

# People Management

April/May 2022

**ETHNIC  
MINORITY  
WORKERS  
ARE PAID 13%  
LESS THAN  
WHITE  
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**CIPD**

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April/May 2022

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Eleanor Whitehouse **Editor**

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# Welcome

from the CIPD

## Another crisis – where next?



Peter Cheese  
Chief executive



p32



HR has been working to support staff affected by the war in Ukraine, including displaced employees and their families

Reflecting on our last issue and my comments then, the theme was the unpredictability of events. But there was no reference to the war in Ukraine. At that point, Russia had started positioning troops on the border, but few believed it would go ahead and invade. It is incredible to see what has happened in just a few short weeks to upset a world view and create a humanitarian crisis in Europe.

We seem to be in an era of what some have described as 'polycrisis' or 'permacrisis' – ongoing combinations of individual crises that we must respond to. For many countries, the response to the Ukraine crisis has been to place economic pressure on Russia, and as a result, businesses are being compelled to rethink their supply chains or business relationships in the region at great speed. I have argued in the past that the era of open globalisation seemed to be on hold, with greater national protectionism more to the fore, and this war has accelerated that and changed the landscape of geopolitical and economic thinking in a few short weeks. There are decades where nothing happens, and weeks where decades happen. (Ironically a quote from Lenin.)

The displacement of people from Ukraine is tragic to see, but it has been extraordinary how neighbouring countries have stepped up to take refugees into their homes. Offers of employment are growing, alongside charitable donations from so many. We haven't always been consistent in our responses to refugee crises, but it is encouraging to see real humanity in the face of the biggest outflow of people in a short time frame from any country in modern times.

The broader economic fallout on all of us is now a widespread concern. We were already being confronted with inflation and rising energy prices as global demand grew rapidly following the pandemic, which in turn knocks on to other costs of supplies. This conflict is now making this worse. Not only energy, but basic food products are a big part of Russia and Ukraine's economies, accounting for as much as 30 per cent of global grain exports. Ukraine alone produces around 50 per cent of the

world's sunflower seed products – hence its flag depicting the yellow sunflowers and the flat blue skies.

These crises will continue to create significant challenges for our profession. Pay pressures and recruitment challenges were already a defining

theme at the start of 2022 and are not going to get any easier. For some, rethinking operations in Russia and Ukraine has already been very consuming, along with working out how best to look after people in such difficult circumstances. Looking ahead, consumer spending will likely start to drop as households rein back in the face of rising costs. That could lead to wider recession and organisations cutting back which may then reverse the employment trend but create other challenges.

As we have all seen through the crises in recent years, we have to be agile in order to be able to respond rapidly to changing circumstances. It tests us all, but should also remind us of the importance of continuing to keep people at the front of our agendas, and as organisations, being clear on our principles and what we stand for. Being a responsible business, recognising and supporting all our stakeholders and not just shareholders. Businesses must show compassion, fairness and inclusion, even when making tough decisions, and operate in an ethical and principled manner. We will all be judged by how we respond and manage the changes needed as we look to create better, more sustainable businesses to face the challenges – as well as the opportunities – ahead.

ANADOLU/AGENCY/GETTY IMAGES; HANNAH J TAYLOR

# This month we've learned...

## The big lesson



Companies that choose to analyse their diversity data are still not obliged to publish ethnicity pay gaps in the UK

{Health & wellbeing}

## Menopause policies lacking

Businesses are making progress in addressing the taboo around the menopause: earlier this month, 600 firms including Tesco, Royal Mail and the BBC signed a pledge to take steps to support affected employees. But the majority of firms still have a way to go. A YouGov poll of 1,025 HR professionals, commissioned by Irwin Mitchell, found that almost three-quarters (72 per cent) of firms did not have a menopause policy, with 44 per cent of these admitting they had not thought about implementing one. Another 15 per cent said they didn't consider it a priority, while 7 per cent claimed that embarrassment about the issue were holding them back.

Jenny Arrowsmith, employment law partner at Irwin Mitchell, warned of an uptick in tribunal claims involving the menopause. "We expect to see complaints increase further," she says, particularly if additional legal protection were to be given to those who have significant symptoms: something the Women and Equalities Committee discussed during its inquiry into menopause and the workplace.

But, Arrowsmith says, having a menopause policy could help firms approach conversations and provide a framework for employers to evidence their response if challenged in a tribunal.

{Inclusion & diversity}

## No ethnicity pay reporting – yet

For many, it seemed like just a matter of time – even *People Management* thought it was a foregone conclusion, splashing the headline *Ethnicity pay reporting is coming* in our Oct/Nov 2021 issue.

However, the government had other plans. In its *Inclusive Britain* report, the long-awaited response to the controversial Sewell report, the government confirmed that it did not currently have any intention of introducing mandatory ethnicity pay reporting requirements, claiming that it wanted to "avoid imposing new reporting burdens on businesses as they recover from the pandemic". Instead, the report said the government would focus on supporting employers with voluntary reporting and promised to publish guidance, including case studies, this summer.

In total, the report had more than 70 actions the government would take to reduce ethnic disparities across the country. Among them are plans to discourage the use of the term BAME (Black, Asian and

minority ethnic), which the report acknowledges is "unhelpful",

But, experts have described the failure to implement mandatory ethnicity pay reporting as a missed opportunity. "Unfortunately, we know from previous schemes that a voluntary approach will not help drive the changes that are needed," says Ben Wilmott, head of public policy at the CIPD. "The government has missed an opportunity to tackle racial discrimination and inequality in the workplace."

By not mandating that firms report their diversity data, the government could actually be making things harder for employers, says David Lorimer, director at Fieldfisher. But, he says: "If you are going to do it, you need to have an action plan."

Organisations need to know how they plan to interrogate and examine their data if they want to see where their issues lie. For example, knowing an ethnicity pay gap is more skewed at senior levels will inform how a business responds, says Lorimer.

**"A voluntary approach will not help drive the changes that are needed"**





Emails sent unintentionally can have serious consequences so beware of pressing 'reply all'

{Recruitment}

## Candidate rejected by accidental email CC

Feedback is always appreciated when a job interview doesn't go your way, but when does the recruitment process become too transparent?

A jobseeker in the US may have discovered the answer the hard way when he found out he wasn't getting a role he'd applied for after he was copied into an email chain between HR and hiring managers discussing his application.

In a video posted on TikTok, Alexander, who

goes by the username @noveltygay, posted an image of an HR email which was obviously meant to stay internal – that said: “Well, that’s interesting. Okay, so let’s reject him...”

In a later post, he elaborated that while the reason given in the email for not hiring him was that he failed to turn up to an interview, Alexander claimed he wasn't given an interview time, showing an unanswered email to the company to back up his claim.

{Inclusion & diversity}

## Diversity targets met

Despite some gloomy headlines, FTSE 100 firms have seen some success recently when it comes to meeting leadership diversity targets. Last month, the latest report from the Parker Review Committee on boardroom diversity found the UK's top listed companies had almost all met the review's target of having at least one board member from an ethnic minority background.

By the target deadline of December 2021, 89 of the

FTSE 100 companies had ethnic diversity on their boards. By March 2022, another five firms had added a director from an ethnic minority background, while three more are said to be in the advanced stages of recruiting an ethnic minority director. Similarly, the FTSE 250 was on track to meet its target of all firms having at least one ethnic minority director by 2024, with more than half (128) having already achieved this by December 2021.



Stuart Lewis of Rest Less has warned of older workers leaving the workforce, while Dr Miriam Marra argues in favour of a four-day week

{Flexible working}

## Four-day week on the up

The four-day week has been hyped for years. But it turns out the majority of businesses are already doing it. A poll of 500 C-suite business leaders, conducted by Henley Business School, found that two-thirds (65 per cent) were operating a four-day week for some or all of their employees, and were saving money while doing so.

The research estimated that businesses were saving a total of £104bn – the equivalent of 2.2 per cent of the UK's annual turnover – through improvements to productivity and wellbeing and lower

running costs, while still paying staff a full salary.

Dr Miriam Marra, associate professor of finance at Henley Business School, said the pandemic had made workers more aware of the value of the hours they work. “It seems clearer, now more than ever, that time means money when it is owned,” she said.

A separate poll of 1,000 office workers, conducted by Velocity Smart Technology, found 72 per cent were willing to work a compressed four-day week – the same hours for the same pay but over four days.

{Labour market}

## Labour stats warn of over-50s 'exodus'

The pandemic has been a particularly tough time for the young and the old, both of whom were disproportionately represented in the furlough figures. But, while youth employment is recovering, the latest official figures warn tens of thousands of older workers are leaving the workforce.

The latest labour market figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) found that those aged 50 and over saw the largest decrease in economic activity

of any age group since the pandemic started. In January 2022, there were nearly 280,000 more

50-to-64-year-olds who were economically inactive – meaning they were not in work and not looking for work – compared to before the pandemic in January 2020. A separate piece of ONS research looking at over-50s found that the number of people in this age group who moved into economic inactivity was 87,000 higher in the three months to June 2021 than the same period in 2019, with men and those in professional occupations largely driving this shift.

Stuart Lewis, founder of Rest Less, said the figures did not come as a surprise. “We've been talking about the brewing crisis and mass exodus [of older workers] for a couple of years, since the start of the pandemic, and it's been falling on deaf ears,” he says.

News & analysis

# P&O sackings:

# will the law change?

*The government has already made changes targeted directly at the ferry operator, but there could be wider repercussions for employers*

WORDS YOANA CHOLTEEVA

Transport secretary Grant Shapps ordered UK ports to start refusing entry to ferry operators that pay staff below the minimum wage



**P**&O Ferries has been under scrutiny since it dismissed 800 employees en masse on 17 March. The firm, which received nearly £15m in Covid support funding, has been widely criticised by the government, trade unions and lawmakers for the way it went about making the redundancies, apparently done in order to replace staff with cheaper agency workers. With no prior warning and over a video call that lasted just a few minutes, the staff were informed it was their final day of employment with immediate effect. The firm said the redundancies were essential to its survival, and that it had made a £100m loss year on year which had been covered by its parent company, Dubai-based DP World.

The firm's CEO, Peter Hebblethwaite, admitted to a parliamentary hearing that the firm had broken UK employment law when it failed to consult on the redundancies (He claimed unions would not have agreed to such cuts and that the firm would "compensate everybody in full"), and earlier this month the UK Insolvency Service announced it had started "formal criminal and civil investigations".

But, as many commentators have pointed out, the ferry operator may have exploited a loophole in the Maritime Labour Convention allowing it to class its employees as seafarers – meaning they are not protected by UK employment law. "P&O may be able to avoid tribunal claims due to jurisdictional requirements – namely that it does not fall within the remit of UK employment law and instead is subject to unique maritime laws," explains Paul Holcroft, managing director of Croner. In response, transport secretary Grant Shapps unveiled plans to bring forward legislation requiring ferries coming in and out of UK ports to pay the UK minimum wage, and instructed port operators to start refusing entry to ferries not paying the national minimum wage.

In a move likely to have a wider impact on UK businesses, the government also announced it would bring in a new statutory code of practice on firing and rehiring – the controversial practice often used in contract negotiations where an employer terminates an employee's contract and immediately re-engages them on new, usually less favourable, terms. This new statutory code will also "clamp down on controversial tactics used by unscrupulous employers that fail to engage in meaningful consultations with employees," the government said, and give tribunals more

teeth by allowing them to increase an employee's compensation by 25 per cent in cases where an employer is found to be non-compliant. "P&O Ferries' actions were not a case of fire and rehire – just fire. However, the way the company acted in not consulting employees before taking extreme measures was appalling," said Paul Scully, the labour markets minister, when he announced the new code.

