canteen was unfairly and wrongfully dismissed, a tribunal has ruled.

Mr Steven Smith, who also has a respiratory issue which can cause his face to go red, worked at the Airdrie office of digital services provider Teleperformance Limited and had been working a 12-hour shift on the day of the incident.

Smith had asked for “chicken nuggets, chips and cheese” and was given three nuggets by canteen staff. He claimed he did not want the food because other customers had received more nuggets and “slid the box back”.

The incident was brought to the attention of a team manager, Ms Marshall, who suspended Smith the same day with full pay pending an investigation. As part of the investigation, Marshall interviewed the two canteen assistants, who claimed that Smith was noticeably angry and “forcefully pushed the box back”. Smith was also offered three more nuggets for 99p but he refused.

Smith attended two investigation meetings during which he denied “storming off” and said he reported the incident to a manager. He maintained that he conducted himself in the correct manner.

He also submitted a grievance letter as he felt he was being “discriminated against and victimised”. The letter noted that at the time, Smith needed to take his medication and there was a note from a GP confirming he had been seen at an out-of-hours primary care centre earlier that day.

Smith admitted that his shock at the portion size caused him to say “if I wanted a Happy Meal, I would go to McDonald’s”.

The tribunal heard that Marshall took no steps to identify other employees present when the incident took place, either by speaking to those involved or checking swipe card logs, and accepted the position of the canteen assistants.

Smith was dismissed for “acting violently” and gross misconduct. He appealed but did not attend the hearing out of fear and felt his grievance had been ignored. The appeal was not upheld. Employment judge Hoey said the investigation fell out of the “range of responses open to a reasonable employer” because it placed “significant weight” on the evidence given of Smith’s demeanour and the witnesses’ belief he had been angry.

Smith was awarded more than £6,000 for unfair dismissal, loss of statutory rights, wrongful dismissal, an unreasonable failure to follow the Acas Code of Practice and a further compensatory award.

# Teacher unfairly dismissed for telling misbehaving pupil to get into ‘haunted’ cupboard

A maths teacher was unfairly and wrongfully dismissed after a pupil alleged he forced him to get in a cupboard as punishment, the Liverpool employment tribunal ruled.

Mr A Mohammad Basit, who worked at Pleckgate High School in Blackburn, was teaching a class when he noticed ‘pupil A’ misbehaving. Basit, who had a “light humour” teaching style, asked pupil A to stand at the back of the classroom and “joked” that he should get in the cupboard, which he did for a “short time”.

Unbeknown to Basit, after the class, pupil A and two other students who were also disciplined complained to the headteacher, Mark Cocker. He took their statements, which the tribunal said had “inconsistencies and similarities”. Basit’s statement, which was “brief and rushed”, said he asked Pupil A to go into the cupboard “as a joke”, and that he had a “running gag” that the cupboard was haunted.

At an investigatory interview, Basit emphasised that it was a joke and even said pupil A came out the cupboard laughing, saying “it’s actually quite cosy in there”. He also pointed out pupil A’s “appalling” behaviour record.

Basit was dismissed for gross misconduct. He appealed, asking again for the pupil’s behaviour record to be taken into account, but the appeal was not upheld. The tribunal found that the school not only failed to take into account pupil A’s 364 previous behaviour reports, but there were faults at each stage of the disciplinary process, which sometimes led to “imbalanced or baseless conclusions”.

The judge said Basit’s dismissal was an “extremely harsh sanction” and not within the band of reasonable responses.

## CIPD | HR-inform

For employment law advice and resources, visit [hr-inform.co.uk](http://hr-inform.co.uk)

# Withholding tips could land employers at tribunal under new law

Employers in the hospitality sector would be legally obliged to pass tips on to staff and could face tribunal claims if they fail to do so under new government proposals.

Under the new regulations, employees will be able to request their employer’s tipping record and could bring a tribunal claim if they suspect them of breaking the rules.

The employment tribunal will also have the power to fine businesses caught flouting the rules and can

require them to compensate workers for any lost tips.

Currently, businesses are able to choose whether to pass tips on to workers or keep them. However, the government has said it is acting on concerns that the move towards a more cashless society has made it easier to withhold tips.

Although the government has not specified when the measures will come into force, it has said the changes could help two million

hospitality workers who rely on tips to top up their income.

Labour markets minister Paul Scully said: “Unfortunately, some companies choose to withhold cash from hardworking staff who have been tipped by customers as a reward for good service.

“Our plans will make this illegal and ensure tips will go to those who worked for it. This will provide a boost to workers in pubs, cafes and restaurants across the country.”

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*I'll tell you something...*

# AMRIT SANDHAR

FOUNDER OF THE  
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*Beyond Covid, leaders need to consider more than just hybrid working*

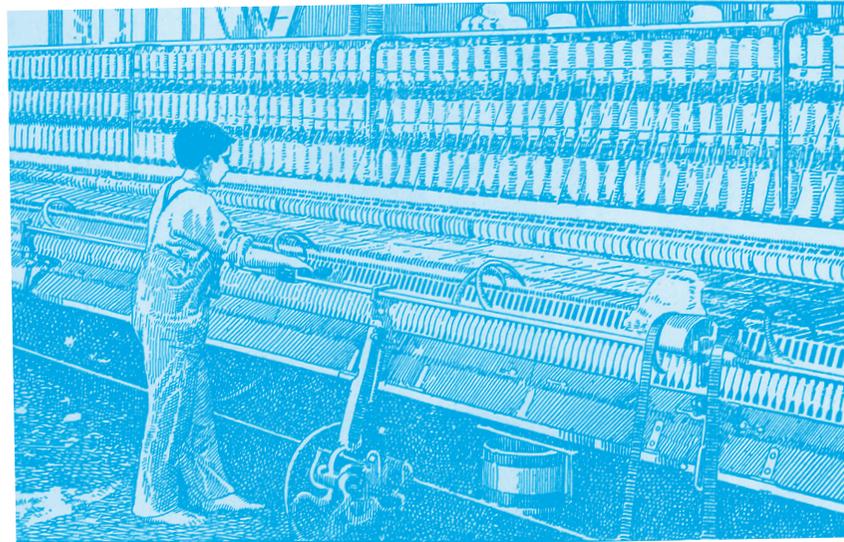
In this environment of economic growth and high levels of job opportunities, employees may be more likely to leave if they see a lack of recognition, poor work experiences or a toxic culture in their organisation.

And while the move to home working may keep employees happy, this alone may not be enough to retain them. A recent Microsoft study found that although 70 per cent of employees want their remote or hybrid working to continue, 41 per cent of the global workforce will consider leaving their employer within the next year.

It might seem confusing that employees want to retain remote working, yet it's not enough to stop them looking elsewhere. But how does the experience of working from home differ between organisations? Leaders need to help employees develop deeper connections with their employers, which requires creating a culture of involvement.

Yet remote working itself doesn't come without challenges.

Research by AWI highlighted one of the areas most at risk of being impacted by remote working is trust. In an increasingly partisan world where fake news has made many question who they can trust, the recent Edelman Trust Barometer found that businesses



**"Organisations are a reflection of the social and ethical conscience of their employees"**

are now the most trusted institutions globally, more so than governments and the media.

This could be the reason why organisations are increasingly being drawn into providing opinions on societal issues. We've seen many state their support for LBGT+ issues, Black Lives Matter and #MeToo, but what's also apparent are those organisations that stay quiet. In a world of 'cancel culture', leaders need to be aware that employees are looking to their organisations to understand their stance on important societal issues – and not having an opinion can be as damaging as not speaking up.

Organisations are no longer just seen as profit-making entities, but as a reflection of the social and ethical conscience of their employees and wider society. In a recent survey of 2,000 UK office workers by Reuters, 65 per cent said they were more likely to work for a company with strong environmental

policies. It's understandable, then, that many organisations are looking to become a force for good by, for example, becoming a certified B Corp.

Ethical leadership isn't a new concern. In 2018, Gallup asked generation Z and millennials what they looked for most in an employer, and the two most important areas

highlighted were that organisations cared about wellbeing and demonstrated ethical leadership. But what does ethical leadership look like within organisations? How ethical is it to allow employees to work long hours or under huge amounts of pressure? According to the ONS, 118 million days were lost across the UK in 2020 because of sickness, with mental health one of the main causes. Leaders need to consider the ongoing responsibilities their organisations have to wellbeing and creating cultures where people feel cared for.

We know from research into social identity theory the importance of a distinctive culture – one that employees can connect with. While the move to long-term hybrid working will require a greater focus on ensuring employees remain connected through effective communication and team cohesion, leaders will also need to appreciate the responsibility they carry to support causes their employees feel passionate about. **PM**

# In practice

*Real organisations, real challenges*

**Childs Farm**

## “We could have lost a quarter of our staff”

*Women’s health has become a big focus for the children’s toiletry brand*

**T**ucked away in a corner of rural Hampshire, Childs Farm is a brand borne of one woman’s very personal problem – there was no product on the market that would treat her young daughters’ chronic eczema without harsh steroid creams and chemical-based sealants. So Joanna Jensen set about creating her own solution using only natural ingredients, and Childs Farm was born. What started as a single-person venture in 2010 with 1,000 bottles of the company’s first six products given away to friends and family is now the number one UK brand for babies’ and children’s toiletries, with a workforce of 40.

It’s no surprise, then, that when Jensen encountered another very personal problem – namely taking 11 years to be formally diagnosed with the menopause after experiencing a raft of symptoms – she set about ensuring her own workforce didn’t go through the same. The company’s work on promoting and supporting women’s health, explains its HR director Laura Guttfield, has been driven by Jensen based on her experiences.

As well as wanting to prepare those in their 20s and 30s for what’s to come, a quarter of the company’s workforce is female and over 40, so it is at real risk of losing key employees if it failed to offer proper support. “The numbers of women who leave their jobs or are on long-term

absence because they aren’t supported during the menopause is terrifying,” says Guttfield.

As well as paying for every female member of staff over 40 to have a one-to-one consultation with a private GP specialising in the menopause whom the company has partnered with, Childs Farm has also held a series of ‘lunch and learn’ events on the topic for the entire workforce – not just the women. “This affects men too – they might know someone in their personal life going through it, or they might manage someone who is,” explains Guttfield, who has been with the company since the beginning of 2019.

On top of this, the firm is providing free copies of a book on the subject so staff can read up in their own time, and making sure it puts in place any adjustments that affected staff might need. “It could be something as simple as a desk fan,” adds Guttfield.

But Childs Farm is also acting as a lobbyist for further change – notably, Jensen has contributed to the Women and Equalities Committee’s enquiry into the menopause at work. “It’s definitely an issue HR has to be more aware of, especially employment law, how the condition

manifests itself, and that everyone’s experience is unique,” says Guttfield. “We’re a small company, but women in larger firms might not know where to turn for support.”

And while Guttfield is avoiding attaching targets and metrics to the company’s work around women’s health, she’s keen that it doesn’t become a policy that gets “forgotten about”, and is adamant that the benefits will begin to be noticed in other areas of Childs Farm’s wellbeing efforts. While the wider subject of wellbeing, she says, certainly wasn’t ignored prior to the pandemic, the company had no formal strategy and just did what it felt was needed. “Covid definitely made us more aware of wellbeing as a topic,” she explains.

“I think people also now look at wellbeing as a hygiene factor in where they work, so it was important for us to do more in this area.”

As well as having set a wellbeing calendar for the year, focusing on a different topic each month and tying it in with national awareness days, the company has also provided standing desks and yoga balls for those in the office (it recently successfully introduced a hybrid working model after going fully remote for six months at the height of the pandemic), taken the twice-weekly Pilates class it

**“Wellbeing has never been so high on the agenda – it’s now seen as a critical business update”**

offered in the office prior to Covid online, and Guttfield keeps her diary clear one day per week for 'Wellbeing Wednesdays', where any member of staff can drop in for a chat about any issue and be signposted to further support. With the subject now forming part of the HR report Guttfield compiles for the company's board, it's never been so high on Childs Farm's agenda, she explains. "It's now seen as a critical business update," she says. "Which is great – it's an area of HR I get really excited about. In terms of where we take it next, we'll be led by what people tell us they'd like to see."

With the company's wellbeing efforts in much better shape coming out of the pandemic and the challenges of doing HR as a team of one in a fast-growing business beginning to abate, Guttfield now plans to turn her attention towards recruitment and diversifying the workforce beyond bolstering support for women. The company's countryside location brings its own recruitment challenges, she explains, but its recently implemented hybrid working model allows employees to work in the office and at home, with some staff also fully home based, as far away as the south west, Manchester and even Germany, and a new flexible location in London available for those with ties to the capital.