But, trade unions – which have historically called for tougher rules against 'fire and rehire' tactics – have argued that not only are these plans not enough to change the outcome of the P&O case, they are also insufficient to protect workers in the future.

Gary Smith, general secretary of the GMB, said changes amounted to "futile tinkering". "We urgently need clear legislation to outlaw this abhorrent tactic," he said. Similarly, Tim Sharp, policy officer at the TUC, called on the government to instead "bring forward a long-promised Employment Bill," referencing the long-awaited bill expected to bring in many of the recommendations of the 2019 Taylor Review. (The *Financial Times* recently reported the Bill was once again expected to be missing from the Queen's Speech in May).

James Potts, head of legal at Peninsula, says the introduction of a new statutory code "will help to deter employers from completing unfair and unreasonable dismissal and re-engagements", and that both employers and employees would benefit from the structured framework it would provide.

But, he cautions that a total ban on the practice could lead

to more redundancies in the long run – especially in cases where employers have justifiable grounds for making contractual changes and have run a meaningful consultation. "Fire-rehire could be an essential means of protecting the long-term viability of the organisation and safeguarding the employment of the entire workforce," he says.

Regardless of the law, Rachel Suff, employee relations adviser at the CIPD, says sacking staff on the spot was "inhumane and very difficult to justify". Acknowledging the reality that job cuts are sometimes necessary, she warns: "Businesses that fail to meet their legal and moral obligations to consult and treat people fairly face significant risks and costs," she says, including long-lasting damage to staff morale, employment relations and brand reputation.

**"The new code will clamp down on unscrupulous employers"**



**P&O CEO Peter Hebblethwaite admitted the company broke UK law but claimed it was unavoidable**

## P&O: events so far

### 17 March

Shipping company P&O Ferries dismisses 800 members of staff via a pre-recorded video. Disruption is caused at the port of Dover.

### 19 March

P&O resumes limited service amid calls for it to lose its licence.

### 24 March

P&O Ferries CEO Peter Hebblethwaite admits to a parliamentary hearing that the firm broke the law.

### 29 March

Labour markets minister Paul Scully announces a new statutory code on 'fire and rehire' to "clamp down on" the use of the controversial tactic.

### 30 March

The government introduces legislation to require ferries operating via UK ports pay the national minimum wage. The British Ports Association warns it "could be unworkable".

### 1 April

The Insolvency Service starts an investigation into the P&O case.



# Cost of living crisis: how HR can help

WORDS JASMINE URQUHART

*Some employees are having to choose between paying their bills and feeding their families – but there are ways employers can help to ease the squeeze*

**F**or the past few months, it's seemed like the cost of living crisis has reached a new high (or low, depending on how you look at it) every week. Coinciding with last year's energy firm bust, the current situation is seeing even some of the savviest spenders and highest earners having to reduce their outgoings. The harsh reality now is that many employees are having to make tough decisions on where to cut their expenditure: it's now increasingly common for workers to have to choose between keeping up

with soaring gas bills and essential household food shopping. Since *People Management* last covered the story in our February issue, the Ukraine war and price cap increase have meant that households are seeing an even bigger rise in energy prices.

With so many people affected, it's not something employers are able to ignore, but what can HR reasonably be asked to do?

A recent CIPD study revealed the extent of the situation: more

than one in 10 (12 per cent) said their salary was not enough for them to afford basic necessities without going into debt, and more than a quarter (27 per cent) said their current level of pay was not enough for them to cover a

£300 emergency without having to dip into savings. Less than half (47 per cent) earn enough to save for retirement, and a third (34 per cent) of those earning less than

**"12 per cent  
said their salary  
was not enough  
to cover basic  
necessities"**



£20,000 say their money worries affect their job performance.

While the post-Covid boom saw warnings of spiralling wage increases, they're not going nearly far enough to help people keep up with the cost of living. And while the latest Office for National Statistics (ONS) data showed that growth in average pay including bonuses was 4.8 per cent in the three months to January 2022, this fell to just 0.1 per cent when adjusted for inflation. Similarly, the boost to regular pay excluding bonuses was 3.8 per cent over the same three months, but fell to -1 per cent when adjusted for inflation. Since then, the rate of inflation increased to 6.2 per cent in February: the highest rate seen for three decades.

The annual increase to the national living wage that came into effect on 1 April was the largest ever, according to the government, but is likely to be entirely eaten up by rising bills. While those working full time on minimum wage will bring home an extra £800 a year,

energy bills alone are up by an average of nearly £700 a year. Those earning above the living wage also face problems with pay: according to a CIPHR study, two-thirds (64 per cent) of employees thought their last pay rise was unfair, with 70 per cent reporting that it was unreflective of their job performance. Employers do seem to be acknowledging the situation, however: nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) said in a separate CIPHR survey that they plan to give their employees a pay rise in line with or above inflation this year.

According to another poll by Wagestream, two-thirds (68 per cent) of employees are now hiding mental health struggles which have been brought on by money worries, while a quarter (24 per cent) of the 5,000 people polled said they were concerned about money every day – an 8 percentage point increase on the previous year.



**"The government's increase to the minimum wage is likely to be eaten up by bills"**

Clearly the issue is worsening for both employers and employees, so what can be done? CIPD guidance says employers can start by ensuring they're paying a fair and livable wage – not only by paying a wage that enables employees to meet the true cost of living, but also by providing workers with hours they want and need, giving enough advance notice of shifts and offering occupational sick pay.

"While employers might not be able to match spiralling inflation, they can perhaps look to increase other discretionary benefits and incentives, which may help mitigate feelings of unfairness and increased turnover," says Claire Williams, chief people officer at CIPHR.

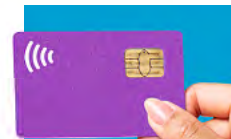
This was echoed by Samantha Johnson, policy lead at the Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals (CIPP), who says payroll departments need to become more creative with their pay strategies by offering salary sacrifice and holiday purchase schemes and working with discount providers to help employees make their pay go further.

The CIPD guidance also highlights that supporting in-work progression is another tangible way to improve an employee's situation, especially for those who may have become 'stuck' in low-paid roles.

Employers can promote a culture of lifelong learning, and ensure a flexible working culture. Implementing a clear pay structure and developing the skills of line managers can also contribute to a positive pay culture.

Similarly, for employees on the edge of poverty, a financial benefits package that provides the right kind of support can make a difference. Offering accommodation or rent subsidies, paid time off for childcare responsibilities, and travel to work schemes – or simply signposting employees to wellbeing resources and providing them with financial education – can all help keep employees out of poverty.

\* Read the CIPD's guidance for employers on tackling in-work poverty at [bit.ly/CIPDTacklingPoverty](https://bit.ly/CIPDTacklingPoverty)

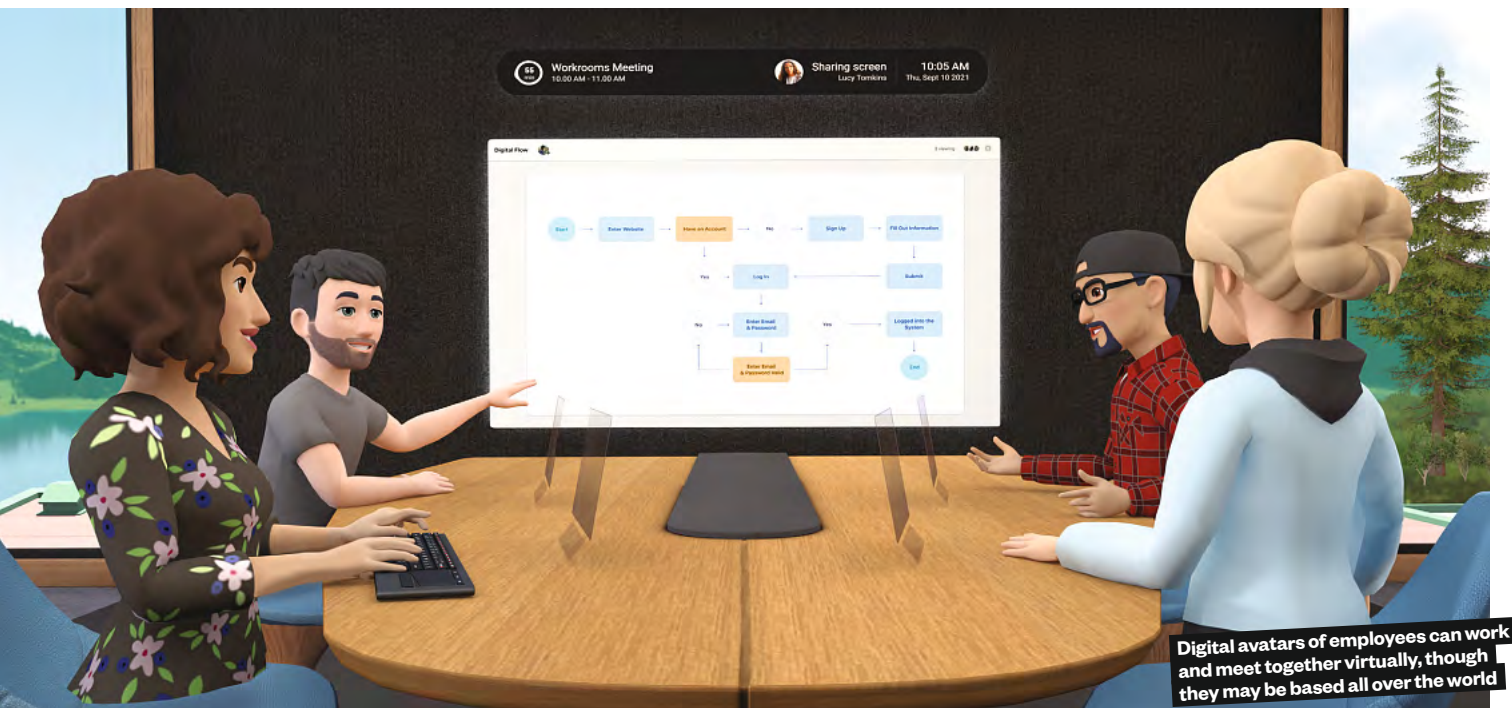


## Why should HR implement a financial wellbeing policy?

Having a financial wellbeing policy is one of the best things a business can do to support its staff in dealing with the cost of living crisis.

A CIPD poll found employees whose organisation had such a policy were more likely to say that they are able to keep up with bills and credit card payments without difficulty (70 per cent compared to 58 per cent), and more likely to say their pay was enough to save for retirement (61 per cent compared to 41 per cent).

These employees were also more likely to say they had a good level of benefits (70 per cent compared to 28 per cent), including a generous pension (64 per cent compared to 26 per cent).



# The metaverse: a whole new world of work?

*People Management explores whether our experience of the workplace could be enriched by learning and interacting in online virtual environments*

WORDS CAITLIN POWELL

It's 9am and you're logging into work: you put your headset on and appear in the metaverse as an avatar – a virtual representation of yourself. As other avatars appear, filling this digital 3D space, you exchange small talk with the person next to you as you find your space at a virtual desk ready to collaborate with your colleagues from across the globe. While it sounds like science fiction, companies such as Disney, Meta (formerly Facebook) and retailers Nike, Forever 21 and Selfridges have already started exploring the potential of the metaverse for customer experience – and it might not be long before it comes to a workplace near you.

The metaverse is a “shared virtual world”, explains professor Bob Stone, human factors specialist and director of the University of Birmingham's

Human Interface Technologies team. In workplace terms, it's a 3D computer-generated version of what firms do on the likes of Zoom and Teams. “It's a pervasive, simulated world in which people from across all different cultures can get together for work, education, leisure activities and retail,” he says.

Companies could use this technology to collaborate across different branches of an international firm; the travel industry could use it for L&D to simulate on-location experiences; and health and safety training via the metaverse could allow managers to guide staff through critical points and potentially even test employees, says Stone. One example of how

it is being used in the workplace is found at Accenture UK, which built a virtual campus called the ‘Nth floor’ where remote teams can learn and work together, irrespective of where they are.

“While nothing can replace the value of a face-to-face meeting, we do see how these workplace experiences can evolve how we meet and work together online,” says Lisa Rose, Accenture's HR lead in the UK & Ireland. “People tell us they feel more present in a meeting in our virtual office than they do in an [traditional] online event – free from the distraction

of an instant message or email that pops up in the inbox.” This year, the company expects to use the metaverse to greet 150,000 new hires on their first day, says Rose, explaining that employees are likely to







Some workers have reported feeling 'more present' during meetings held in the metaverse

retain “as much as 33 per cent more information in immersive learning environments than with more passive online training”.

And the metaverse is not just limited to recruitment, says Hayfa Mohdzaini, senior research adviser at the CIPD. “The metaverse could be useful for activities that are more expensive or dangerous to do in real life – like going out for a team snowboarding trip in summer – or too troublesome to do online in 2D – like tailoring a uniform to fit the new employee,” she says.

It can also support company health and wellbeing policies too, suggests Nick Diamond, membership director at Business in the Community. “The metaverse could offer a new arena for employees to talk about their wellbeing, such as mental health,” he said. “People crave human interaction, so for some colleagues who are working remotely, the metaverse could be a new step toward offering those connections that the

workforce has missed.”

But, for all of the hopes for businesses using the metaverse, Stone cautions against employers rushing to get in on the action. For one, employees may struggle with the technology, which consists of screens, headsets and different interfaces. “If you don’t understand your corporate population but you put a [route to the] metaverse in place and expect everyone to don low-cost virtual reality headsets and come together, that’s a recipe for failure,” he says. “The metaverse is all very well, as is [Meta CEO] Mark Zuckerberg showing his avatar and waxing lyrical about the wonders of the future metaverse... But if companies don’t think about the people who use it and different cultures, I think it’s going to come to a sticky end,” says Stone. And just because the metaverse is in a digital space does not exempt it from the rules and regulations of the real world. There is the risk that staff who feel “emboldened” by appearing in avatar form may behave in ways that

are not appropriate for the workplace, warns Barry Ross, director and partner at Crossland Employment Solicitors – a concern that already has precedent in the way people behave on social media. “We presently have a culture where comments of a hateful or discriminatory nature happen on [online] platforms that would not happen in real life,” Ross says, suggesting that it is not a great leap to assume that this could happen within the metaverse unless it is managed.

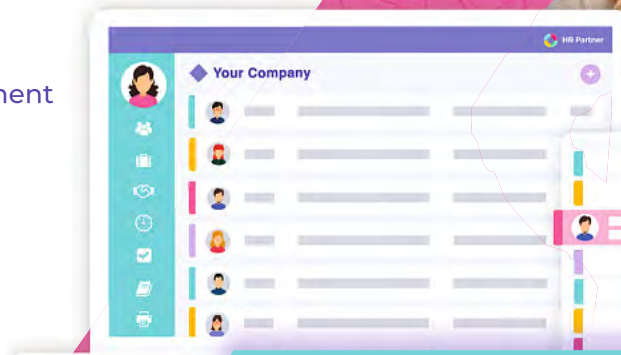
Employers will also need to think about how to monitor employees in the metaverse to ensure that they take downtime, says Ross, noting that a virtual workplace has just as much potential to see employees burn out.

But, the move to the metaverse is still in its infancy, meaning it might be too soon to write it off, says Mohdzaini. “Adoption of the metaverse is in the early stage, so I would expect how people use the metaverse and the technologies that support it will evolve.”



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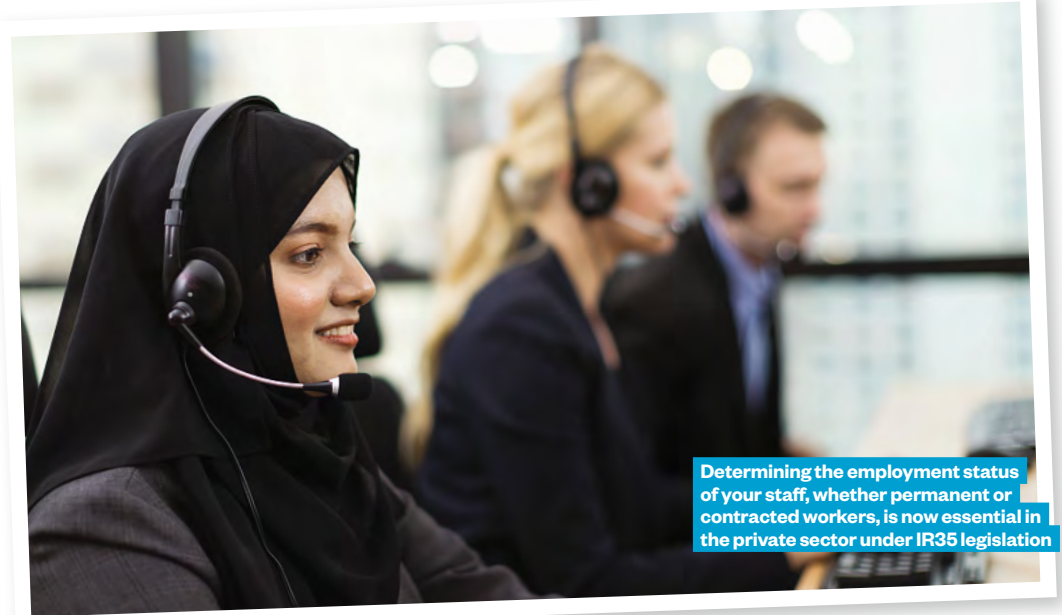
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# Private sector IR35: one year on

*Having been delayed by the pandemic, the changes were finally rolled out last April – but many firms are still struggling to get to grips with the legislation*

This time just over a year ago, many businesses were hoping HMRC would have a change of heart and backtrack on its plans to roll out changes to IR35 off-payroll rules to the private sector. Unlike the public sector – where the responsible for determining the employment status of contractors moved to the employer in 2017 – private sector organisations were granted a reprieve because of the pandemic. Initially meant to be rolled out in 2020, the date was pushed back to April 2021. Even then, when the rules did eventually come into force, employers were promised a soft landing, with HMRC pledging not to fine firms for accidental breaches of the rules.

That grace period came to an end at the start of April, and once again the focus of many businesses is back on this notoriously finicky piece of legislation. “Many businesses have asked us to reassess their solution in recent months,” says Matt Fryer, head of legal services at Brookson Legal. “This is especially true for those organisations who have not engaged with IR35 since their initial



Determining the employment status of your staff, whether permanent or contracted workers, is now essential in the private sector under IR35 legislation

audit, leading them to seek advice and reassurance around meeting HMRC’s reasonable care threshold.”

IR35 was first introduced in 2000 to ensure people who were working like an employee, but through their own limited company, paid broadly the same tax as someone employed directly. Initially, contracts were responsible for deciding whether they were caught by this rule, but under the changes the responsibility for deciding employment status for

tax purposes – and the tax liability that comes with it – now falls squarely on the employer.

By now, however, firms should be well versed in making these assessments. A poll of 500 senior managers by Brookson Legal found four in five (80 per cent) had planned to review their IR35 solution by April this year. However, the end of the grace period also coincides with a time of growth: 90 per cent of managers polled said their firms planned to extend their use of contractors over the next 12 months to support business growth. As such, Fryer urges employers to conduct regular reviews of contractor status determinations.

“It’s important for businesses to use the end of the soft landing period as a welcome period of reflection; to review their solution and implement a robust approach that can realise the flexibility and agility IR35 can deliver,” he says.

## The cost of IR35

Earlier this year, the government spending watchdog warned that the cost of IR35 changes to businesses could be larger than expected. In a report, the National Audit Office said that when the changes to the private sector came into force in 2021, the government “expected new administrative burdens... to be small”.

However, best practice in the public sector, which saw the same changes introduced much earlier, suggested organisations needed “significant investment” to stay compliant. “Public bodies we interviewed explained that in some cases a lot of staff time had to be put into administration and ongoing compliance work,” the report said.



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A photograph of two women in a professional office environment. The woman on the left is an older Black woman with short, curly grey hair, wearing a tan sweater and a yellow and red patterned scarf. She is smiling broadly. The woman on the right is a younger Asian woman with dark hair tied up, wearing a tan blazer over a green top. She is also smiling and holding a black folder. The background shows a large green plant. A large yellow triangle is on the left side of the image.

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# Jobseeker banned from tribunals service after making over 40 'vexatious' claims

*EAT says the man's threatening behaviour 'weaponised' the process*

**A** man has been banned from using the employment tribunals (ET) service after making more than 40 claims against multiple companies, the Employment Appeal Tribunal (EAT) has ruled.

Mr D Taheri was handed a Restriction of Proceedings Order (RPO) of indefinite notice, prohibiting him from making claims against employers without the permission of the EAT or the Judge of the High Court. The EAT found that Taheri was engaged in a "weaponisation" of the ET process, and had a "modus operandi" of applying for a job, then bringing a claim against the employer if his applications were rejected and seeking thousands of pounds in damages.

Taheri made 43 "vexatious" claims between 2012 and 2020, often on the grounds of race, age and/or disability discrimination. The majority were struck out because they had no reasonable chance of success, were withdrawn by Taheri or were settled out of court. All of the claims that were brought forward failed.

His first claim, for £1,000, was brought in October 2012 against a pub after Taheri was rejected for a chef role. The pub claimed he was not interviewed because of the "pushy and insistent nature" of his emails. Taheri was found guilty of harassment against a member of staff there and sentenced to 28 days' imprisonment and a restraining order.

In another incident, in 2013, he claimed £5,000 against a clothing retailer after he was rejected for a sales assistant role. The retailer claimed he had turned up at one of its shops and stared "menacingly" at staff through the window. That same year, the president of the England and Wales ET told the treasury solicitor in a letter how Taheri "seeks thousands of pounds but then writes to the Respondent's representatives repeatedly (20 or 30 times) demanding settlements of £500, and threatening to hold a press conference".

Taheri argued that since February 2021, he had "only" three claims outstanding; however, the EAT commented that three claims was "not an insignificant number". The tribunal ruled that he had "used the ET process to put pressure on would-be employers to enter into low-value settlements" and "habitually and persistently brought proceedings without any reasonable grounds", causing "inconvenience, harassment and expense".

Jules Quinn, employment partner at King & Spalding, said it appeared that in many of the cases, the affected employers sought to "buy off" Taheri out of court for smaller sums of money, "rather than incur legal fees of defending" the claim. But, she said, employers affected by vexatious claims can also apply for the case to be struck out or ask for a deposit order to be issued to the claimant.