"Because of our recruitment challenges and where we're based, we need to work even harder to open up those pools," explains Guttfield. "If we need to do that from grassroots because those people aren't there at the levels we need them, then we'll do that."

Creating opportunities for people from more underprivileged or diverse backgrounds, she adds, is an extra challenge for small businesses like Childs Farm. "It's difficult because we don't have deep pockets or the luxury of access to formal schemes," she says. The firm, however, is within touching distance of qualifying to pay the apprenticeship levy, and Guttfield is keen to turn it into an opportunity when it comes. "Perhaps we could do a positive scheme around building diversity in the FMCG [fast-moving consumer goods] world," she muses. "But that's probably one for 2022."



Kettering General Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

# “There were no ways staff could challenge decision makers”

*When the pandemic hit, the hospital trust bolstered its inclusion efforts to ensure staff would feel supported*

The events of 2020 acted as a catalyst for many changes in the world of work – with a renewed focus on inclusion and diversity high among them. Kettering General Hospital NHS Foundation Trust – which provides acute healthcare across north Northamptonshire and south Leicestershire – like many other organisations, already had numerous equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) networks in place to support staff from varying backgrounds and walks of life, but when the pandemic hit, it realised many staff were simply not aware of them or the support they offered, says Carol Verner, the trust’s interim head of EDI.

With around a quarter of its 4,000 employees having an ethnic minority background, and an “urgent” need for extra support because of the additional challenges stemming from working on the front line of the pandemic, one of the first things the trust did to continue to put employee welfare front and centre was to relaunch its BAME EDI network, Verner explains.

As well as relaunching the BAME staff network, the trust also boosted its other networks, including groups for disabled and LGBTQ+ staff. “We wanted to ensure there was a safe space for people to talk and get the support they needed, so they could address issues when they happened rather than let them escalate,” says Verner.

But Verner, who took up her interim post just before the first lockdown, did not stop there. She and her team devised an equality and diversity strategy after noticing that there was no clear process for staff to challenge leaders.

“I’m someone who likes to ensure there are structures and processes in place and I didn’t see one where staff could challenge managers or decision makers,” she says, adding that this was important to her because of experience at previous organisations. “I’ve been through discrimination. I’ve cried in toilets, I’ve been upset about the way I was treated. But those experiences helped me balance my views and the decisions I make,” she explains.

Verner, who has a background in project management, took on the task of

overhauling equality and diversity offerings as a change initiative. Her strategy, which was approved by the trust’s board, included rebranding some of the EDI networks and introducing a training programme designed to promote an inclusive culture.

This year, the BAME EDI network was renamed REACH – short for race, ethnicity and cultural heritage – after an article that was circulated by the government came to light about ongoing discussions over the use of the term ‘BAME’, explains Verner.

“Some people felt the phrase ‘BAME’ is self-discriminating, so it was renamed,” she says. “Although NHS England hasn’t yet told trusts to stop using ‘BAME’, it has said that they can choose an alternative while it decides what umbrella term to use. We felt ‘REACH’ was more inclusive.”

REACH started with seven members, but is now one of the largest EDI networks with more than 400 staff signed up.

In line with the intent to be more inclusive, other networks were also renamed, and a new gender equality network was formed. Each one was



**"We wanted to ensure there was a safe space for people to talk and to address issues"**

restructured so it has a co-chair – who gets one paid day per month to dedicate to running the group – a committee, a board sponsor and a terms of reference, which Verner highlights didn't exist previously. The idea, she says, is to "make everyone accountable in the process" and to allow busy surgeons or doctors allocated time away from their day-to-day duties.

But to make people truly accountable, they need to understand what is considered unacceptable behaviour, Verner points out, which is why her team has also set up numerous training programmes.

"It's easy to say 'we want a diverse board', for example," she says, "but people have to be developed to get to that level. It's a journey – and no-one wants to be a tickbox. So while we are progressing towards that, we need to raise awareness, because what one person might consider as acceptable behaviour might be upsetting or offensive to someone else."

The aim of the training programme, which is now part of the employee starter kit, is to give staff the skills to better manage any issues that might arise.

As part of this, the organisation has introduced inclusive recruitment champions, who are trained to spot unconscious bias and help managers make more informed decisions, explains Verner. "We now have more than 30 trained inclusive recruitment champions and since September, all job roles at Band 7 [manager level] and above, as well as all medical and dental posts, will have a champion on the interview panel."

Verner's overhaul of the trust's EDI strategy has proven successful with both its workforce and NHS England; a 2020 staff survey by the national body rated the trust 9.1 out of 10 for its policy.

With the initiative now entering its second year, Verner says she hopes to start seeing "some real culture change", but cautions that change takes time, and for EDI to be successful in any business, it's important that HR continues to work collaboratively so everyone has a sense of belonging. "This helps create an organisation where people really want to work," she says.

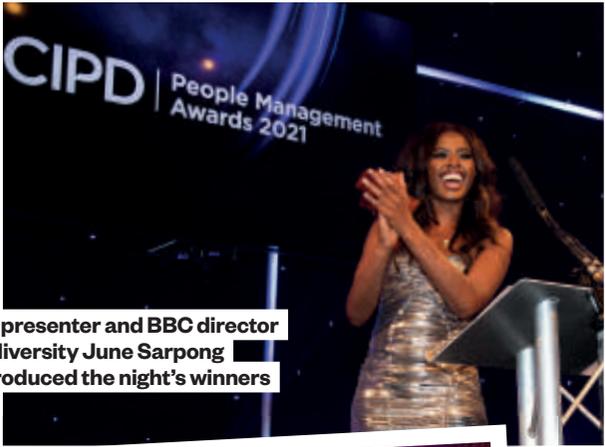


# Who's scooped the Oscars of HR?

*Back in person for 2021 with a glittering London ceremony, we reveal the winners of this year's coveted CIPD People Management Awards*

PHOTOGRAPHY ALEX DEVERILL

# CIPD People Management Awards 2021



TV presenter and BBC director of diversity June Sarpong introduced the night's winners

## Best flexible working initiative: The Sovini Group

Company culture is not confined to four walls and Sovini Group's winning of the flexible working initiative has proven that to be true. Pre-pandemic, its Bootle head office was the hub of its company culture, where its 830-strong workforce would collaborate as a family. But when the pandemic dispersed them, its strong sense of culture and belonging hung in the balance.

"When people visited our office, they would say there was a family feeling about it," says Steven Scott, head of HR. "The pandemic threatened to take the culture away, but it wasn't the office that held it together; that's just a building. It was the people who were in it."

He adds that if you really believe in your company culture, as Sovini employees do, then you can recreate it elsewhere and in different ways. "It wasn't about surviving the pandemic," he says, "it was about using it to make positive changes."

When the pandemic hit, the company launched its Change For Good programme, which focused on connecting employees virtually through apps and various engagement groups, and put communication at the centre of everything. But one of the biggest challenges of the initiative, according to Chloe Ellison, head of organisational development, was training senior leadership to cope with the shift to virtual working.

"The [biggest challenge was the] shift in the mentality of our managers who were used to working in a face-to-face environment," says Ellison. "They needed to have a different set of skills to be able to manage that in a virtual environment and to be able to engage with staff." So it created a bespoke management workshop to equip leaders with the skills to thrive virtually, embrace change and trust their teams, which was delivered to over 140 managers across the group. ▶

WORDS ELIZABETH HOWLETT



CIPD chief executive Peter Cheese kicked off the evening with a big thank you to the people profession



Members of the Sovini Group team celebrate their flexible working win

The initiative saw benefits across the organisation, such as staff engagement on the internal app, which was at 53 per cent pre-pandemic and is now at 85 per cent. Employee sickness absence levels also improved, decreasing from 1.69 to 1.37 per cent, and turnover rates improved from 18.8 per cent to 13.2 per cent. The firm also recruited more than 200 new employees during the pandemic.

When asked what advice he would give other organisations considering implementing a flexible working initiative, Scott says “knowing what you want to achieve and why you’re doing it” is the first step. “For us, the main reason was performance, because we believed we could be better for this change. We are a business and we want to achieve our corporate goals, so you need to have a clear vision and commit to it.” He adds that if you don’t commit from the outset “you will always look back and reminisce on the past and how great things used to be, but you have to look to the future and the improvements”.

### Best apprenticeship scheme: Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust (LTH)

**S**adly for the winning team at LTH, Covid restrictions at the trust meant not only were they unable to attend the awards ceremony, but they weren’t even allowed to watch the online ceremony in the same room as each other. “But we set up a Teams meeting and followed it on Twitter, and got excited together” explains Robyn Swain, head of people development. “People joined in their slippers – not quite dresses and tuxedos, but definitely the right thing for our organisation.”

Back in 2017, the trust had commissioned the ‘Get In, Get On, Go Further’ programme after a focus on hiring pre-trained staff failed to fill sufficient vacancies. The aim was to increase the number of apprentices at the trust; increase levy spend; retain apprentices through better support; and build

career pathways to fill key gaps in the workforce.

With apprenticeships previously avoided by many managers looking to recruit because of a lack of understanding, a key aspect was internal communications to bring about a culture shift, so managers understood that apprenticeships were a valuable option.

Getting buy-in, explains Swain, has been critical to the success of the programme. “Once you’ve set the culture and apprenticeships are part of the organisation’s DNA, increasing the number of programmes still takes work, but it’s part of what we do,” she says. “Walk out onto the wards and you’ll see apprentices in every team in every part of our organisation.”

Of the reason behind the effort the HR team and managers across

**“Apprentices are now just part of our DNA”**

WORDS ELEANOR WHITEHOUSE

LTHT has seen a six-fold increase in apprenticeship starts since 2018



the trust put into the scheme, Jenny Lewis, director of HR and OD, is clear. “You’ve also got to have the desire and the ‘why,’” she explains. “You’ve got to have a deep-seated ambition that personal development for everyone is crucial.”

Despite the pandemic, apprenticeships were only paused for five weeks, with learners often saying that their studies were keeping them going through the crisis, recalls Swain. “I’m really proud of our organisation for saying, ‘no, this is still important.’”

“It was also nourishing to be doing something that was growing at a time when most of the day was, quite frankly, horrendous,” adds Lewis.

And the impact of the trust’s efforts has been astonishing. It has seen a more than six-fold increase in the number of apprenticeship starts since 2018, up to more than 900 from 140, and the trust’s levy spending increased from £846k in 2018 to more than £2.5m in 2020.

“There were tears,” says Swain of the moment the team’s win was revealed. “To be objectively recognised as excellent is such a boost for everyone that has supported a learner through such tough times. As much as awards aren’t our main motivation, I can’t emphasise how much it matters.”

IAN JEREMIAH

People team of the year – public sector:  
Cayman Islands Government

## “We didn’t know the skills we had”

The Cayman Islands civil service was already three years into a five-year plan to become a world-class organisation when 2020 hit. In January of that year, the Caribbean island – a self-governing British Overseas Territory – was hit by a 7.7 magnitude earthquake and the threat of a tsunami. While the earthquake left the country shaken, but largely unharmed, it was a sign of the year to come.

“Coronavirus wasn’t the start of the journey for us in the HR team here,” says Graeme Jackson, director of workforce development for the Cayman Islands civil service. “We started quite a bit before the Covid crisis hit in terms of trying to prepare the civil service for a new way forward, a new way of thinking, getting out of the old-fashioned bureaucratic view of what governments were.” The HR team was also chair of the government’s business continuity panel, so when crisis struck, “our focus was already there,” says Jackson.

The first mission was to bring home

citizens from abroad in a controlled way to prevent the virus from being spread through the local population, in which the HR team took a leading role. This involved taking over the management of local hotels and coordinating 250 inbound flights over a three-week period. While there were still no cases of the virus on the island, the team also worked to create a field hospital as part of the country’s diligent contingency planning. “We don’t have the luxury here of being able to call in the next village or the next town. That next town to us would be Miami, followed by London, so we really had to be self-reliant,” explains Jackson.

At the heart of this was making the most of the talent that the civil service had available. “It was never the people we expected. Even within our own team, we didn’t know some of the skills that we had,” says Jackson. This included individuals who, in previous careers, had experience working in hospitality or setting up field hospitals. “I reached out to the organisation [asking] if there was anybody with experience of building a hospital very quickly, at short notice and with no equipment, not expecting any response. But actually, I got two or three people,” he says.

Now Jackson and his team are working to make sure everything they have learned over the last 18 months is embedded in their day-to-day roles.

“We know we can accelerate decision making and make good solid decisions,” he says. “So how do we make that part of our everyday practice?”

The other focus? “Trying to capture some of the stories so we don’t lose them, and we can embed them in training going forward,” he says.

▼ WORDS FRANCIS CHURCHILL



The Cayman Islands HR team made the most of their talents during an earthquake as well as the pandemic

### Best L&D initiative - private sector: Boots UK

With outlets on most UK high streets, as well as a thriving online operation, Boots is arguably the most well-known wellbeing, beauty and pharmacy retailer in the country. Customer care has always been important, but it didn't always have a clear focus, according to James Griffin, the company's senior L&D manager.

The company had slipped from 12th to 99th place in the Institute of Customer Service's rankings over the space of four years which, coupled with a decline in high street sales, caused it to refocus. The team collected and analysed customer insight data before zeroing in on three customer needs: friendly, helpful and available staff. "They were the three killer insights – we then agreed we needed to create some training behind it," Griffin says.

And so the 'HUG' scheme was born – an acronym for a customer experience model where staff follow three steps to a "brilliant" customer experience.

The L&D team first worked with staff to define how each of the elements could translate into their daily work and customer interactions, before designing



The Boots team have seen great success with their 'HUG' training scheme

## “It’s so much more than just a training programme”

a training programme comprising theory and practical exercises to bring it to life. A pilot in the company's Stirling branch in July 2018 saw customer experience measures quickly improve, followed by an equally successful broader pilot in 18 stores the following month, before it was rolled out at the business's stores conference.

"The launch in one store had an immediate impact, not only on the team, but also on customers," says Griffin. "It blew us all away and, within a couple of weeks, it was really noticeable, which we weren't expecting."

Since HUG's inception three years ago, it has driven a 13 percentage point increase in Boots' overall satisfaction and net promoter score.

Customer complaints have decreased, compliments increased and customer loyalty card data also shows that the company's most satisfied customers return more often. "The simplicity of what we've done has been key to its success," Griffin explains.

Following the first version, subsequent iterations of the initiative have also been developed over the last three years, including HUG for beauty, pharmacy, Christmas and the response to Covid.

"It's been really transformational and not just a training programme," Griffin says. He also describes how the model has "built momentum" around company culture with 'HUG' appearing on staff notice boards and as part of internal company awards.

### Best inclusion and diversity initiative: Police Now

## “We wanted to really understand the barriers that ethnic minority groups face”

The killing of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement last year brought to the fore the need for police forces to be representative of their communities on a global scale.

But Police Now, a charity that supports police officer recruitment across England and Wales, started the process to attract a more diverse

workforce more than two years ago.

"We took a step back from everything we were doing and spoke to people on the programme, those that had graduated from it, and even those considering policing, to really understand what was valuable to them and the different barriers they faced," explains Clare Power, director of recruitment and marketing.

When putting together the campaign, Power says the marketing team hosted numerous focus groups and workshops to really find out and understand what different ethnic minority groups' thoughts were on policing careers, their perception of the police force and the reasons behind the various barriers people faced.

"We told people not to be polite with us, but to be really honest and open. We had a lot of things come up, including the Stephen Lawrence case and the reasons why some do not trust the police," adds Power.

The team at Police Now used what they learned from the focus groups to not only devise a strategy aimed at removing bias from the recruitment



# CIPD People Management Awards 2021

process, but create what the judges described as a “bold” recruitment campaign: Be the Change.

The campaign used real-life experiences of people to address the realities preventing under-represented groups from joining the police, as well as from those in the force.

“We’re absolutely delighted,” Power says of winning the award. “We’re so proud of what we’ve achieved, in such a short period of time and it means so much when it’s from such a respected judging panel.

“We were so happy just to be shortlisted, so to be selected as the winner from such a distinguished crowd of organisations just means so much, especially because it has been a hard journey.”

So what’s next? For Power and her team, it will be supporting those who have been recruited to progress up the career ladder, particularly those from under-represented backgrounds, while also continuing to evolve and refine the charity’s inclusion and

diversity initiatives.

Police Now launched its Frontline Leadership programme at the end of September, which is part of its wider, long-term inclusion and diversity strategy, the aim of which is to make the workforce representative across all ranks.

“We want to bring people into something where they can make a real change through frontline policing,” Power adds.

“We want to support these people throughout their journey in policing; they are our future leaders. And that’s why our work doesn’t stop – it’s important we continue to evolve.”

## ROLL OF HONOUR

### The 2021 CIPD People Management Awards winners

#### Best apprenticeship scheme

sponsored by Investors in People  
**Leeds Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Trust**  
See page 28

#### Best change management initiative

**The Co-op**  
Highly commended: Citizens  
Advice Gateshead

#### Best community initiative

**The Indigo Childcare Group**  
Highly commended: NHS Blood  
and Transplant

#### Best digital/technology initiative

sponsored by Personio  
**Shared Services  
Connected Ltd**  
Highly commended: NHS Scotland  
Workforce Policies

#### Best employee experience initiative

sponsored by Civica  
**Severn Trent**

#### Best flexible working initiative

sponsored by Softworks  
**The Sovini Group**  
See page 27  
Highly commended: Financial Services  
Compensation Scheme

#### Best health and wellbeing initiative - private sector

**Northumbrian Water**  
Highly commended: Seetec

#### Best health and wellbeing initiative - public sector

**The City of Edinburgh  
Council**

#### Best HR/L&D consultancy

**Kamwell**  
Highly commended: Let’s Talk Talent

#### Best HR/L&D supplier

**Ceridian**  
Highly commended:  
McCruden Training

#### Best inclusion and diversity initiative

sponsored by Western Power Distribution  
**Police Now**  
See opposite  
Highly commended: News UK

#### Best L&D initiative - private sector

**Boots UK**  
See opposite  
Highly commended: CDE Global

#### Best L&D initiative - public/third sector

**Police Now**  
Highly commended: Department of  
Health and Social Care

#### Best organisational development initiative

sponsored by Imperial College  
Business School  
**Karbon Homes**  
Highly commended: NHS Employers &  
NHS England and Improvement

#### Best people analytics initiative

**People Matter**  
Highly commended: SUEZ Recycling  
and Recovery UK

#### Best resourcing initiative

**Sunrise Senior Living UK and  
Gracewell Healthcare**  
Highly commended: NHS England and  
NHS Improvement

#### Best reward or recognition initiative

**Essex County Council**

#### Best SME people management initiative

**Shoreham Port**

#### Best talent management initiative

**Network Rail**  
Highly commended: Sky

#### People team of the year - private sector

sponsored by MHR  
**The Co-op**  
Highly commended: Aboam

#### People team of the year - public sector

sponsored by MHR  
**Cayman Islands  
Government**  
See page 29

#### Michael Kelly outstanding student award - advanced level

**Ryan Hollingshead**  
HR manager at Tiffin Sandwiches

#### Michael Kelly outstanding student award - foundation/intermediate level

**Khaji Kushumbayev**  
HR generalist at Eradah Capital

Read all the  
winners’  
stories in depth  
at [cipdpmas.co.uk](http://cipdpmas.co.uk)



# And the win

*HR has emerged with renewed credibility from the pandemic – which winner at this year's CIPD People Management Awards. But the*

**A**s a company that helps other organisations with their business continuity plans, International SOS was ahead of the curve when the pandemic began to bite in March 2020. It had an assistance centre set up to support clients with health and security issues in such crises, and was well drilled in crisis management. “There was pressure on us to handle this well in the eyes of our clients, at

the same time as there was increased demand on our services,” remembers Peter Jenkins, general manager for Northern Europe. “We’d run crisis scenarios before, even pandemic planning, where we took half the team out of the centre and sent half home. But technical challenges and issues with client security meant this wasn’t viable.”

One of the first actions Jenkins took was to place Ben Dale, the region’s HR director, in charge of the business

continuity team. They made the difficult decision to send everyone but the assistance centre staff to work from home in late February, meaning core operations could continue securely. “I asked HR to lead on this because this was very much a people issue. We could have had our medical advisors, a myriad of people in charge, but with something as emotional and individually threatening as a pandemic, our number one priority was to look after our people

# ner is... YOU

*is why the profession was named overall question is, where does it go from here?*

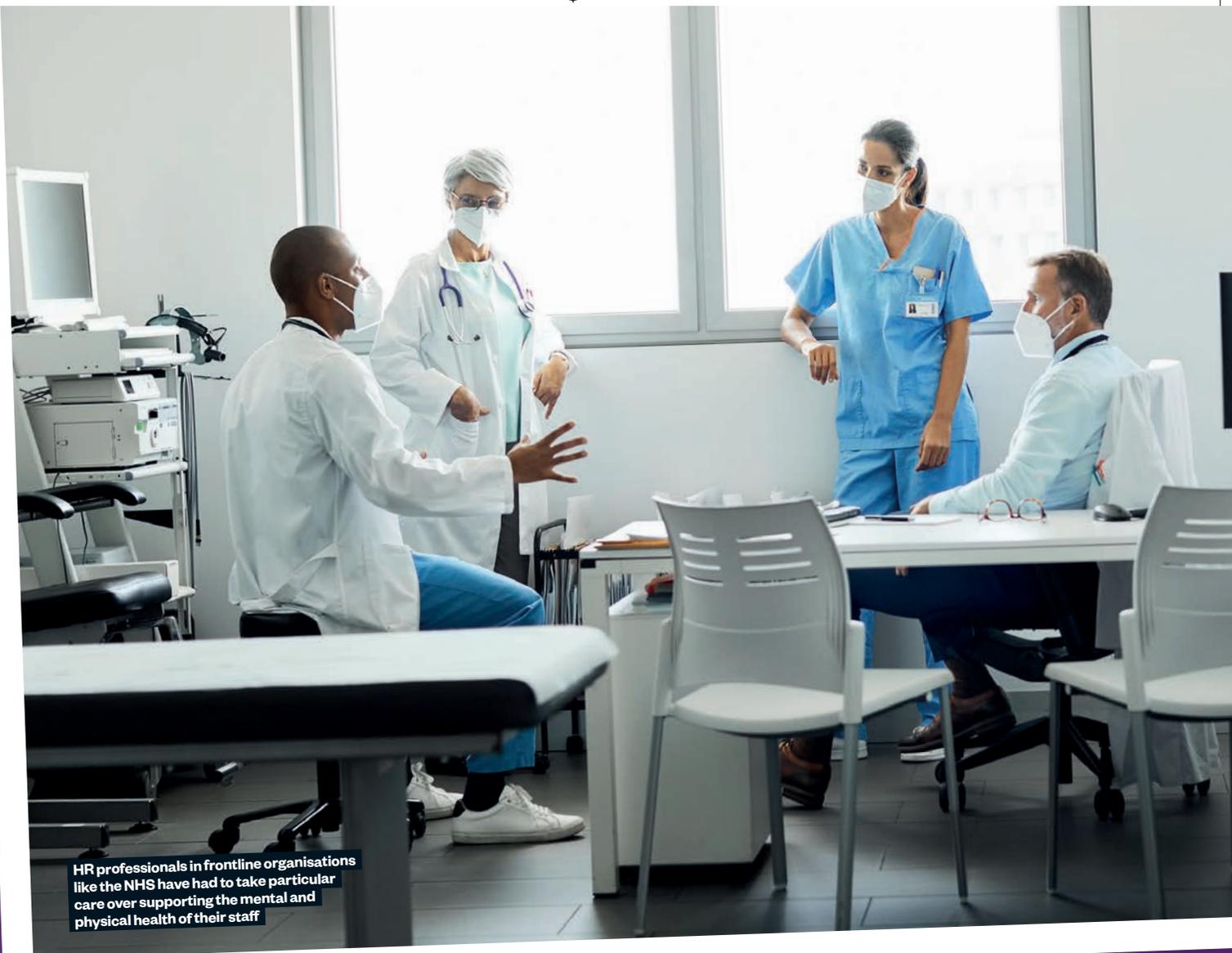
WORDS JO FARAGHER

in the most appropriate way," he adds. "HR was the appropriate place to sit this, with strong counsel." Throughout the months that followed, Dale's team adapted policies, communicated with teams working on site and at home, and began preparing for an eventual return to the office. Jenkins has seen HR in a different light. "They are far more visible and present to me. Maybe two years ago they were a great support on policy and employee issues, more of a tactical

advisor," he says. "But now Ben and his team have a much stronger input."