# Care worker accused of lying about Covid was unfairly dismissed

An employee was constructively unfairly dismissed after an argument with his manager during which he was shouted at, a tribunal ruled.

The Watford employment tribunal found that Kestrel Grove Nursing Home breached implied terms of trust and confidence after a manager accused Mr G Galang, a domestic assistant, of lying about his absence due to Covid symptoms. It found that the care home was unable to identify a fair reason for the dismissal.

In March 2020, Galang suffered symptoms related to Covid-19 and was off for several weeks with a GP's fit note. On the day he returned to work, 5 May 2020, he noticed staff working in the kitchen were not wearing face masks and jokingly mentioned to a colleague that he would make a complaint to the Care Quality Commission (CQC), which regulates care homes.

The same day, his manager, Mr Tripp, heard that Galang had threatened to report the home to the CQC and decided to speak to him. The tribunal heard that in the meeting Tripp shouted at Galang, pointing his finger in his face and accused him of lying to his GP and falsifying a doctor's note. At the end of the meeting, Tripp warned Galang that going forward he would be "on his back every five minutes". (Tripp denied Galang's version of events).

Galang was issued an informal warning in respect of "unsatisfactory conduct", and on 7 May, Galang sent his resignation letter to the care home.

Judge Skehan ruled that Tripp's actions constituted a breach of the employment contract. The tribunal found that there was no investigation into allegations of dishonesty and there was no reason to suspect dishonesty on Galang's part.

**CIPD | HR-inform**

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# Striking workers not protected from actions short of dismissal

Employees who take part in strike action are not protected from any sanctions short of dismissal, the Court of Appeal has ruled, in effect allowing organisations to take action against employees taking part in industrial action, including depriving them of non-contractual benefits, as long as they are not dismissed. The decision overturned a previous ruling from the Employment Appeals Tribunal (EAT) that had found an employee

who was participating in industrial action protected from detriment by the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), with the Court of Appeal finding that despite what the ECHR said, the UK had not implemented the primary legislation necessary to protect employees in this way.

The case was initially brought to tribunal by Fiona Mercer, a care worker employed by Alternative Futures Group, after she was

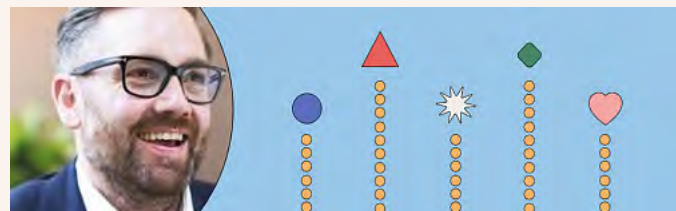
disciplined for her participation in a series of strikes in 2019.

Samantha Dickinson, partner at Mayo Wynne Baxter, said the decision meant employers were now on firmer ground if they wanted to act against staff in similar circumstances. But, while the decision was binding on lower courts and the Court of Appeal going forward, she warned firms "still need to exercise caution as the law in this area is highly nuanced".

# Why interpersonal skills will be vital in the future of work

Go1, one of the world's largest corporate education content hubs, feels passionate about the future of work and what shape the workplace and workforces will take in the coming years. As jobs are being redefined by evolving and new technologies, hybrid working and a fast paced cultural climate, one set of key evergreen skills to nurture are **interpersonal skills**; the behaviors and tactics a person uses to interact with others effectively, ranging from communication and listening to attitude and deportment.

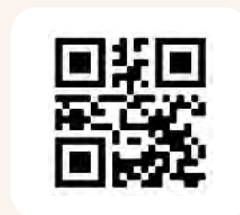
In recent years, demands of businesses to their employees for interpersonal skills has skyrocketed, to the point where many predict that these skills could very well define the future of work altogether. According to McKinsey, people with strong interpersonal skills are 14% more likely to earn a top-quintile income and a research conducted by TRVST finds that 93% of employers believe soft skills (also known as interpersonal skills) are "very important" or "essential", while 97% say they are key to business growth and success.



Ollie Browning from Go1 identifies the top five interpersonal skills to nurture and grow as employees, and for L&D professionals to put at the top of their agendas:

- **Creativity:** Though it may not be overtly required in your job description, writing with creative flair and thinking outside the box will always add value to your projects.
- **Persuasion:** You don't only need to persuade in sales roles - channel your power of persuasion to get ideas off the ground and assert your direction and thinking with impact.
- **Collaboration:** Internally and externally, being a team player will create a healthy working environment and lead to more qualitative outputs.
- **Adaptability:** Be willing and open to changing tacks and listen to other people's visions, you may be surprised by the benefits and rewards reaped.
- **Time Management:** Good time management is essential for maintaining balance at work, increasing productivity and achieving goals and should never be overlooked.

The Go1 platform offers exclusive content pertaining to interpersonal skills, scan the QR code to find out more:

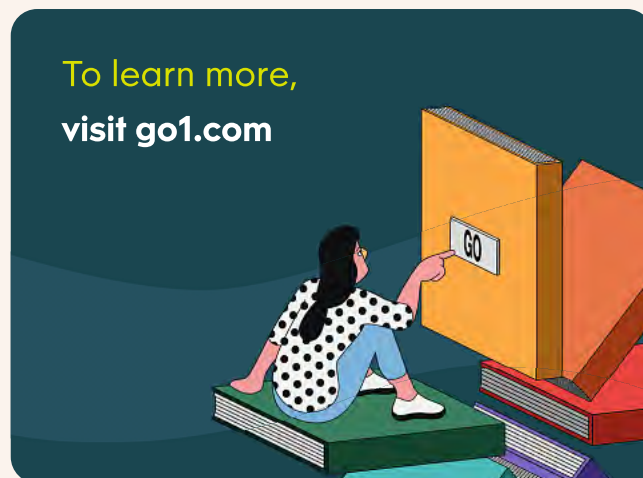


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*I'll tell you something...*

## DR ADAM TURNER

NATIONAL IMPROVING  
HEALTH AND WELLBEING  
LEAD AT NHS ENGLAND

*By listening to executive leaders, we can rethink personal resilience*

**N**ow, more than ever, the personal resilience of our workforce is inescapable. We often describe personal resilience as a response to stressors. But what if I told you it's much more than that?

Our knowledge of personal resilience comes largely from the perspectives of people who have already experienced stressors and adversity. I became curious about what we could learn by taking a strengths-based perspective and examining resilience through the experiences of highly successful individuals. This led me to researching the personal resilience of executive leaders in my practice setting of healthcare. My findings provide new ways of conceptualising personal resilience

and, most importantly, how we can enable it in others. Here are some highlights from what my research into this area has uncovered:

**"A negative stressor can become a positive challenge"**

### **Resilience is active**

The most significant discovery arising

from my research is that for these executive leaders, personal resilience is not a response. It is experienced as active, continual, and about moving the situation forward for both themselves and their followers. They are always horizon scanning and seeking out stressors before they happen. This enables them to actively prepare themselves and their organisation for future stressors, or avoid them entirely.

### **Banking resilience**

Social support is an established enabler of personal resilience, yet much of our



**Not all workplace disasters are sink or swim: viewing a stressful situation as a learning experience can develop personal resilience**

knowledge focuses on this support being unidirectional. These executive leaders are highly values-driven and see their role as enabling resilience in others. However, they also crafted the concept of 'banking' personal resilience, knowing that helping people today will lead to this support being returned to them in the future.

### **Positive framing**

We can perceive the same situation in different ways. These leaders actively frame stressors in a positive and optimistic way, for both themselves and their followers. A negative stressor can instead become a positive challenge to overcome, or opportunity to embrace. This makes it easier to manage.

### **Motivational energy**

These executive leaders experience personal resilience as a form of motivational energy that can be topped up like a battery and transferred between

situations. Being aware of what motivates them and actively building in time for these activities enables them to maintain their resilience energy when facing challenging stressors. They may get a top-up from a motivational staff engagement activity in the morning that enables them to deal with a challenging board meeting that afternoon.

### **Actively developing resilience**

While we understand personal resilience as something that can be developed, these executive leaders go further by actively seeking out stressors to learn from. They have purposefully exposed themselves to a manageable level of stress throughout their careers, such as stretch assignments, and positively framed these experiences as learning opportunities. Actively developing personal resilience in this way has enabled them to thrive when facing the significant stressors that they encounter during their daily lives. **PM**

# In practice

*Real organisations, real challenges*

**Virgin Money**

# “Lots of people aren’t used to this level of freedom”

*The bank introduced locationless working as part of a more flexible culture*

A third of the way up central London’s 45-storey Leadenhall Building, affectionately known as the Cheese Grater, sits Virgin Money’s London HQ. Bedecked in contemporary, on-brand red decor and luxurious furniture, on the sunny day in mid-March when *People Management* visits, aside from a board meeting taking place down the corridor, it’s noticeably empty. The office is, explains group chief people and communications officer Syreeta Brown, on the company’s list to be remodelled as part of its post-Covid ‘A Life More Virgin’ package, formally announced in November, under which staff can choose where they work, and the firm will maintain key hubs for staff to work in collaboratively, rather than forcing them back to a traditional ‘office’.

It’s a path, says Brown, who joined the bank in November 2021, that it was on before the pandemic, yet this clearly

added impetus to its plans. Having surveyed all Virgin Money staff (as well as more than 3,000 members of the public) about what they wanted from working flexibly, it found 73 per cent of employees said more flexibility would improve their general happiness, and 62 per cent said it would improve their mental health. But people also said they wanted choice in what that flexibility looks like, explains Brown. “Some flexibility is prescriptive in itself, so we’ve tried to think systemically about how we create a proposition that’s flexible in itself and shows we trust people to make the right choices, while still meeting our regulatory and risk obligations.”

Aiming for ‘A Life More Virgin’ to be completely in place by summer 2022, all staff will be provided with the tech they need to work flexibly, and it will be down to individual teams themselves to decide how and where they would prefer to do their jobs. Even branch staff whose location is fixed will

be afforded more choice over their hours. And key indicators are already moving in the bank’s favour showing the changes are being welcomed. But it’s also involved a lot of comms work to ensure people feel empowered, including online guidance and improved training for line managers, says Brown. “We’ve given people freedom to decide, but lots of people aren’t used to this level of freedom,” she points out.

And this move towards permanent flexibility has also been looked at under an organisational design lens, encompassing the rest of the bank’s people offering. “We’ve looked at every aspect of the employee lifecycle to say what needs to change to deliver this philosophy,” explains Brown. For example, the bank’s reward offering has been drastically improved; A Life More Virgin also offers new benefits including five extra ‘wellbeing days’ per year, as well as gender-neutral parental leave. Looking at the organisation’s offering holistically is key, Brown says, to making sure it’s sustainable in the longer term. “If you don’t embed these things systemically,

**“Too often inclusion strategies just focus on symptoms”**





**Syreeta Brown says ambitious and systemic change is essential if inclusion and diversity are to be truly embedded in an organisation**

they can just become gimmicks,” she says.