Stories showing the value of HR abound since March 2020, when a function that some perceived as the payroll gatekeeper or policy manager was thrust into the limelight almost overnight. An editorial in *The Economist* at the time declared that "never before have more firms needed a hard-headed HR boss". The weeks that followed saw HR professionals move entire

workforces to home offices in a matter of days, get to grips with an ever-changing furlough system and make sure that employees who needed to work on the front line were physically and mentally safe. Speaking at the annual conference for the Public Services People Managers' Association (PPMA) in September, Coventry City Council's chief executive Martin Reeves reflected that "there was no rulebook" for HR teams: "These were unique circumstances; we relied ▶



HR professionals in frontline organisations like the NHS have had to take particular care over supporting the mental and physical health of their staff

on the guile and brilliance of our people managers to see us through. It was acute and chronic at the same time, dealing with the here and now but with one eye on the medium- to long-term impact of what was happening.”

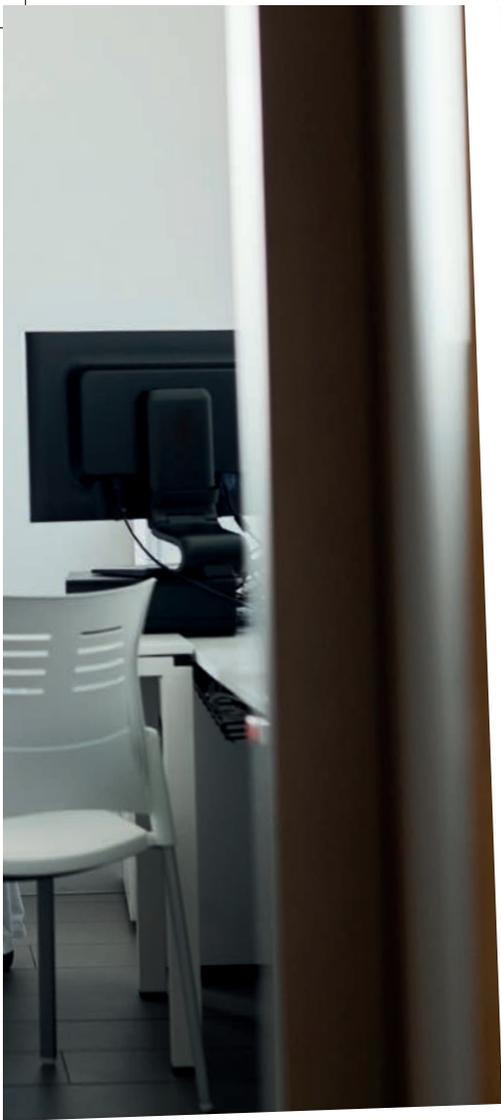
The profession itself feels it has had a reputation boost. A survey by software company Sage found that almost three-quarters (72 per cent) of leaders felt the value of their role increased, while 54 per cent of employees said they had a better understanding of HR’s role and value to the organisation. Among CEOs, 59 per cent said they understood the value of HR better than before the pandemic. But this challenging period is not over yet, and the next few months could prove decisive as to whether HR can

**“We relied on the guile and brilliance of our people managers to see us through”**

cement those gains. Jessica Fuhl, author of Sage’s research, argues that there is still work to do. “HR was front and centre... employees and the C-suite recognised that – and valued it,” she says. “However, that was during the ‘firefighting’ phase. To maintain its newly valuable position in the eyes of the C-suite, people leaders must use this groundswell of influence and support to build on this and move forward to the strategic horizon scanning phase.” The coming months will offer multiple opportunities to do so, adds Fuhl, whether that’s in embracing automation to free up time and resources, how HR puts wellbeing at the heart of employee experience,

progress on diversity and inclusion and making the most of workforce data.

“You could argue that the early days of the crisis were easier to manage because there were fewer options on the table,” says David Collings, professor of human resources management at Dublin City University. “With the return to the office, we’re starting from a new baseline. HR has to manage expectations about what the return to work means, what the purpose of the workplace is and what is better done in the office than remotely. The future is much more complex than the past.” In the early months of the pandemic, Collings’s team collaborated with the University of South Carolina to track 50 chief human resources officers and their responses to the Covid crisis. They were asked a series of questions on their priorities, their learnings and their



the pandemic we've seen a willingness and humility from leaders to listen – when they're forced to make difficult decisions, that's when you really see what an organisation stands for."

Paul Boustead, director of people and organisational development at Lancaster University, felt this keenly. "What I've observed over the past year is an exponential shift from using the terminology of 'HR' to 'people', 'organisational effectiveness' and 'culture,'" he explains. "I have more strategic conversations with my executive team than ever. This was happening before, but has been accelerated by the pandemic." Like many HR professionals, Boustead faced an onslaught of policies that needed to be revised and questions that required answers. "Universities are communities, so it wasn't just about employees' mental health but also keeping students and visitors safe. HR had to play a role in that community and could not think in a siloed way." An unexpected positive was an improvement in negotiations with the three trade unions on site: Unite, UCU and Unison. "They were conflicted in many ways because they had their safety hats on as we were thinking about returning to campus, but could also see the benefits of delivering learning face to face," he says. "But because we could meet virtually, rather than trying to get everyone in a room, those negotiations happened quickly and we were able to move forward." Boustead has also seen HR's standing elevated outside of his own campus, where his team has

**"During the pandemic we've seen a willingness and humility from leaders to listen"**

been invited to discussions with the Home Office on how academic visas might work and approached to inform guidance from the Department for Education. "Years ago, they would have gone straight to the vice-chancellor," he adds.

At animation studio Jellyfish Pictures, the past 18 months have shown the sheer breadth of the HR director role. So much so that Sarah Tanner was promoted from her HRD role to operations director, having supported the company to not only relocate

a workforce where 40 per cent of employees come from Europe, but also hire around 250 new people over the course of nine months. "We very quickly had to react and make sure people weren't panicking," she says. "We employ a lot of Italians and couldn't continue if people weren't feeling safe, so we had to think about how we adapted, changed working hours and got people home."

The company began moving employees to remote working, supporting many to return to their home country, three or four weeks before official lockdown was announced in England to make sure the studio technology would work remotely. Tanner was heavily involved in communications, wellbeing and logistics, as well as ensuring managers were checking in with employees and responding to questions on government guidance. Both her old and new roles have a seat on the board, she adds. "I've always wanted to know how the whole company works, what the implications of certain actions are – the move into the operations role is a reflection of what my job is, it's much bigger than 'just HR'. That said, it's a reflection of what the people function can do – you can't have one without the other, there's too much of a hard stop."

Of course, the dramatic shift to working from home or protecting employees on the front line was not only driven by HR. The very nature of the pandemic required a team effort, and HR was often at the forefront of that cross-functional collaboration. "The two main functions driving things for me were my chief people officer and my CIO. The two of them made all of this happen," says John Petter, CEO of payroll software company Zellis. The technology team ensured everyone was connected to company systems, while HR drove communications with colleagues, such as weekly all-hands calls and inviting employees to share any concerns about juggling home schooling or feeling burnt out from time on Zoom. But one of CPO Caroline Drake's most pressing jobs during the crisis has been to support Petter in his own decisions. He adds: "She has an important role in coaching me, and she gives me totally honest advice, even if it's not always ▶

interaction with their executive teams. "What became clear in many ways was – just like the financial crisis brought chief financial officers to the fore, and Y2K was all about CIOs – this was a people crisis," he adds. "Decisions were often being made without data or experience early on in the pandemic, and values tended to inform the executive leadership team in their decision making. CHROs were helping CEOs think through what the organisation's values meant in terms of key decisions." This was a shift compared with how that relationship might have played out before, says Collings. "In the past, HR might have been reluctant to go to leadership and say 'we don't have all the answers' or 'we need to revise a decision'. But during



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## “IN HR YOU HAVE TO PUT YOUR EGO ASIDE”

**Marine Fournier, head of HR at Powell Software**, joined the company days before the pandemic began, in February 2020. She was already tasked with splitting out the HR function after a funding round when the world was suddenly thrust into lockdown.

“At the time we were around 45 people and now we have more than 90,” she says. “Our first message going into this was one of care, and as a digital company we had an advantage from a practical perspective. But the timings of lockdown announcements varied in different countries so in some ways we were operating blind.”

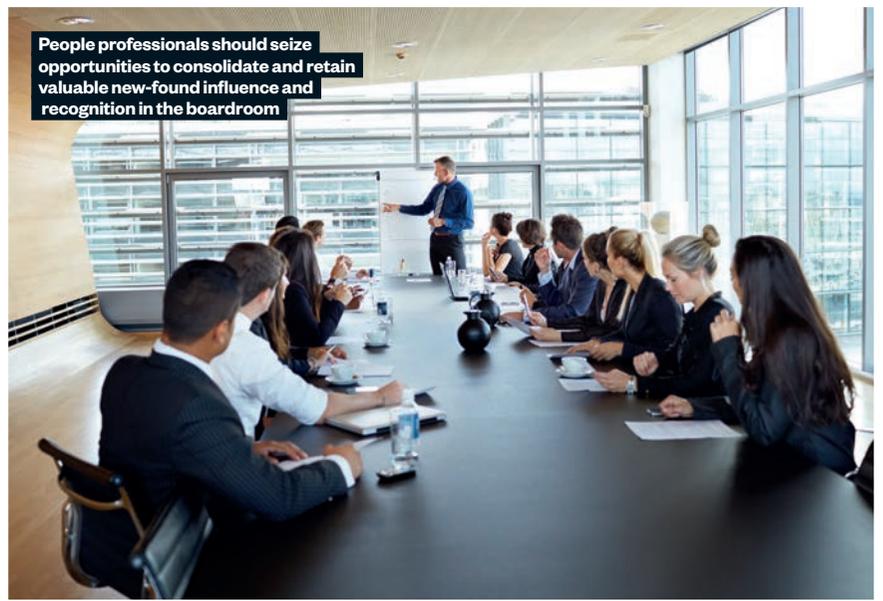
A new intranet helped HR to communicate as the early days turned into weeks of working from home. When the second wave happened, the foundations were in place.

“This time we’d had the chance to prepare,” she adds. “We’d learned to communicate differently, we’d done a lot of education around synchronous versus asynchronous working. The culture was no longer about going to work, but about delivering work.”

Fournier and her team have since consulted with employees on future working patterns and contracts. HR has garnered recognition from other functions more than before, she believes. “On the business side, the mission is simple – you hit your targets. In HR, you have to put your ego aside for the success of the business or you won’t survive.”



Marine Fournier says her team learned to communicate differently during the pandemic



People professionals should seize opportunities to consolidate and retain valuable new-found influence and recognition in the boardroom

what I want to hear. When we were communicating with colleagues, her coaching was key to ensuring what we were saying would resonate with people.” This role will only grow in stature in the future, Petter believes. “So many companies have seen the importance of having a strategic plan for their people through this. This is unlikely to be the last pandemic in my lifetime, so we’re thinking about what our learnings are from this and developing a strategic plan around developing our hybrid workforce, how work is globalised and such – and the HR function is inevitably at the centre of those debates.”

But how can HR harness this boost in its reputation? While restrictions may have been lifted and employees are tentatively returning to offices, the road ahead is likely to be bumpy. Skills shortages in sectors such as logistics and hospitality have the potential to derail workforce planning strategies, nobody truly knows how hybrid working is going to pan out and some labour analysts predict a “great resignation” as some workers face a revelation that they’d rather work elsewhere. Furthermore, a winter illness peak could resurface many of the tricky issues companies faced at the start of

**“Companies have seen the importance of having a strategic plan for their people”**

the pandemic. “The past 18 months put the profession in the spotlight and onto the front line, and people have begun to understand more about how difficult the role can be,” says David D’Souza, membership director at the CIPD.

“We’ve seen organisations try different things, learn at pace, and recognise that change is possible. The profession has been at the forefront of organisations finding ways to flourish. But now we need to understand the enormity of what’s been delivered, and keep those cross-functional relationships we created open and those conversations alive.” Over the coming months and years, the people profession has an opportunity to continue to showcase both its technical expertise and its ability to help organisations change to meet the challenges they face, he adds. “We’ve built up a lot of credit in the bank, and we need to be careful how we spend it.”

Angela O’Connor, founder of consultancy the HR Lounge, advises caution in the short term at least. “There’s real pressure on HR to make these big decisions on working patterns and such and we can’t make these immediately. It’s time for HR leaders to hold their nerve and push back, which takes real courage,” she says. Many



The pandemic has placed employee wellbeing front and centre – and HR is vital to ensuring staff feel valued and looked after by their organisations

teams will be under pressure to develop firm policies on hybrid working when a more bespoke, employee-led approach is likely to work better, she adds. “HR departments that are used to running things as a ‘one size fits all’ operation will find this hard. They won’t be set up to do this and their culture may not be supportive. In many ways, this period is harder than the start, and this is when we’ll see real leadership from the HR profession.”

Collings also predicts that the coming months will see HR inject balance into a complicated debate and become advocates for the workforce. He explains: “HR can give voice to employees’ concerns, addressing the risks if we see cohorts of people at the top of the organisation coming into the office at the disadvantage of those who are mainly at home, for example.”

**“HR will bridge the gap between the ‘normal’ we knew before and how we emerge”**

Another area where HR can make a difference in the longer term is in addressing inequalities. The pandemic shone a light on inequalities at work: women were more likely to shoulder

the burden of childcare or be in low-paid, part-time work, while a parliamentary committee last month slammed the Department for Work and Pensions for not fully considering the impact of its pandemic policies on people from ethnic minorities. Gary Rees, head of organisation studies and human resource

management at Portsmouth Business School, believes this has made employers and employees alike reassess what is important. “We don’t talk about wellbeing as something tangential now, for example. Line managers are talking more to staff and seeing that how we work and our health are all connected,” he says. “But people have

long memories and you need to treat them fairly. Employees will have seen how companies operate in the worst of times as a reflection of what they’re really like. Those with strong employer branding, retention and engagement will ride the storm well.”

Rees believes the pandemic has made employees see their managers in a new light, and one of HR’s roles going forward will be helping them to survive the challenges of new ways of working. “HR’s involvement at grassroots level was completely overturned [during Covid],” he adds. “Tremors that were beginning to emerge before the crisis – the impact of artificial intelligence on jobs, the idea that people can follow multiple careers in a lifetime – these have all been brought forward. HR needs to ensure line managers understand that we need to fit the job to the person and not vice versa. More money will only be a sticking plaster because employees will need a good psychological contract or to perceive that they’re treated well,” Rees says. This will extend to the role of businesses in society more broadly, he adds, as workforces make ever greater demands on their employers to stand by their environmental, social and governance promises.

Sabby Gill, who joined assessment company Thomas International six months into the pandemic as its new CEO, argues that HR will bridge the gap between the ‘normal’ we knew before and how we emerge. “When I joined the company, my HR director was the first person I called in the morning and the last one at night,” he says. “We’re putting people through something they’ve never experienced, and what we can’t do is expect everything to be back to normal.” Gill will continue to rely on his HR team, not just in setting new ground rules and policies, but in ensuring employees’ mental welfare and understanding that everyone’s personal situation is different. “Every decision I make as a CEO has to take into account we’re a people business and we need to harness the lessons we’ve learnt,” he adds. “But as leaders we’ve also got to allow HR to take that credit – we need to give credit where it’s due.” **PM**

## HOW MUCH HAS HR’S VALUE IMPROVED?

**43%**

of people practitioners said the standing of HR had increased in their organisation because of the pandemic

**29%**

of professionals said the perceived value of their organisation’s HR team had improved during the pandemic

**52%**

of professionals rated the increase in their HR team’s reputation as 4 or 5, where 5 is a considerable improvement

Sources (1) CIPD/Workday People Profession Report 2021 (published on 25 October 2021); (2) Haymarket Business Media survey of 2,473 professionals, September/October 2021; (3) Haymarket Business Media survey of 380 professionals, September/October 2021



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Since the murder of George Floyd last spring and the subsequent Black Lives Matter protests across the globe, the need to stamp out institutional discrimination and foster better inclusion and diversity has come to the fore. But with gender pay gap reporting having stalled during the pandemic, and ethnicity pay gap reporting still waiting in the wings to be officially legislated, many organisations are still failing to make significant headway.

Yet for many, work to improve inclusion and diversity in organisations far precedes the events of 2020. Bernadette Thompson OBE, deputy director for inclusion, wellbeing and employee engagement at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (formerly the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government), has worked in inclusion for the UK

government for several years, including at the Home Office and the Treasury.

Prior to Thompson's appearance at this year's CIPD Annual Conference and Exhibition, *People Management* grabbed some time in her busy diary to find out what she thinks is stopping organisations taking their diversity efforts to the next level, and the role HR has to play.

### **Why should organisations invest in improving inclusion and diversity?**

In the private sector, it equates to money. That's simply it. Research shows you're able to do good business. But for me, it's just the right thing to do. It's all about people's lived experiences within the workplace. We spend an awful lot of time at work, so it's making sure that people are able to thrive and be themselves so that they can give their best. It's the moral case for me rather than the money.

### **Why do some organisations struggle to get a handle on their I&D?**

Time is a problem when there are so many other things that need doing, as is finding good analysts who can unpack all the data.

But some of this is historic. Back in the day, it was fine to have an all-male meeting because no one asked 'where are all the women?'. Now, it would be awkward if you walked into a room and there were no women. But it's taken a long time to get to that point. If the people in the room making the decisions don't have the lived experience, it's not going to bother them.

### **How can businesses make I&D more of a priority?**

It's about accountability – what gets measured gets done. If it's a big deal for the CEO, it will get done. We need to treat it the same way as our commercial functions – have the same level of accountability, the same kind of governance, and make sure that if it's not done, there are consequences. It's a wicked problem, because if it were simple, we would've solved it by now. Leadership needs to be driving this, but by asking the right questions and demonstrating that it matters to them, not just by having glossy strategies.

### **Should there be more public reporting around organisations' I&D metrics?**

Definitely. When we started being intentional about the gender pay gap, organisations started looking at it, then realising they had to publish it and that they perhaps weren't going to look good. Once they start publicising figures, they realise they don't want to be at the bottom of the league table. More of that will help to foster action.

### **What role does HR have to play in improving I&D among its own ranks?**

It's about role modelling. In HR, we point our fingers at the business and tell them what they should be doing, but the rest of the fingers are pointing back at us. I find it slightly

# “HR can't tell the business off without looking at itself”

*Government diversity leader, advocate and public speaker Bernadette Thompson OBE on how businesses can level up their inclusion efforts*

INTERVIEW ELEANOR WHITEHOUSE



## Interview

embarrassing. We've got an awfully long way to go. In most organisations, the two groups that are the most underrepresented are people with disabilities and people from a BAME background, but when we talk about HR, we have to mention gender as well.

It's not right for us to tell the business off without looking at ourselves. I always advocate succession planning by that underrepresented group – who's the next disabled person that can take your job? Who's the next BAME person that can take your job? Who's the next man that can take your job? And if that person doesn't exist in your organisation, do they exist outside? And if they don't then there's a problem, because we're just recycling the same kind of people.

### **What advice would you give to an HR department struggling to improve I&D?**

I always say 'don't boil the ocean'. There's no point trying to juggle so many balls, everything will just drop. Start by encouraging more people to declare their diversity data. You'll be amazed at some of the reasons some people choose not to say and who they think is seeing it.

The second thing is to look at your most underrepresented groups and focus on those, looking at the employee lifecycle, because that really shows you what's going on in your organisation. Employee networks also really help – any organisation that's serious about inclusion and diversity needs to talk to the people who can actually tell them about their lived experiences. There's no point wanting to solve a problem for someone with a disability and not talking to them.

You also need to invest in adequate resources. Inclusion is as important as digital and finance. You need professionals, not just someone who has passion. Passion is good, but you need qualified people who understand how to lead the people's function that is I&D. **PM**

\*Thompson will be appearing at this year's **CIPD Annual Conference and Exhibition** on 3-4 November in Manchester and online. To view the conference programme and book your ticket, visit [cipd.co.uk/ace](http://cipd.co.uk/ace)



Whether in HQ, at home, or out in the field, tech can help keep colleagues connected and safe

# “HERE’S YOUR SOCIAL DISTANCING ALARM, MR BOND”

WORDS ROB GRAY

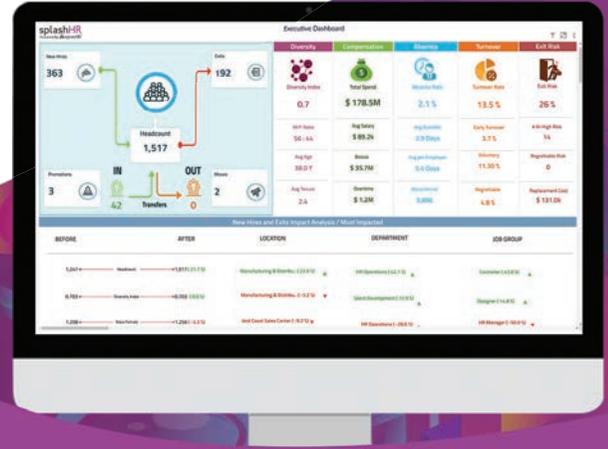
*Hybrid working has accelerated the need for workplace tech to improve collaboration, book desks and more. People Management explores the solutions HR might need to consider in the ‘new normal’*

**W**hen it comes to bizarre, short-lived technological developments, the workplace has seen its fair share. At the more extreme end of the scale were the AI-powered cameras reportedly invented

by Canon Information Technology, the Chinese subsidiary of the Japanese giant, which only allowed staff to enter rooms, book meetings, control the temperature and use printers if they were smiling.

Workplace tech company Moodbeam also makes wearable wristbands that allow

employees to tell their managers if they’re happy or sad at the touch of a button, and Shoreditch-based data science company Profusion has used AI to build its own ‘coffee roulette’ system, which arranges meetings between employees who have limited contact while working remotely. ▶



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Remote working quickly became accepted practice during the pandemic, with firms often embracing new tech for the job

## Hybrid working tech

Carrington says the major change will be the introduction of a scheduling module, which will allow managers to plan when their people will work from the office or at home. “This means we’ll be able to track how much office space is being used and ensure we don’t exceed capacity,” she says.

Implementation of the new system means that in addition to the IT service desk team, HR now works with other departments such as enterprise architecture, developers and infrastructure. “It’s been a useful learning experience for us all but a great example of collaboration between business areas, which will continue post implementation,” she adds.

**“Some firms are using tools like door handles that release automatic hand sanitiser”**

With more companies taking on employees in remote – and sometimes international – locations, recruitment technology is another area that potentially requires some investment post-Covid. Ravelin Technology, a London-based fintech company, went down the global remote work route when it needed to diversify its team, using employment service provider Omnipresent’s software OmniPlatform to help hire people quickly across different countries. Thanks to the lockdowns, several of Ravelin’s employees had requested to transfer abroad and work remotely on a permanent basis, leading Ravelin to begin to explore the options available to support employees.

“Using Omnipresent’s platform means we don’t have to set up a legal entity, which can be complex and time-consuming,” says Toni Georgieva, Ravelin’s people operations manager. “We make sure our international employees still feel part of our team. For instance, we can offer benefits on top of any country’s statutory rules, such as holidays and medical cover.”

Another organisation using tech to move towards a long-term hybrid future is AXA UK, which is taking a ‘test and learn’ approach that focuses on an increase in remote working, while placing more emphasis on going into the physical office “with purpose”, such as collaborating across teams and building a sense of connection. Microsoft Teams and the rollout of AXA’s Digital Workplace platform have helped employees stay connected. The latter, says AXA UK’s

But amid the weird and wonderful, there’s never been a more significant time for the advancement of workplace technology, whether organisations want to ensure their physical spaces remain Covid secure or that their dispersed workforces remain connected.

Construction company Skanska set about changing the way it worked as early as June last year, with technology at the centre of enabling the switch to hybrid working. It has two categories of employees: those who do most of their work on a construction site, and office-based staff who have mainly been working remotely. The HR team collaborated with IT and procurement to ensure anyone at home was kitted out with additional monitors, Jabra headsets, webcams, wireless keyboards and mice, so they could work effectively.

“This has ensured our people can be as productive as possible, while working safely and comfortably,” says Skanska CHRO and executive vice president Harvey Francis. “We implemented Office 365 back in 2019, so were able to quickly transition to running meetings on Teams.” To bridge the gap between home, site and office working, the firm also upgraded the equipment in its larger meeting rooms to run Teams, and has provided guidance on how to run hybrid meetings.

“Our people have got used to it very quickly, using the platform for meetings, document sharing and messaging,” says Francis. “We also set up and ran a number of pulse surveys with the same provider.”

Aaron Alburey, MD and founder of LACE Partners, an HR transformation and tech advisory consultancy, says that aside from the explosion in Microsoft Teams and Zoom since the onset of the

pandemic, he has also seen an increase in uptake of health and wellbeing platforms, many of which offer guided exercises such as yoga and mindfulness, as well as financial wellbeing platforms, which offer help with money as well as allowing users to draw down part of their wages early.