The changes brought about by the introduction of A Life More Virgin also put inclusivity centre stage, explains Brown. “In today’s world, diversity and inclusion has become a programmatic, sideways initiative that organisations have to do,” she says. “A Life More Virgin really pulls inclusion into the centre of our strategy.” With ambitious targets in place (between 45-55 per cent gender diversity at senior level and 10 per cent ethnic diversity across the group by 2025), the move to a more locationless working model has also removed some of the barriers the bank has experienced in accessing talent. In the past five months, Brown says, the number of applications for its vacancies has doubled, with hiring managers reporting a greater diversity of candidates. When location is removed, she says, the reasons people give for why they can’t improve diversity also start to be removed. “Which is a cornerstone of having a truly inclusive strategy,” she adds. “It has to be systemic. Too often inclusion strategies just focus on symptoms.”

As part of A Life More Virgin, Brown has also made a conscious effort to do away with a large number of people policies, only maintaining mandatory ones such as regulatory and health and safety. “We’ve tried to eliminate a lot of the prescription around how a policy should be practised between a manager and a colleague,” she explains. “I’ve turned it over to colleagues to say ‘do the right thing’, and it’s been proven that when you do that, you get people doing the right thing. Nobody comes to work to deliberately circumvent the rules.” And it’s a tactic she thinks other organisations will also start following: “You have to have guard rails, but also appreciate the environment and employee market is now determining what happens; we don’t determine what happens anymore.”

For Brown, the months and years to come will see the bank working to truly embed A Life More Virgin as a long-term culture change, not just a ‘Covid’ project, and iterate as required in order to build on its already “phenomenal” improvements to employee engagement and reward ratings and achieve its ambition of being the UK’s leading digital bank. And she’s realistic about the potential for more future changes: “Nobody’s got the answers on flexible working; the world is still changing and organisations need to be open to doing that as well.”

# “Pursuing external accreditations gave our employees a voice”

*The further education provider saw staff satisfaction jump after it set its sights on a better Ofsted rating*

**T**he landscape in further education is ever changing, says Gill Thornton, head of HR at Preston College. “It’s not well funded, so we’ve had to be creative and make things happen with limited resources,” she says.

So when the time came for a drastic change of direction for the college in order to salvage its dropping Ofsted rating, Thornton and her team had to work even harder, with a new people strategy core to the organisation’s turnaround plans.

Almost a decade ago in 2013, the college improved from an Ofsted rating of ‘Requires improvement’ to ‘Good’. However, a second visit in 2016 saw it drop back down, having failed to demonstrate a “strong trajectory” during the time between inspections, explains Thornton. With the college setting its intention to return to ‘Good’, Thornton wanted to inject energy and new thought processes into the organisation, and introduced a host of measures designed to improve the working environment.

Part of this involved introducing a culture of ‘no blame’, whereby staff are encouraged to share the things they’ve done right, rather than focusing on what

people have done wrong. The college also took its teaching back to basics, introducing formal lesson plans and encouraging staff to learn from each other. “We looked at our best practitioners and set up opportunities, such as observing ‘masterclass lessons,’” Thornton explains. It also organised ‘walkthroughs’, where staff literally walked through teaching or practical skills and development sessions and provided feedback on whether the work met corporate standards.

At the same time as work to get back to a ‘Good’ rating was getting underway, Preston College had also signed up to be an earlier adopter of Investors in People (IIP)’s new framework.

Thornton drafted an “aspirational” paper, which detailed the college’s hopes of achieving Silver standard under the new framework by March 2017, and the Gold standard by March 2020.

“We set up an IIP task group across the organisation’s different tiers, so we had voices from every part,” she explains. “That helped in doing a self-assessment and acting as champions.”

According to Thornton, the dual goals of IIP accreditation and Ofsted

improvement supported each other: “There was the vision for the whole college to get our ‘Good’ back, and a lot of energy around the voice that would be given to staff through the IIP, so that all came together at the same time,” she explains.

An added challenge during this time was a restructuring, through which the organisation decided to stop offering A level courses in the school year 2014-15. “Our *raison d’être* has always been on the vocational and training side,” Thornton explains. Her team worked alongside the union every step of the way to develop the “best scenario” for the college in making the transition, and was also supported by the union during staff consultations, yet some staff “didn’t see themselves aligning to our new brand” and subsequently chose to leave, she says.

After two years of investment in its people, culture and working practices, the college’s ‘Good’ Ofsted rating was reinstated in 2018 following an early inspection, and it was awarded its Silver IIP accreditation in March 2017 – with 40 per cent of the evaluated areas already meeting the Gold standard.

Yet having met her initial goals for Ofsted and IIP ratings, all while managing a rebrand on the side, Thornton was still not done. In 2018, the college introduced

**“Staff have been encouraged to share things they’ve done right, not focus on what’s wrong”**





**Gill Thornton says allowing staff to learn from each other without fear of judgement has improved creativity and lifted morale**

a five-year plan to achieve a 'Good' Ofsted rating and pursue Gold IIP accreditation.

Four years into the plan, progress has been positive. Preston College was awarded Gold IIP accreditation in 2021 after the assessment – originally planned for March 2020 – was delayed. And it still has its sights firmly set on being 'Outstanding'. "We've done a lot of staff development days about what exactly that would mean," Thornton says.

And while the college still does walkthroughs, they aren't graded, and staff instead focus on having feedback conversations about what went well, which lets "creativity fly", Thornton says, rather than allowing a fear of not performing.

The college's journey to being 'Gold and Good' is also reflected in its staff feedback: in a workforce survey for the school year 2020-21, five of the six survey sections saw improvements. Levels of staff satisfaction ranged from 63 to 81 per cent in last year's data, compared to between 48 and 61 per cent during 2018-19. In addition, almost 94 per cent of staff agreed the college is "well led and managed": a 16 percentage point increase on 2018-19.

Ahead of its current five-year plan ending in 2023, another iteration is being reviewed and, in the meantime, there will be a refresh of the organisation's values. The college will "absolutely" be aiming for an 'Outstanding' Ofsted rating, says Thornton, but she caveats that the aim is to be "outstanding in everything we do", and not just for the sake of Ofsted.



# Would you send your white employees home an hour early?

*Exclusive new data shows ethnic minority employees need to work 58 minutes longer than their white colleagues to earn the same amount. But how can organisations begin to address the imbalance?*

**WORDS** JO FARAGHER









**E**mployees at Sodexo were horrified by the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May 2020 and the food services and facilities management company felt it needed to do more to bring about meaningful change. One of its first actions was to sign an open letter to the *Sunday Times* newspaper from business leaders, pledging to set stretch targets for ethnic representation and report annually on its progress. The company then committed to reporting its ethnicity pay gap data, and was the first employer in the hospitality sector to publish this, in 2021.

“We believe data is one of the best places to start,” says Raj Jones, Sodexo’s head of diversity, equity and inclusion. “It shows you where people sit in the business, what pay equity is like. It enables conversations internally and holds us to account externally.” The company also set up a strategic taskforce made up of

leaders from Black and other ethnic minority backgrounds to better understand the lived experiences of employees and start meaningful conversations about race. Jones says there is an “ongoing drumbeat” of activity around inclusion that brings in senior sponsors, employee networks and external speakers.

Sodexo is one of a growing number of employers choosing to voluntarily publish its ethnicity pay gap data as employee demands get louder around action on environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals.

According to Business in the Community, which asks organisations to sign up to pay gap reporting as part of its *Race at Work Charter*, the number of employers doing so has grown from 11 per cent in 2018 to 19 per cent in 2021. After a government consultation into making it a legal requirement concluded more than three years ago, there had been mounting pressure from MPs and business bodies to introduce legislation in April 2023.

But this will no longer happen, as the government’s response to the 2021

Encouraging staff to self-declare on ethnicity provides companies with more robust data to analyse

Sewell report into racism in Britain has confirmed. Instead, the *Inclusive Britain* report said the government would support employers that want to publish their ethnicity pay gaps, and would publish guidance to help them do so this summer.

The report acknowledges that there are a host of challenges associated with ethnicity pay gap reporting that did not impact gender pay obligations – something that was highlighted by the then small business minister Paul Scully during a parliamentary debate on the issue last year.

First, we have a wide range of ethnic minority groups in the UK – ethnicity pay reporting is not ‘binary’ in the same way as gender pay reporting, so it is disingenuous to make sweeping comparisons between ‘white’ employees and all other ethnicities. This in turn affects statistical robustness, because minimum sample sizes would be needed to ensure data shows an accurate picture of pay comparisons in an organisation, and some ethnicities may have a far smaller representation than others.

Furthermore, any requirement would have to support reporting across demographically different areas – employers in parts of the country with smaller ethnic minority populations could struggle to produce a meaningful report because the numbers are too low.

Nigel Marriott, an independent statistician who has been involved in shaping the new guidance, agrees that it would be impossible to apply the same framework used for gender pay gap reporting to ethnicity. “With gender, the census shows it to be around 50/50 in the population while around 86 per cent of the UK is white. That means you’re comparing a majority category with multiple minority categories,” he says. “Also, ethnic distribution varies considerably across the country, so the end result could be that an employer might be all-white by virtue of where it is based. Similarly, if you’re doing a straight comparison between white and all other ethnicities, you could eliminate the pay gap by just recruiting a single minority – your ethnicity pay gap would be zero, but you’d have got there





by excluding all other ethnic minorities.” Furthermore, because ethnic identity is something that has to be ‘shared’ willingly by an employee, anyone who felt uncomfortable with this could just choose to tick the ‘not applicable’ or ‘prefer not to say’ box when they are recruited, decreasing disclosure rates and the reliability of any analysis.

In its ethnicity pay reporting guide for UK employers, the CIPD advocates – as long as numbers allow – using the five broad ethnicity categories used in census data: white; mixed or multiple ethnic group; Asian or Asian British; Black/African/Caribbean/Black British; or other ethnic group. A recent survey by the HR body found that 47 per cent of those collecting ethnicity data used these classifications, and 30 per cent of this group used the 18 sub-categories from the 2011 census. But when it comes to statistical robustness and sample sizes, it’s likely that only larger organisations would be able to report with any granularity, Marriott suggests.

The Royal Statistical Society stated in its recommendations for improving pay gap reporting in 2019 that any category with fewer than 100 employees would

become less and less reliable the smaller the sample. On this basis, only a small percentage of employers with fewer than 1,000 employees would be able to compare data based on the census ethnicity categories. Go down to the 250-employee threshold for gender pay gap reporting, and “around 95 per cent” would not be able to report, he says.

With almost 23,000 employees, consulting giant PwC has the luxury of not only a large workforce sample but years of experience in collecting and analysing workforce data. The company has published details of its ethnicity pay gap since 2018, something that “creates a stronger sense of accountability to drive improvements internally”, according to Sarah Churchman, UK head of diversity, inclusion and wellbeing. One of the drivers for publishing this data before being under legal obligation to do so is the size and maturity of the company’s dataset. “We’ve focused on this for a long time so we have good data – around 97 per cent of people have shared their ethnicity,” she explains.

**“People like to believe that we live in a meritocracy, but you need the data to prove it”**

“When you have robust data you can do good modelling.” PwC captures data during the recruitment processes to ensure they are fair, as well as other moments in the employment lifecycle such as performance management, promotions and participation on high-potential programmes. Employees are also invited to update their personal details – which includes a question about ethnicity – when they review their flexible benefits and complete regulatory training, so there are plenty of opportunities to disclose.