“These have emerged post-Covid, with individuals on furlough and the need to access pay in a more flexible way,” Alburey explains. But as well as remote technology, the organisation has also seen an increase in physical wellbeing solutions. “Some clients are using tools such as door handles that release automatic sanitiser when someone touches them, or metal plates that stop virus transmission,” he says.

In terms of improving collaboration when teams are dispersed, Alburey highlights that engagement tools such as Menti offer the facility to conduct interactive polls and garner survey results in real time, while Mural, the interactive online equivalent of a whiteboard, can also be useful. The key to getting hybrid tech right, says Alburey, is understanding the workforce. “There is no ‘one size fits all’ solution, so HR teams that help IT and other departments to understand this – and act accordingly – will develop the best approach for employees so they maximise their ability to be productive.”

Cloud-based HR systems have also seen huge growth to help staff stay connected. To support its new hybrid way of working and streamline its HR processes and payroll into one application, investment platform AJ Bell plans to implement a cloud-based system with its own mobile app, making HR services more easily available to staff. HR director Elizabeth

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# Hybrid working tech

HR chief operating officer Emma Harvey, has been critical to internal processes, and also enabled the business to connect virtually with new candidates during recruitment.

In July, the organisation also launched its 'My Wellbeing' platform, which delivers employee health and wellbeing services and support. "This has made it easier for colleagues to access support as and when they need," says Harvey.

For audit, tax and consultancy service provider RSM UK, meanwhile, the most important principle is to keep reviewing current arrangements in light of feedback from staff, changing government policy and Covid infection rates, while keeping abreast of new R&D by software vendors. To get the best out of Microsoft Teams, RSM has invested in enhanced audio-visual equipment in its offices to allow 'one touch' entry into virtual meetings from a physical meeting room.

"We need solutions to hybrid working that are flexible enough to support our matrix organisation, with multiple service lines working across a range of geographies," says Chris Knowles, the organisation's chief digital officer. "For example, we found that there wasn't a workspace management solution on the market that was suited to our needs, so we built our own. This proved very successful to allow our people to book office workspaces and has now supported our new ways of working for over a year."

As more staff return to the office, Knowles says the company is now investigating off-the-shelf workspace management solutions that can

incorporate catering, meeting room management and enhanced reporting. And with the pandemic triggering closer co-ordination between RSM's people and technology teams than ever before, the firm recently appointed a technology business partner dedicated to the people team's digital needs. RSM, explains Knowles, sees HR technology as fundamental to enabling productivity and staff engagement going forward into the era of hybrid working.

Throughout the pandemic, packaging company Klöckner Pentaplast (KP) has been looking at improving communication with its frontline workers, installing large screens in its plants and providing computer kiosks on its sites to give people access to information and ensure two-way feedback. KP is also working on giving them improved access to online learning using various

technologies, which was previously available but not as fully utilised. Time and attendance modules also feature in some parts of KP's business, which enable people to work from home where there is an in-country requirement to show working hours; such as Germany, where KP is working with its German Works Council to implement hybrid working.

"All of this has meant that we are working more closely with IT than we did previously, to consider new solutions and support whatever the requirements are in our countries of operation and ensure we can communicate and engage with our people," says Linda Kennedy, KP's chief human resources officer. "There are lots of new solutions being developed all

**"HR tech is fundamental to enable staff engagement and productivity going forward"**

Some businesses have installed door handles that dispense hand sanitiser when touched



the time and we are working constantly to improve our HR system to use more manager and employee self-service which will support remote working."

Similarly, the university of Brighton was in the process of rolling out Microsoft Teams across the organisation when the pandemic hit. With teaching and meetings all moving online overnight, the platform was immediately available to all staff and students. "We were already using Microsoft SharePoint and OneDrive to collaborate and share information, but our recruitment is also all handled online using Stonefish, and we've widened out the technology to provide a complete HR platform," says Jo Hird, head of HR. This means all requests for contractual changes, leavers and establishment changes are electronic, making it straightforward to manage remotely. Hird recommends not rushing to find a solution, because unpicking a poorly designed system is "incredibly difficult" once it's already in place.

The University uses ResourceLink as its HR and payroll system, including the self-service MyView element, which allows staff access to sickness reporting, annual leave requests and payslips. "But during the pandemic," explains Hird, "we also used the technology to help with our statutory reporting requirements to local public health teams around coronavirus cases, self-isolation and requests to volunteer in the community."

Hird says the system was never designed for this purpose, but systems specialists within the department were able to apply a solutions-focused approach and come up with creative ways to adapt what the organisation already had available. She says: "Having staff who work in that way has made the seemingly impossible possible." PM

## COVID-SECURE TECH IN ACTION

Earlier this year, a French factory making hygiene products became embroiled in a row with workers when it tried to introduce **social distancing alarms**. The devices, worn by employees, beep, flash, vibrate or sound an alarm of up to 83 decibels – similar to someone shouting from 3ft away – when they are within two metres of each other. But according to *The Guardian*, representatives from the union Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (CFDT) accused

the company of "particularly intrusive behaviour" that "infantilises" workers.

Danish firm UVD Robots was reportedly the first company to pioneer autonomous **UV light-emitting disinfection robots**, which travel around workplaces emitting UV light that damages viruses and bacteria so they're unable to function. The robots, which cost around €60,000, have so far been deployed in hospitals, hotels, offices and airports around the world.

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# Career path

## Helping you get further

**Research:**  
*Shorter working week improves wellbeing and productivity*  
p57

### Masterclass

## How to support working carers

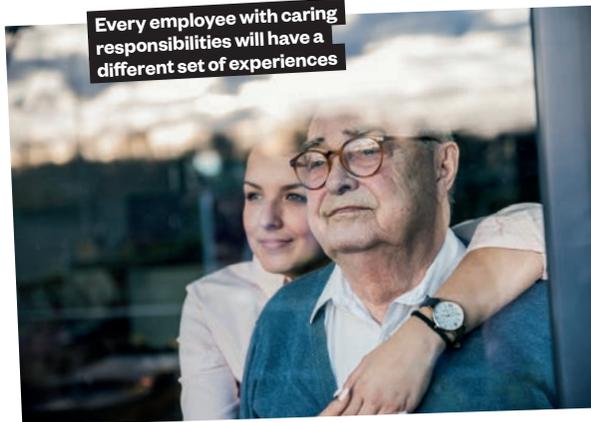


**Tanya Sealey**  
Programme lead for working for carers at Carers Trust

Carers UK research from 2019 estimated that approximately 8.8 million adults have caring responsibilities, as do one in seven of the UK's workforce.

Given the numbers of employed carers, supporting carers in the workplace is of paramount importance for employers. The increase in remote working as a result of the pandemic has provided opportunities for carers, who tend to be time poor. It has also reduced stress for carers who now need to travel less to and from work.

The Wavehill evaluation (2020) of Working for Carers found that the biggest barrier for carers is finding employment that fits around their caring role. The majority (88 per cent) of those surveyed by Carers UK said flexible working would be the most helpful benefit if they were caring alongside working.



Every employee with caring responsibilities will have a different set of experiences

However, it is important to remember that flexible working isn't just about remote working – this isn't a viable solution

### “Remote working isn't a solution for everyone”

for everyone with caring responsibilities. Employers should talk to employees about other steps that would help them, such as flexible working hours, and continue to have open conversations because the intensity of caring can change over time.

Organisations could consider tools such as a Carers' Passport,

which sets out how they will be supported to combine work and care. Such tools can help employers build a clear picture of an employee's caring role. It is also recommended that businesses implement a carers policy.

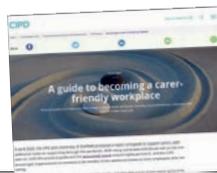
Peer support, such as workplace carers champions, and/or support groups are a good way to support carers in the workplace.

Alternatively, employers could organise events during Carers Week in June to help build awareness of their caring employees' circumstances, and the challenges they face.

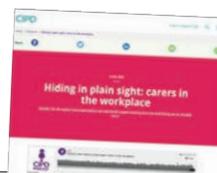
Whatever support organisations offer, there should not be a 'one size fits all' approach. Every employee will have a different set of needs and experiences, and line managers should be able to have open conversations about what works best for the individual. It is also important that steps taken to support carer employees are viable for the business. If not, stigmatisation could crop up further down the line.

### Taking it further

**Read**  
→ The CIPD's guide to becoming a carer-friendly workplace, including links to further resources  
[bit.ly/CarerFriendlyWorkplace](https://bit.ly/CarerFriendlyWorkplace)



**Listen**  
→ The CIPD Podcast episode 156: Carers in the workplace  
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**Watch**  
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## Who I am

Sophie Metcalf

Head of human resources at  
Expect Distribution

**The pandemic has** really put a spotlight on HR, showing the value of what we do and how important it is. But sometimes I found it really challenging – you have ideas you want to take forward but getting buy-in can be hard because the return on investment isn't always clear to those who hold the purse strings. It's taught me resilience and how to communicate with different people to get the outcome we're all happy with.

**Without our people,** we don't have a business. That's everything from recruitment and career planning, to succession planning and employee engagement. As head of HR, my role has a big remit, including getting the best from our people and making sure we have the right resources at the right time to make the business successful. We view HR as much more than just a transactional function, giving people the ability to succeed from day one.

**The best thing people** wanting to get into HR can do is networking. Start as soon as possible and it doesn't need to be with a huge corporation, but with people working in HR – because I learn as much from my group as they learn from me. The people in HR are a good bunch and will share experiences because we've all been there. Use social media, get to networking events, volunteer for bits and pieces to build your brand and your network.

**HR can be** a lonely place and sometimes you're stuck when you try to do the best for the business and employees but they don't always sit well together. As a woman, you have a unique perspective from an emotional point of view but you are sometimes seen as the weaker sex, so you have to hold your ground and stand up for what you believe in. Regardless of your gender, you have to have a real passion for what you do.

**I used to teach** martial arts, and was hooked on seeing that light in people's eyes when they achieved something. While working in a financial services organisation, I supported its HR team for half the week and earned an MA in learning and development. When the organisation's HR manager left, I was approached to see whether I would be interested in the role.

**When Covid hit,** I set up Helping Hand into HR, an online not-for-profit organisation that shares knowledge and expertise for people wanting to join the profession. I share jobs, ideas, and best practice. I've been lucky and had amazing people around me during my career, but I know it can be tough to get into HR if you haven't got the right connections. I wanted to give back a bit by sharing my experience.

## CV

Sophie Metcalf started her career in finance, before becoming head of learning, development and HR at SimplyBiz Group in 2010. Prior to joining Expect Distribution, she also worked as people experience manager at Versus Arthritis. Sophie has a Diploma in Financial Planning from the Chartered Insurance Institute, and is currently completing her CIPD Level 7 Diploma in HR Management.

**“Unconscious bias training can make stereotypes more likely to come to mind”**

## Reviews

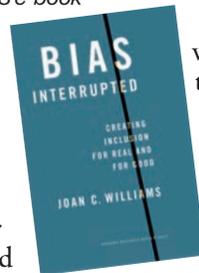
# Bias, Interrupted

Joan C Williams, Harvard Business Review Press, £21/£19.78 e-book

The role of unconscious bias training in businesses was thrust front and centre in December 2020, when the UK government announced its intention to scrap the course for all civil servants. An evidence review by the government’s Behavioural Insights Team cited research by equality watchdog the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), which found that unconscious bias training can be effective for reducing implicit bias, but there is “no evidence” it can eliminate it. It also concluded

that short-term educational interventions “do not change people”, especially when biases have been acquired over a longer period, and that unconscious bias training can actually activate stereotypes and make them more likely to come to mind.

It’s fitting, then, that the very first chapter of Williams’ ultimate guide to ending bias at work once and for all addresses this meaty question, tackling first the problems

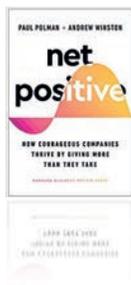


with traditional diversity training before exploring more modern iterations that have yielded promising results.

In subsequent chapters, Williams – a distinguished professor of law and director of the Center for Worklife Law at the University of California, Hastings Law – explores the many different types of bias perpetuated in workplaces, discovered through her own research, including racial stereotypes; ‘prove it again’ bias, where some groups have

to prove themselves more than others; and ‘maternal wall’ bias specifically affecting women with children, as well as offering sensible strategies to eradicate each type.