The benefit of such a high volume of good quality data is that the company has been able to break down its pay differentials further than comparing white employees with anyone from an ethnic minority background. So while its overall ethnicity median hourly pay gap is 2.9 per cent, this fluctuates according to different ethnicities within the workforce. “When we started breaking it down, we realised that 19 per cent of our Black and ethnic minority talent is Asian, and only 4 per cent Black. This obviously affects the pay gap down the line, so we thought about where we need to intervene,” adds Churchman. This year, PwC launched a scheme aimed at Black

## Where should businesses start?

Although the government has now confirmed it will not introduce a legal requirement for companies to report their ethnicity pay gap, there are solid reasons to move forward and do so. Getting ahead on the data is “an opportunity to show you’re credible” about your diversity and inclusion promises, says Alison Woods, partner and co-head of employment at CMS Law. “We’re seeing ESG starting to have a snowball impact, and much more is going on without legislation having to be in place,” she says. “It’s people power; companies are looking at this issue because of wider pressures rather than a legal obligation.” So how should organisations set about collecting and reporting the data?

**Build trust:** “People might not be willing to share if they already have concerns about their employer’s approach to diversity,” says Woods. “We’ve seen clients go on a journey of trust, but if you’re clear on data privacy and how you will use

the data, you can build up the information.”

**Collect the data:** ‘Keep asking’ is a common message among organisations that have achieved high disclosure rates (anything north of 70 per cent, according to Sandra Kerr, race director at Business in the Community). Use data-capture moments such as employee surveys, annual appraisals and onboarding to increase levels of data sharing.

**Run the numbers:** In its *Ethnicity Pay Reporting guide*, the CIPD recommends organisations publish a) the difference between the median hourly rate of pay of all “full-pay relevant” white employees and the same for those from other ethnic minority backgrounds and b) the difference between the mean hourly rate of pay for the same groups.

**Break down the data:** If numbers allow, run an additional analysis based on more detailed ethnicity categories alongside the

headline figure. As with gender pay reporting, organisations could also look at the gap in bonus payments and present pay gap analysis across quartile pay bands.

**Present the context:** The CIPD advocates two additional statistics that do not appear in gender pay reports: demographic data on the proportion of an employer’s total workforce from ethnic minority backgrounds; and the proportion of employees that chose to disclose their ethnicity. This data can then be used as contextual information in your report.

**Produce a narrative:** A key recommendation of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities is that organisations publish a diagnosis and action plan, setting out the reasons for and steps to address the disparities the figures have highlighted. “Having a duty to report does not fix the problem, as we’ve seen with the gender pay gap,” adds Woods. “Start to think about what your narrative would be, engage with your workforce and see if there is a wider commitment to change.”

undergraduates where they undertake a three-day paid programme that could lead to an internship, work placement or graduate role depending on the stage of someone's degree. Sharing the role of data in why such programmes exist is all part of building a culture of trust, she says. "We have a clear explanation as to how we use the data and that it's held confidentially so we can look at the fairness of our processes. People like to believe we live in a meritocracy, but you need data to prove it."

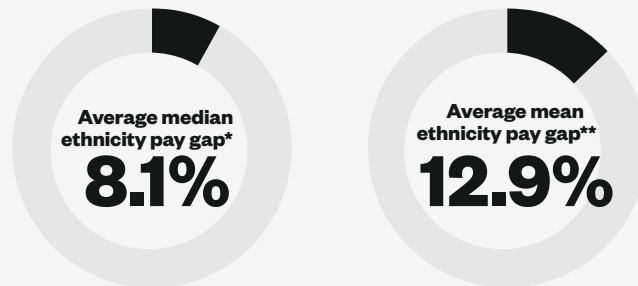
Sodexo broke down its own ethnicity pay data into four categories: white; Black; Asian; and mixed ethnic, as well as calculating an overall gap between white employees and those of other ethnicities. It was able to produce a figure for the overall gap for each of its legal entities (as is required in gender pay gap reporting) but the sub-categories had to be calculated across the business as a whole. "We're now running a big initiative to get all of our diversity data up so we can overlay it and dig much deeper," adds Jones. While the overall gap is quite small because around 20 per cent of frontline staff are from ethnic minorities, one of the key priorities has been to review processes across the employee lifecycle to ensure workers receive equitable promotion prospects within the company. "We want people to stay here and thrive," she says.

But building this level of transparency also requires a degree of trust. "An initial hurdle is that some employees may not like to reveal to their employer how they categorise themselves, so be upfront about why you're collecting the data and provide assurances that it will remain anonymous," says Amanda Glover, a senior employment solicitor at Clarkslegal.

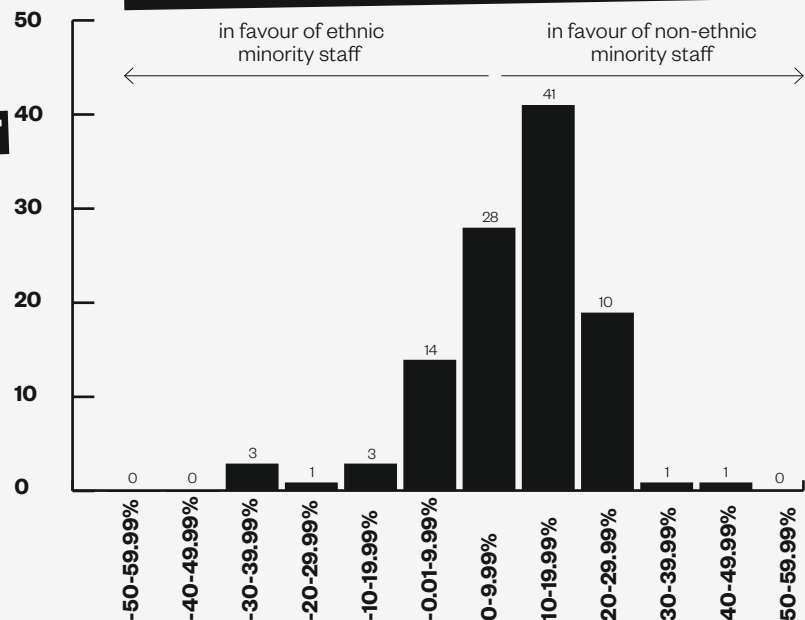
Sandra Kerr, race director at Business in the Community, says organisations need to "build confidence that the data will be used for something positive to benefit the organisation and the individual". Many employers use internal campaigns to encourage people to self-declare, or share how past data

**"Build confidence that the data will be used for something positive"**

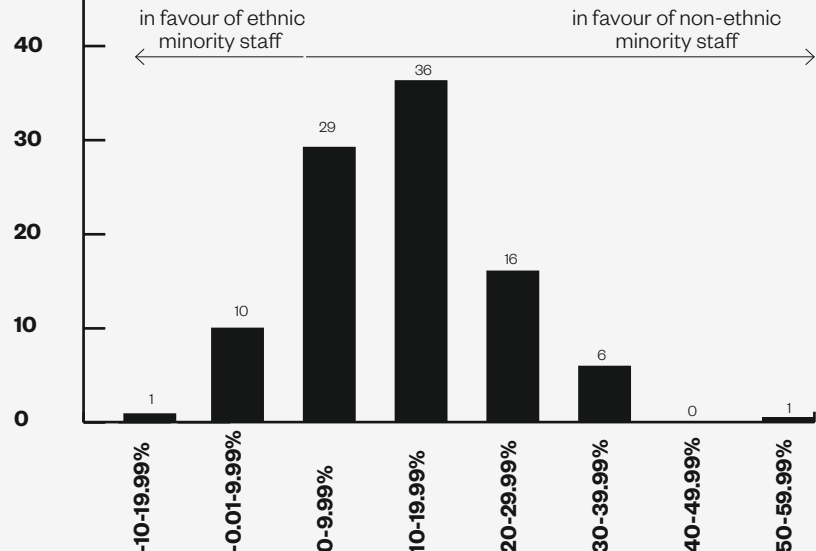
## The UK's ethnicity pay gap – so far



### Most common median ethnicity pay gaps\*



### Most common mean ethnicity pay gaps\*\*



\*People Management analysis of data from 102 companies \*\*People Management analysis of data from 99 companies

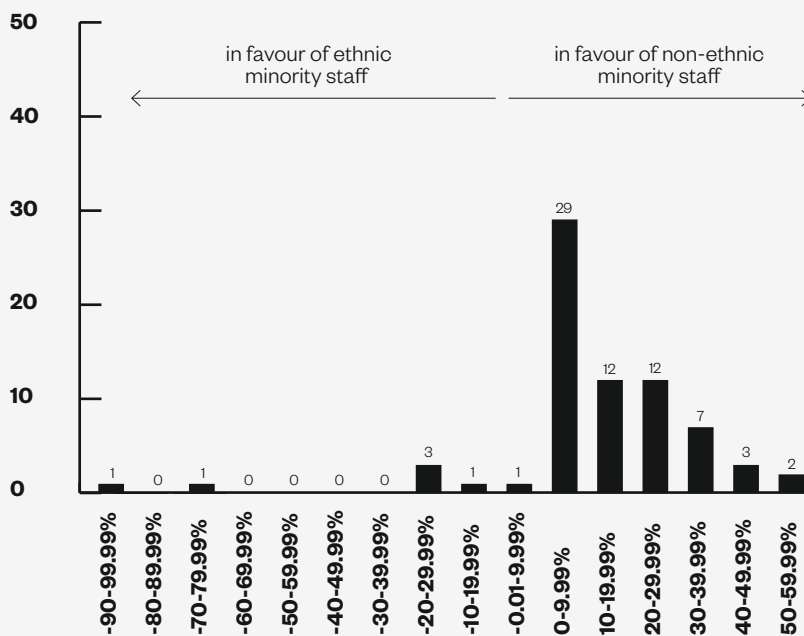


# Ethnicity pay gap

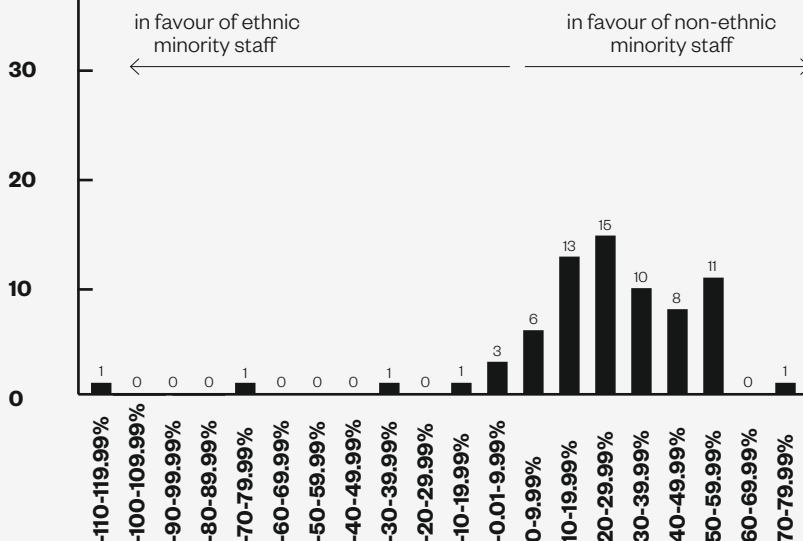
Although not yet mandated by the government, plenty of organisations have still chosen to get ahead and report their figures. *People Management* has crunched the available numbers to paint a picture of companies' progress



## Most common median ethnicity bonus gaps\*



## Most common mean ethnicity bonus gaps\*\*



\*People Management analysis of data from 72 companies \*\*People Management analysis of data from 71 companies

insights have driven improvements, she advises. “Even if you don’t get everyone declaring, having people tick ‘prefer not to say’ means the message has been delivered rather than not getting through. If leaders share their stories on the ‘why’ and you encourage new joiners to disclose, you’re driving up data capture,” she adds.