Chapters 13 and 14 are particularly pertinent for HR professionals, in which Williams explores how to get buy-in from the top to help deliver on inclusion and diversity goals, and how people and diversity teams can work together to help put a stop to the bias that exists within everyday business processes.

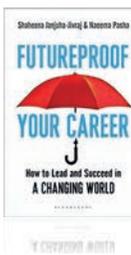


{Book}

## Net Positive

Paul Polman & Andrew Winston, Harvard Business Review Press, £19.36/£12.34 e-book

With the pandemic far from over and amid warnings of myriad other global crises, it’s only right for businesses to consider their environmental and social impact on the world. In their eye-opening and practical guide, former Unilever CEO Polman and sustainable business guru Winston explore in detail how businesses can ensure they help to solve the world’s problems, not create them, and why that makes better economic sense in the long term.



{Book}

## Futureproof Your Career

Shaheena Janjuha-Jivraj & Naeema Pasha, Bloomsbury Business, £14.99/£8.03 e-book

The world of work has seen more upheaval during the last 18 months than ever before. Coupled with other factors such as the increasing awareness of the need for better inclusion and diversity within organisations, we all have to consider our careers against a backdrop of this ‘new normal’. Janjuha-Jivraj and Pasha’s guide offers a helping hand to maintain progression, as well as an insightful look into what the future of work will hold.

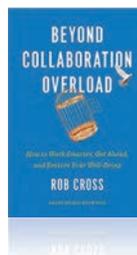


{Book}

## Mental Health at Work

James Routledge, Penguin Business, £8.99/£4.99 e-book

Part of the Penguin Business Experts series, Routledge’s easily digestible book is comparatively short, yet filled to the brim with useful advice about addressing one of the most important issues in modern workplaces. Through a combination of anecdotes, case studies and simple guidance, Routledge makes it easy for businesses to begin fostering better mental health among their workforces, as well as suggesting ‘conversation starters’ to initiate the first steps.



{Book}

## Beyond Collaboration Overload

Rob Cross, Harvard Business Review Press, £18.55/£12.34 e-book

The way we collaborate at work has fundamentally changed, but in *Beyond Collaboration Overload*, Cross – a professor of global leadership at Massachusetts-based Babson College – argues that we’re collaborating in the wrong way and potentially damaging both our performance and health in the process. Simply split into two parts, Cross first unpicks what’s incorrect about current methods of collaboration, before explaining how to break free of it.

## What’s new

In **The Female Edge**, change management expert and CIPD Chartered Fellow Mary McGuire provides a framework to allow female leaders to use the leadership skills they already possess to bolster their career progression and help fix the ‘leaky female talent pipeline’ and increase the number of women in senior roles.

Meanwhile, in a newly updated edition of **Our Separate Ways**, authors Ella Bell Smith and Stella M Nkomo compare the experiences of 120 black and white female managers in the US, exploring the differences in their career journeys and the roles of gender, class and race.

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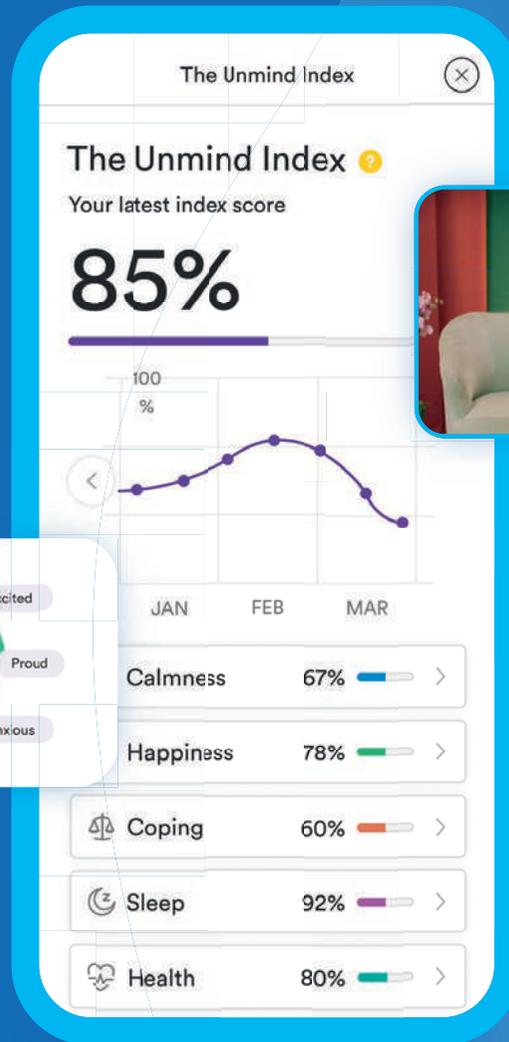
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## Your problems



### Guest Fixers Rob & Nicci Birley tackle your queries

Husband and wife team Rob and Nicci Birley have run their own full service HR consultancy, Cornerstone Resources, since late 2017, partnering with small businesses and charities throughout the UK. Prior to this, they both spent more than 20 years each working in a range of specialist and generalist HR roles across a range of sectors.

Nicci specialises in management coaching, mentoring, recruitment, change management and improving organisational performance. Rob specialises in complex employee issues and salaries, pensions and benefits.

Their 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](http://bit.ly/pmfixer)

# Can we help terminal colleague determined to keep working?

**A member of our staff has very sadly been diagnosed with a terminal illness. She has been incredibly brave throughout and the organisation has supported her during sickness absence and with time off for medical appointments. She is determined to carry on working as long as she can. However, unfortunately her estimation of her ability to continue in her role and the business's are very different, and we don't feel it's in either her best interests or the organisation's for her to keep working. How can we still be supportive as an employer but ultimately suggest the time may be right for her to leave?**

This is a very sad situation and one we've unfortunately had to deal with on several occasions, but it's never easy. If the employee is no longer

capable of performing their role, then we'd suggest you first arrange an occupational health review or get her permission to access her medical records. It's important to get a medical opinion on her capability and not just what you are observing. If

these can make things easier because you would move to make an application under either scheme. If your claim is accepted, they will transfer to insurance payments after a qualifying period.

If this isn't the case, we'd suggest you consider making

**"The last thing a terminally ill employee needs is to be concerned about financial pressures"**

this confirms that she can't continue working, even with reasonable adjustments being put in place, then you need to decide next steps.

Is the employee eligible for group life assurance? If the answer is yes, then you need to keep her on payroll so that a claim can be made under the scheme. But how do you maintain employment in the meantime? If you have critical illness cover or permanent health insurance,

an ex gratia sickness absence payment to the employee until she passes away. The last thing the employee needs is to be concerned about financial pressures when she is seriously ill. If this isn't possible, then exhaust your normal sick pay scheme and move to unpaid leave until she passes away, keeping her informed throughout. After all, do you and the organisation think it is the right thing to dismiss someone who is terminally ill?

## HR team is hostile towards union rep L&D manager

**I'm an L&D manager for around 250 engineers, as well as a union rep. I'm also a Chartered Member of the CIPD: something I've studied and worked for to be the best I can be for both my day job and my union members. Although I don't work directly in HR, many of my interactions are with the HR team. However, the majority of the team treat me with mistrust. I have a strong relationship with a small number of HR colleagues**

**and have mentored a few, but how can I address the rest? I'm struggling with the hostility.**

A good trade union rep is worth their weight in gold and can aid effective relationships, as well as hold poor management practices to account. We can't tell you the number of issues we've been able to resolve informally by working with unions to reach a resolution that everyone is happy with.

In terms of changing perceptions, we'd start by trying

to understand why the team is so hostile. Is it about the union role you play? Have they had negative interactions with the union in the past or maybe they don't fully understand the role and the value it can add? Is there any perceived overlap between the L&D role you play and what they do? Can you work together on some projects? This could have a dual benefit of helping to build or improve the working relationship as well as utilising both sets of skills.

Could the members of the HR team who you get on well with give you some insights? Ask them about opportunities

where you could work together across the two teams to achieve the same organisational goal. You could think about giving the whole team an insight on the role of a rep, or a 'day in the life' of your L&D role? If there is a perceived overlap between roles, more may need to be done to give everyone greater role clarity. Once you have identified projects you could work on together, you and some of your HR 'allies' could bring these up in the session.

By doing this together, it helps the rest of the team to see that you are all working towards the same outcomes.

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## Moves

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



1



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**Victoria Livingstone (1)** has recently taken up the post of chief people officer EMEA for media and digital comms company Dentsu international, having moved from fashion brand ASOS.

Hermes UK has appointed **Penny Garnett** as its new chief people officer as part of its commitment to investing in its people. Penny has come from Serco, where she was HRD for justice and immigration.

Credit app TotallyMoney has announced that **Liz Afolabi (2)** is taking over as people director, with the aim of growing the company's team. Liz arrives from Unleashed, where she worked as a people and culture consultant for companies such as Suvera and SimplyCook.

Marketing platform Iterable has announced the appointment of **Markita Jack** as head of diversity, equity and inclusion. Markita joins from First Horizon Bank, where she

was senior vice president of diversity and inclusion.

**Tania Ray, Chartered MCIPD (3)** has been appointed head of resource management – deals for PWC UK. Previously she was head of resource management for Cognizant Worldwide's digital business.

Tech company Criteo has appointed **Manuela Montagnana** as chief people officer. She arrives with 20 years of experience.

Moorhouse Consulting has appointed **Ruth Grimaldi, Chartered MCIPD (4)** as people director. Ruth has worked for Moorhouse since February 2020 and was previously consulting in organisational transformation and development.

**Rosie McInerney** has started a new role as talent manager at broadband firm Cuckoo. She previously worked as head of team experience at start-up insurer Hiro.

**Rachel Mooney (5)** has

joined Monzo as chief people officer, having previously worked at Snow Software, Vodafone and Google.

**Ella Cyphus** has moved from Barclays to take up a new role in organisation design within people advisory services at EY.

**Jonathan Pyle, Chartered MCIPD (6)** has recently moved from being a senior HR business partner in the construction industry to head of people strategy at Tevva Motors.

**Gretchen Koback Pursel** has taken over as global chief people officer at Wella, having moved from her role as CHRO at Tiffany & Co in August. Her remit includes driving the company's diversity, equity and inclusion policies forward.

**Ada Ayten Demirovska, Chartered MCIPD**, has moved into the P&O HR business partner role at Wood. She joins from Tideway, where she was an HR operations analyst.

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

I am a chartered member of the CIPD and hold an MSc in human resource management. I've enjoyed two roles as a regional HR business partner for large multi-site organisations, but I rarely see roles to progress into other than head of HR positions, which don't become available often. I've tried to develop my role internally but the options are limited. I want to move on to bigger and better things, but I don't manage staff and feel like this is holding me back in obtaining those more senior roles externally. What can I do to achieve that head of HR or senior HRBP role? Ultimately I want my career path to be director of HR.

Be comfortable moving left and right: the more you can understand the full breadth



of what HR does, and could do, the more valuable you will be as a candidate, says Jason Fowler (pictured), VP, HR director UK and head of HR for Northern, Western and Southern Europe at Fujitsu.

You have a stellar set of qualifications. I would encourage you to think about some of the areas of HR that you rely on as a business partner but perhaps don't completely understand for your next step, such as a position in talent and skills or an operational role within HR.

It broadens your horizons and gives you the chance to do things that are missing, including taking on more people management responsibility. It also gives you a sense of those HR specialisms that the business requires, and a chance to experiment as well as get depth

and breadth of experience. So if you're running an operational team, you're going to have a group of people and, although it might not sound as exciting as being a business partner, it is just as important.