Network Rail has disclosed its ethnicity pay gap for the past three years as part of a longer-term strategy to gain more transparency on the challenges for employees across a spectrum of protected characteristics. Two years ago, the diversity team launched a disclosure campaign offering employees the chance to update their personal details on ethnicity alongside other categories including their sexual orientation or if they have a disability. Office-based staff received an email, while frontline workers were written to and given a pre-paid envelope to return their responses. “The message was ‘you can share as much as you want’ – we’re clear that we use data to target resources and programmes and why it’s good to know the make-up of our workforce,” explains Jonathan Payne, who works in the D&I team. “But we’re also clear about what we don’t use it for – their line manager would not see it, nor would a recruiter.”

Gathering data across multiple diversity strands means the company can look at pay equity through an intersectional lens, he adds. “Many people might have one protected characteristic but we wanted to know the compound effect of being in more than one – for example, overlaying ethnicity pay with gender can show us whether males or females from certain backgrounds are treated differently.”

While it is yet to report its ethnicity pay gap data publicly, this year the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) decided to conduct an analysis using the same methodology as the gender pay gap calculations, so it could get a baseline figure to work with. “While we collect ethnicity data on specific ethnic minority groups, we have undertaken the pay gap analysis on a more simplified level, using White and BME categories, because we



Network Rail has published its pay gap for the past three years after an internal campaign to encourage staff to disclose their ethnicity

**“There are actions you can commit to as a company that will reduce any pay gap”**

know that if we were to analyse all minority groups separately such small sample sizes would provide little or no statistical validity,” says Andy Read, deputy director of people services. The exercise also threw up other statistical challenges, such as variations in employees’ length of service or their terms and conditions. “Overall, however, it remains important that we don’t just look at pay gap data in isolation: it is part of a much wider analysis of diversity in employment and directly informs our diversity and inclusion strategy,” he adds. Like Network Rail, the CPS embarked on a disclosure campaign called ‘Count me in’, including messaging in staff inductions, and inclusion and diversity

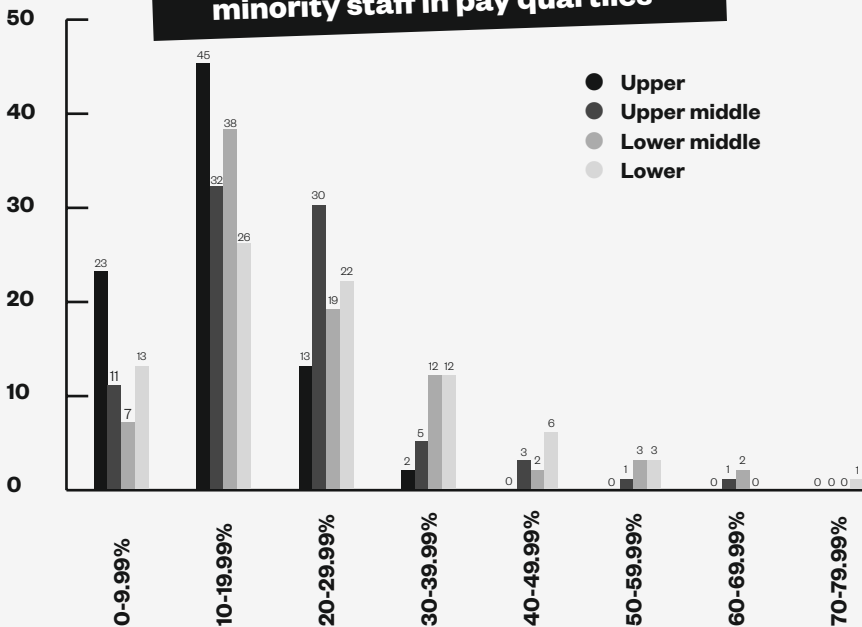
events, such as awareness days. The organisation has increased the ethnic diversity of its workforce over the last five years – 21 per cent of employees are from ethnic minority backgrounds compared to the Civil Service average of 13.2 per cent – but Read adds that “data is imperative in sustaining our position as an inclusive employer”. “Having a strong set of accurate diversity data enables us to implement positive action in a properly targeted way,” he says.

Of course, simply publishing a set of figures does not translate to a greater sense of inclusion and belonging – the work that follows these insights is what makes the difference. “Even if you don’t report the data, there are actions you can commit to as a company that will reduce any pay gap, such as not asking for salary history or addressing unconscious bias,” adds Glover. Crucially, collecting and analysing data on pay across ethnicities can start an important conversation about where your business needs to be. Payne says Network Rail has never looked back since it started expanding its reporting processes: “Doing this demonstrates you take equity seriously – both to people outside your organisation considering you as an employer, and your existing employees,” he says. **PM**

### Average percentages of ethnic minority staff in pay quartiles<sup>^</sup>



### Most common percentages of ethnic minority staff in pay quartiles<sup>^</sup>



<sup>^</sup>People Management analysis of data from 83 companies

\* Read the CIPD’s guide to ethnicity pay reporting for UK companies at [bit.ly/EthnicityPayReporting](https://bit.ly/EthnicityPayReporting)





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**“I used to be responsible for their development. Now I’m responsible for their lives”**

*The war in Ukraine has sent shock waves across the world – and HR has a pivotal part to play in supporting workers affected both directly and indirectly*

WORDS DAN GAVE









# HR's role in Ukraine

**W**ar, broadly speaking, is experienced in two distinct ways. For most in the UK, the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine has been a conflict understood through devices. Though this makes news of cities bombed to rubble and of displaced peoples thronging at border checkpoints no less horrifying, it does make it all somewhat distanced; viewed through laptops, phones and TV screens, listened to via headphones and speakers.

Despite this interspace, events of 21 February 2022 and beyond have sparked many into wanting to do as much as they can to help, business leaders and HR practitioners among them. Here, information and best practice sharing has been most prominent. Sergio Caredda, until recently chief people officer at Italian retailer OVS and a current adviser there, is constantly updating the well-visited 'HR for Ukraine' site he created, crowdsourcing insight on how organisations support Ukrainian colleagues who have been impacted.

In addition, some firms are changing their people operations. A UK business

coalition, including Marks & Spencer and Robert Walters, is advertising 10,000 roles for those displaced or who want to leave. Adecco, the recruitment firm, has started a specific jobs board for Ukrainian refugees. For those with staff in Ukraine, Sally Llewellyn, regional security director for EMEA at International SOS, which offers security risk management services to businesses, says her organisation is helping employers create escalation plans and look at where employees might be impacted. "The organisations that have been most effective in assisting their

workforce in Ukraine are those with contingency planning in place and clear communication, verifiable intelligence gathering, and decision-making structure" she explains.

Yet even for those now deeply intertwined in aid or risk management efforts from afar, these involvements are still distinct from the other experience of war. The one where you awake to the shock news that your country has been invaded. The one where among the first things you

encounter is a spouse in tears, just after dawn, a time when you would usually be preparing for a normal working day. The one where you hurriedly ring relatives to check in, to inform. It's the experience Roman Zomko, CEO of Impressit, a Ukraine-based digital agency, tells *People Management* was his and that, a month into the conflict, makes it "hard to recall how things used to be before this war."

Zomko is still living and working in Lviv, a western Ukrainian city away from regions that have seen the most intense fighting, though multiple missile strikes have hit surrounding areas. "I saw [my wife] crying like never before... and I sent a message in our joint [whole company] Slack channel; let's say it was a bit emotional," he says of when the invasion first began. He explains that the primary driver, and all subsequent actions, in those first moments of war were about ensuring his employees were safe, including a Kyiv-based DevOps engineer who was recruited but had not yet started working for him, and that he was well informed. "The main goal was to make sure everyone was safe and that we knew what was happening with every member of our team," he says, adding that among the first decisions he took

**"Organisations that have contingency planning have been the most effective"**

Global protests have demonstrated a widespread desire to provide both practical and political support to the people of Ukraine





was to call his HR lead so they could align on employee care before telling staff to ignore work and focus on their families for the time being.

Zomko's approach highlights the need to consider the total people impact of war and not just its impact on business operations: a mindset that HR teams not in the country are also driven by. Drinks giant Diageo has paused some operations to focus on its five staff inside Ukraine; SAP has closed offices and is taking safeguarding measures; and other businesses are employing security firms to bus workers out of the country. AstraZeneca, which employs 200 people in Ukraine, is providing temporary accommodation for those who flee the country, alongside financial and emotional support. For those still in Ukraine, the pharmaceutical giant has rolled out virtual education sessions for employees' children.

But wartime employee support doesn't have to take agency away from individuals. Revolut, the challenger bank with people in Ukraine, is rolling out help – financial and tool-based; there is a significant trend of non-Ukrainian companies with a Ukrainian employee presence delivering relocation and/or wartime funds for their staff. As a company spokesperson tells *People Management*: “[Support is there] if they want to relocate.”

Revolut's internal efforts are matched by changes to business operations, making it easier for customers to donate to Ukraine-focused charities and easing account set-up requirements for refugees. It's a showcase in ensuring values are practised in an holistic manner, something HR knows the importance of. And for staff that don't want to move, the fintech firm has partnered with a global security partner and onboarded all Ukraine employees to a security app, using experts to deliver tech and solutions HR teams aren't used to providing.

The UK-headquartered bank's approach might seem counterintuitive: why allow your most important assets to stay in a warzone? But there are valid reasons. Many aren't allowed to leave. In addition, commercial flights are halted, getting foreign working visas can be

complicated, and border crossing is fraught. As Louise Haycock, partner at immigrant law firm Fragomen, explains, many won't leave for a mix of cultural, logistical and familial reasons. “This is not the usual situation, where people might arrive in a country ready to work,” she says. “This is a [war-hit] population with specific needs. The driver for where these people end up is not just going to be about where employers want them to be.”

There are also those who see it as a duty to stay in the country, bringing in much-needed funds to a struggling economy. Ukraine has a rapidly growing technology sector – producing the founders of WhatsApp and Grammarly – worth £5bn a year and employing hundreds of thousands of people. Many see it as the key to Ukraine surviving past this war, so HR needs to think of ways it can support those it engages with here. Zomko explains that work on culture and team ethic is crucial in being able to work through

successfully, adding: “Tech is at the moment one of the few industries which can continue operating and the Ukrainian economy largely relies on businesses that continue working on the global market.”

This focus on the role culture and team dynamics have to play in war may be somewhere HR needs to

focus in the medium term as Zomko's ‘stay and work’ approach isn't unique. Oleh Humeniuk, CEO of WePlay Holding, an e-sports business, believes that keeping work open and paying staff offers a slice of normality. He says: “Keeping a company running during the war is an extremely responsible thing to do, as people don't feel safe and have no idea if tomorrow will even come.” Zomko agrees: “The best thing that companies can do right now is to distract their teams in Ukraine with work.” Separately, a UK HR leader notes a “staggering will to work” among Ukrainian teams, recalling one employee who apologised for being five minutes late to a meeting because a bomb alert went off.