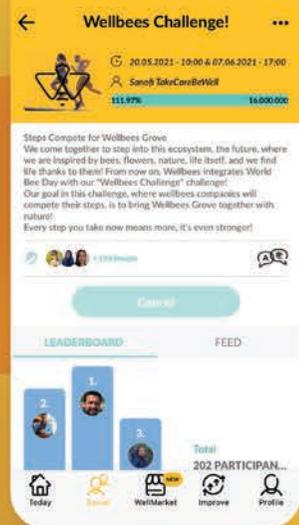
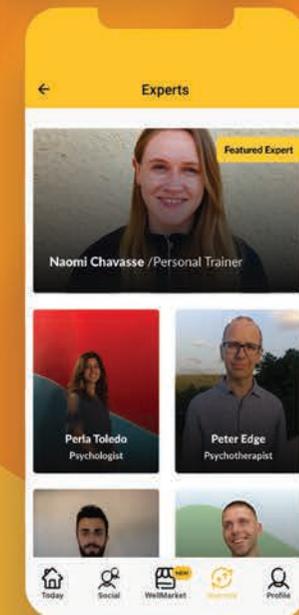
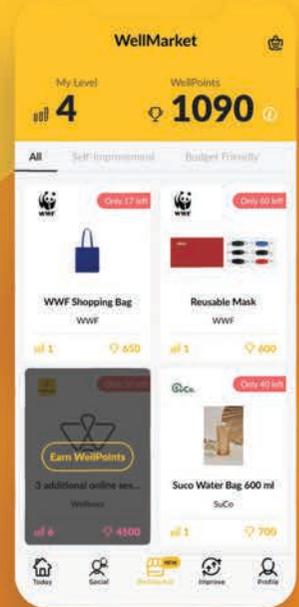
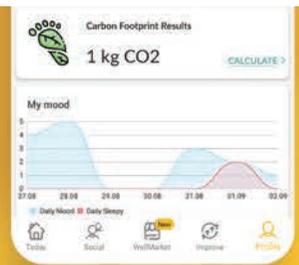
That's the basis of the relationship between the business and HR, and it's the team that interacts more with users in the business than anywhere else, so taking that responsibility gives you credibility.

Nothing's like the real thing of managing people and there aren't shortcuts to doing it. Working as a career coach, mentor or external volunteer is great experience and valuable for getting to know more types of organisations and broadening your network. However, it isn't managing and leading people, and you need to get that if you're going to ultimately be leading your function.

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## Research

# Shorter week improves wellbeing and productivity

Iceland has given workers the right to shorten their hours after a large-scale study in the public sector proved successful.

UK-based think tank Autonomy and Iceland's Association for Sustainability and Democracy (Alda) conducted two trials from 2015 to 2019 of 2,500 workers in Iceland – more than 1 per cent of the country's working population.

Researchers reduced the working week to 35-36 hours without lowering their pay and analysis of the results showed that working a shorter week led to positive benefits for both the employee and the business.

The study found that productivity and service provision remained the same or improved across the majority of the trial workplaces.



A better work-life balance is one of the benefits of reduced hours, the study found

Worker wellbeing also significantly improved, with staff reporting decreases in stress levels and burnout and a healthier work-life balance.

The trial also remained revenue neutral for both Reykjavik City Council – one of the public sector workplaces

that took part in the project – and the government.

Following the success of the trials, trade unions in Iceland successfully lobbied to permanently reduce working hours for tens of thousands of members. In total, around 86 per cent of Iceland's working

population has moved to working shorter hours or has gained the right to shorten their working hours.

Jack Kellam, researcher at Autonomy, said: "The trials in Iceland are just the latest addition to a growing set of evidence demonstrating the widespread benefits of a shorter working week.

"In the UK, workers have some of the longest hours in Europe, which has led to high rates of burnout, reduced productivity, and workplace cultures of 'presenteeism'. With remote work during Covid stretching the day for many, UK workers urgently need a reset of their working hours."

Kellam added that a move to a four-day week with no loss in pay could "drastically increase workers' wellbeing and work-life balance".

## Informal interactions help interns' prospects

Interns who have more face-to-face time with managers are more likely to receive a job offer, according to research by Harvard Business School.

The study, which is yet to be peer reviewed, examined 1,370 new summer interns at a global organisation.

The five-week internships had been adapted to virtual because of the pandemic and the interns, although working remotely, were based across 16 different locations.

Researchers observed three types of interaction between colleagues and interns: the first

was those regularly jumping into informal Zoom meetings with staff – sometimes these so-called virtual water cooler conversations were instigated by the intern.

The second was where senior managers publicly answered questions submitted by the intern, and the final situation was group meetings without managers present.

Interns who had more face-to-face Zoom meetings with managers were found to be 4.7 per cent to 7.3 per cent more likely to receive a job offer at the end of their placement.

The study also found that interns were more likely to receive an offer if they were demographically similar in race and gender to their manager.

## Managers sacrifice sleep to feel productive

Managers are sacrificing the recommended seven to nine hours of sleep a night in order to feel more productive, according to research by Emlyon Business School.

Academics at the business school, alongside colleagues from Pennsylvania State University, asked 98 hotel managers to keep a diary of their work and home interactions for eight days. Participants were interviewed on a daily basis about their previous night's sleep and work, which focused on sleep duration, work mood and

perceived productivity.

The study found that managers who slept less put those extra hours into their work time, and felt more productive as a result. For every hour of sleep lost, managers worked an extra 31 minutes and 12 seconds.

Gordon Sayre, assistant professor of organisational behaviour and leadership at Emlyon, explained that despite sleep having many benefits to our health, when under pressure, managers feel they have to sacrifice it in order to get work done.

"It's important to note that any small gains in productivity are far outweighed by the long-term costs of not getting enough sleep," he said.

## CIPD Code of Conduct: case learnings

*The CIPD Code of Conduct team shares lessons learned from a recent alleged breach of the Code*

Starting from October 2021, on a quarterly basis, the CIPD Code of Conduct team will share some of the complaints about alleged breaches of the Code that have been received. Some will have been investigated, while others may have progressed through to a conduct hearing.

In the last quarter (up to September 2021) those cases include:

- Harassment (by a CIPD member) – upheld;
- Bullying and harassment (by a CIPD member) – upheld;
- Data breach – upheld.

The CIPD cannot comment on current or ongoing cases.

### Leaving an organisation?

Think carefully before deleting documents and emails. Following the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR, awareness of data management and security has increased, but we do sometimes get things wrong. CIPD members have a responsibility in

terms of section 2.5 of the Code of Conduct to “safeguard all confidential, commercially sensitive and personal data acquired as a result of business relationships.”

A member was accused by their former employer of maliciously deleting a large number of emails which contained important information. While intent can be difficult to establish, determining the number of emails deleted is comparatively easy.

While mistakes and errors do occur, section 1.3 of the Code of Conduct (“accept responsibility for their own professional actions and decisions, rectifying issues as soon as possible, informing the client of any likely impact to them and taking all reasonable steps to mitigate their loss/harm”) requires that members notify the organisation as soon as possible regarding any data issues and potential breaches.

### Key learnings

Work emails and files belong to the organisation. They are not personal



LISAVALDERGETTY/IMAGES

data and should be stored in line with the organisation’s data policy. If no policy exists, check – don’t assume ‘usual’ practice. What is usual in one environment is often not in another.

Accept responsibility for all our actions not just the ‘right’ ones.

### Consider this

- When leaving an organisation is it the individual’s or the organisation’s responsibility to clear saved emails/inboxes?
- How should information in emails that is needed by an organisation be saved?
- How regularly do we or should we ‘weed’ our email folders to ensure we only retain relevant data?
- Are staff comfortable highlighting their errors rather than hiding them or apportioning blame to others – do they accept the consequences?
- How easy is it as people professionals to encourage a culture of mistakes being dealt with as learning opportunities?



### Peter McLinn: in memory

It was with great sadness that the CIPD heard of the passing of Peter McLinn, Chartered CCIPD, who passed away last

month after a battle with illness over the last couple of years.

Peter held roles as a committee member for his local CIPD branch, Tees Valley, and as co-chair alongside Ema Perks of the Northern Branch Network.

During this time, he had a significant influence on the region, on members and on the volunteer community. He helped shape the development of regional strategy and was instrumental in leading on key

events such as the Northern Area Partnership and the Northern Student Conference.

Peter was simply a lovely, warm, kind, and wise man whose passion and commitment to the profession and the CIPD was ingrained in his DNA; this was evident in his tireless support over the past 30 years.

The CIPD was delighted to be able to announce that he achieved the highest level of recognition when

he was awarded Chartered Companion status. He was a shining northern star, and his colleagues will continue to build on his legacy.

Peter’s wife Pam and the family have asked for donations in lieu of flowers, so Val Webster, chair of Tees Valley, has set up a Just Giving page. Please feel free to share the link with anyone who you think would like to donate to the hospital in Peter’s memory.

★ [bit.ly/PeterMcLinn](https://bit.ly/PeterMcLinn)

WORDS KRISTIAN ADAMS

“Explore a variety of free sessions, from mental wellbeing and digital work to becoming more environmentally sustainable”

# PMAs 2021: Michael Kelly award winners

CIPD students Ryan Hollingshead and Khaji Kushumbayev scooped the Michael Kelly Outstanding Student Awards at a glittering live event celebrating the 2021 CIPD People Management Awards.

This award celebrates CIPD students who have applied their newly acquired HR and L&D skills across Foundation/Intermediate and Advanced levels of study.

Advanced award winner Ryan Hollingshead, HR manager for food-to-go business Tiffin Sandwiches, not only established a new, dedicated HR department, but also navigated the business through the pandemic and oversaw a merger with rival Street-Eats Food. The judges were impressed by the scope of his achievements and strategic response to unforeseen challenges.

Following feedback from new hires at Eradah Capital in the UAE, HR generalist Khaji Kushumbayev, made it his mission to overhaul the onboarding process for employees. Introducing details like making travel arrangements for starters on their first day meant the digital bank's employer brand was completely reimaged, allowing it to attract the best talent and improve staff engagement.

\* [bit.ly/PMAWinners2021](http://bit.ly/PMAWinners2021)

## Free learning at ACE 2021

With the people profession set to return to Manchester in November, attendees at this year's CIPD Annual Conference and Exhibition can explore a variety of free sessions, from mental wellbeing and digital work to becoming more environmentally sustainable.

### Opening the door to the talent and skills you need

*Stream one – Skills and organisations*

The CIPD's summer *Labour Market Outlook* reports recruitment intentions are up. But is your organisation unlocking opportunities to a broad enough talent pool to answer your recruitment and skills challenges?

### Six principles for meaningful ethnicity pay reporting

*Stream one – Skills and organisations*

Many UK businesses recognise the need for race equality and social inclusion in the workplace, but the picture looks much less promising when it comes to tackling pay discrimination. Explore six leading principles to maximise opportunity and minimise the challenges.

### Has the pandemic changed the role of the people profession?

*Stream two – Tech and innovation*

People professionals have stepped up over the last year and risen to the challenge of the pandemic. While the strategic role HR has played should be celebrated, how can the profession consolidate this position at the heart of business?

### Supporting healthy mental wellbeing in an era of digital work

*Stream two – Tech and innovation*

As uptake of flexible working (including hybrid working) looks set to increase, so will people's reliance on digital working. This session explores how people professionals and line managers can support wellbeing and healthy digital working practices.

### Responsible business: what's the climate crisis got to do with people professionals?

*Stream two – Tech and innovation*

Work can and should be a force for good. With COP26 convening in Scotland, discover what steps you can take to make your organisation more environmentally sustainable.

\* Register for your free exhibition pass at [bit.ly/CIPDACE2021](http://bit.ly/CIPDACE2021)

## People Management

People Management is published on behalf of the CIPD by Haymarket Business Media, a division of Haymarket Media Group Ltd. Registered office: Bridge House, 69 London Road, TW13SP

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01604 828702

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

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### PRINT AND DISTRIBUTION

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



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Finding herself suddenly without childcare when her mum refuses to help, Julia (left) would have benefitted from a boss who asked about her needs

## Could HR solve...?

# MOTHERLAND

*A working mum's urgent childcare problems are rebuffed by her manager*

### The problem

Julia Johnston, a mother of two working in events planning, struggles to find care for her children after her mother Marion, who usually looks after them free of charge, puts a stop to the arrangement. Johnston's manager, Andrew, is less than sympathetic about her problem, merely demanding that she "fix it", all while criticising her recent performance. How could HR's input have helped Andrew to handle the situation better?

### The solution

Andrew wasn't really listening to Julia or showing any empathy, says Katie Beales (pictured), people partner at Perlego, who adds that not only did he fail to listen, but also didn't ask what she needed. "Andrew should have taken a step back to improve his empathy skills and manage the situation with Julia and her feelings in mind."

Childcare is a block for Julia's potential, and discussing people's needs is an important first step, she says. "Asking an employee what



they want is really helpful because HR and managers have many different ideas and approaches to these situations.

"In most cases, the employee has a good idea of what would help, so I lead with that before jumping in with my own ideas," says Beales, who adds that while company policy may prevent some things, short-term solutions can be found.

"For Julia the problem seems to be short-term and long-term, but there is no doubt she is at a point of crisis," says Beales. "The support should be something that will help in that moment, for example flexible or compressed hours, because it's never as simple as 'booking in' childcare." If childcare is a company-wide issue, adds Beales, it might be time to "reconsider the ping pong tables and add in some family-friendly benefits".

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