But such steadfastness can't exist in silo: it needs support. For WePlay, that means salary is deposited in advance, conscripts are still paid, and ‘positive’ news is shared among staff at the end of ▶

**“The Ukrainian economy relies on businesses that continue working on the global market”**



## IMMIGRATION OPTIONS FOR UKRAINIANS

- The easiest option to leave and work outside Ukraine is to travel to a European Union (EU) member state. If an employer has offices there, there are EU provisions for Ukrainians to access work, education, accommodation, and other benefits. The EU has also set up a directive to best place Ukrainians across the whole member zone.
- Alternatively, many European countries have national schemes that can be accessed.
- Employers also need to know the difference between visa-free and visa travel, immigration, work permit and refugee pathways. There are also nomad visa options available in and outside EU countries.
- If any employer wants to employ a Ukrainian national in the UK, there are three main routes. There is a route for skilled workers – slow and expensive, but offers a five-year visa and a route to settlement – and two concessionary routes: the Ukraine Family Scheme visa and the Homes for Ukraine scheme. The latter route will eventually be rolled out so it can be provided via organisations, not just individuals.
- The immigration situation is dynamic and changing. Sourcing independent legal advice is essential.

# HR's role in Ukraine

the day. Humeniuk has also hired an in-house therapist and his HR team shares ways non-combatant employees can pitch in with the war effort. For Kerstin Rothermel, VP of people at Bolt, a ride hail and food delivery firm, it also requires good crisis management.

In her view, leadership alignment between Bolt's senior management in Estonia and Germany and line managers in Ukraine, as well as having pre-invasion organisational flexibility, allows the firm to be reactive when needed. "[Our] crisis communication team has been meeting more or less every day since the war started to discuss actions that the business can take in response," she says. "Our team is used to being flexible, adapting to changing circumstances and working remotely.

All these skills have proven crucial during the war."

This flexibility is crucial because uncertainty, explains Rothermel, is one of the most difficult aspects of war that HR needs to manage.

"It is unclear how long this conflict will last, and even when it does end, it will take a long time until the people of Ukraine return to normality," she explains.

For Ksenia Prozhogina, VP of people at 3DLOOK, a virtual fashion try-on business, which has 80 per cent of its staff in Ukraine, whatever path HR

takes, all efforts now need to underpin safety and business continuity. To do this, 3DLOOK is trying to show staff that jobs are secure by continuing to talk regularly. "We have daily and weekly meetings and we speak about the future and show what we have done and how many contracts sales are delivering," she explains. "We are trying to show our people that we will survive."

It's an approach grounded by compassion. Though Prozhogina, who showed her willingness to support staff by continuously working as she was driven to Poland away from Ukraine, believes HR needs to be resilient, now more than ever, so they can think clearly about how best to protect their employees. "Before, I was responsible for their jobs and development; now I'm responsible for their physical lives," Prozhogina adds.

Peter Cheese, CEO of the CIPD, believes that this care should extend to all parties a business engages with, not just full-time employees: "Given the scale of the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, [HR] should reach out to agency workers and ask what help would be most beneficial," he adds, noting also a wider responsibility to contractors and supply chains.

For some, the support they now deliver is firmly in the realm of what they may have thought their day jobs would entail. It might be about engaging on a personal level with staff: for Zomko, it was offering employees and their families a seat in the car driving his wife and child to safety on the Hungarian border in the early moments

**"Our team is used to being flexible. These skills have proven crucial during the war"**

**WePlay CEO Oleh Humeniuk believes continuing to pay staff and making efforts to keep the business open gives people a welcome slice of normality**

## Providing support for employees in Russia

More than 500,000 employees in Russia have been hit by Western sanctions, affecting pay and job security: the result of more than 500 companies taking measures ranging from suspending new business to exiting Russia completely. These companies include Adidas, Airbnb and JP Morgan.

To help any Russian-based employees with their pay, organisations can explore using international payroll providers or third-party agencies. With the rouble under pressure, some are thinking about using foreign currency or even riskier

cyber currency alternatives. Separately, if a company decides to pull out of Russia completely, they need to understand Russian rules around collective dismissal, severance pay, and insolvency.

Regarding relocation, the situation is very fluid. With travel restrictions in place, getting employees out of the country might require using circuitous routes and is increasingly expensive. There are also rumours that Russia might soon impose legislation making it illegal to relocate Russian citizens with specific skills abroad.

A further complication in trying to get Russian employees out of the country because of the pandemic. Many countries don't recognise Sputnik, Russia's main vaccination. Additionally, many countries require a visa for Russian citizens unless they are a country in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

More broadly, companies must consider providing wellbeing support and ensuring that Russians aren't discriminated against because of their nationality inside or outside of the country's borders.





of the war. For his HR lead, it involved doing a headcount at the initial whole company meeting so they could follow up with staff who didn't attend to check on their safety. In later days, tasks would involve ensuring that two of Impressit's conscripted employees had bulletproof vests, tactical equipment and helmets.

Having to supply employees with military hardware is a sobering reminder that HR cannot shy away from engaging with the brutal reality of war. This means worst-case scenario planning has to be on the cards. It's something Zomko has had to engage with as one of his team is now active in a fighting area. "We are quite concerned about him, so we offered additional funds to his family for them to be comfortable," he adds, noting they regularly update staff on his wellbeing.

As part of this willingness to give updates, Impressit's communication channels were also re-jigged. Some Slack channels moved to read-only so important messages wouldn't be missed; this is especially important as the war gets more complex. For firms larger than Impressit, people leaders are using automated chatbots which ask teammates if they're okay, where they're located, and if they're able to work; automating otherwise time-intensive tasks so HR resource can be used elsewhere.

The role of the line manager should also not be overlooked. As with the pandemic, line managers are often seen as the front line of good crisis management, being the visible support point. However, Emma Parry, professor of human resource management at

Cranfield School of Management, says they can only be successful if given the right tools. "Too often we expect line managers to undertake activities that they are not prepared for, so providing guidance here is crucial," she says.

In fact, by ensuring line managers have the skills to manage such a crisis, HR is partly ticking the box for what

**"Keeping a company running during the war is the responsible thing to do"**

Rachel Suff, senior employee relations advisor at the CIPD, believes will be key for overcoming this crisis. That is, being proactive and ensuring both structures and people are as prepared as possible. "Organisations need to be proactive in offering

help rather than waiting for people to ask for it," she says, adding: "During times like these, an organisation's values and culture are tested. If managers and senior leaders role model empathy and understanding, then the wider organisation is likely to as well."

And though it is the impact of the pandemic that might have made some organisations and individuals less able to absorb this disruption, it is Rothermel's view that strategies from this time can act as a good model for HR teams having to navigate the Ukrainian war. She says: "With the pandemic sharpening organisational ability regarding crisis communications, something useful once more during this conflict, the same thinking could be extended for future conflicts."

Cheese also believes this. With CIPD research showing that organisations with a strong values and culture are better able to navigate crises, there is a clear playbook for how HR might navigate future macro-disruption. "We have much we can all learn from this crisis and embed in positive ways for the future, such as more flexible and hybrid ways of working and the critical focus on wellbeing," he says.

This will be critically needed now, too, as the challenges from this war are already huge and in acute need of HR care. As one Ukrainian worker told *People Management*: "It will never be okay. I am killed in my heart." **PM**

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*A culture where learning is embedded right across the organisation sounds like every L&D professional's dream – and it's easier to achieve than you think*

**WORDS** VERITY GOUGH





# Learning as good



Inspirational teaching, like that of Robin Williams' character in *Dead Poets Society*, can encourage us all to seize the day – which is why creating a learning culture at work is vital

**T**he topic of learning culture has been trending in recent years, particularly in light of the pandemic. While the ongoing skills gap and the ever-present threat of the 'Great Resignation' continue to plague organisations, it has become critical for L&D to provide impactful workplace learning that is more than implementing tick-box training courses or accruing CPD points. A learning culture is no longer a nice-to-have, it is a need-to-have.

#### Getting down to brass tacks

By its very nature, a learning culture is a tricky concept to pin down, and a quick Google search throws up myriad confusing definitions. But Michelle Parry-Slater, founder of Kairos Modern Learning and author of *The Learning and Development Handbook*, says the key to creating a learning culture is to first examine the values that lie at the

# CIPD

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# Learning culture

heart of the organisation. “Culture is a reflection of the people who work in a company, thus a learning culture is one manifestation reflecting a wider company culture’s ‘ingrained innate knowing set of norms,’” she explains. “If a company is not interested in people development, L&D is pushing on a closed door and will need to address more systemic shifts first, before a true learning culture will become an ‘ingrained norm.’”

For Dr Nigel Paine, an organisational development specialist and co-presenter of internet TV channel Learning Now TV, a learning culture is where information, ideas and challenges are openly shared and worked on collectively: “The knowledge resides in the spaces between people rather than locked in an individual’s head. That rapid sharing of insight and challenge allows organisations to react fast to changes and helps build resilience.”

Unpicking the concept further, Valerie Anderson, professor of human resource development and education at the University of Portsmouth, believes that a learning culture is what goes on at the implicit level in the organisation: “You don’t have to look much further than the business or boardroom culture to understand what unspoken assumptions about learning will prevail,” she says. “The reality is, the most impactful learning in the workplace occurs during the working

day, as problems arise and are tackled. It’s when people get the chance to reflect on their experiences, especially when things do not go as expected, and work out how to do things better in the future.”

When it comes to the cornerstones of a learning culture, what needs to be in evidence in order to help it flourish? For Paine, the essential components are trust, empowerment, engagement, a respect for diverse views or contrary opinions, and free debate. “The leadership in the organisation has to embody those aspirations and demonstrate them every day. It is pointless trying to increase the quantum of learning if the environment in the organisation is toxic,” he says.

## Embedding a culture

Creating a learning culture can be complex, particularly when it means changing outdated views on what L&D is and how it fits into an organisation’s culture. A recent CIPD survey on professional L&D found the barriers to a successful learning culture include: leaders with traditional expectations of L&D; seeing learning as a cost centre not an investment; learning initiatives not being regarded as a priority; and social learning not being supported. It seems L&D has the odds stacked against it.

**“Line managers can use a coaching approach to facilitate high performance”**

Karen Meager and John McLachlan, organisational psychologists, founders of Monkey Puzzle Training and Consultancy and co-authors of *Time Mastery* and *Real Leaders for the Real World* argue that dispelling the myths around learning culture is about cultivating learning ambassadors at the top of the organisation: “When a leader is seen to invest in their own learning and development it sends a strong signal that it’s worth doing, which inspires and motivates others to follow. A poor learning culture often comes from leaders that may well arrange and promote training, but then bail out themselves, giving the impression that learning is optional.”

Adnan Bajwa, head of learning at South Bank University Group, adds that line managers need to be part of the equation too: “Yes, leaders need to role model the organisation’s commitment, but line managers can use a coaching approach to facilitate high performance through learning and doing too,” he says.

This commitment from the leadership team to invest in future development of talent and not get distracted by short-term metrics is key, notes Meager: “Learning takes time. From the leadership will come a growth mindset, which recognises that people can’t learn without taking risks. Mistakes are an important part of learning and failure must be seen as positive, so leaders need to be supportive and indeed own their failures as a learning experience.”

## The Covid-19 effect

The last two years have taught us the importance of agility, particularly considering learning was one of the hardest hit areas in organisations. Overnight, demand for remote solutions – and the training to use them – put L&D in the spotlight, but responsive teams quickly implemented systems to enable company-wide learning to continue. Now there is a little more breathing space, what ways of working are organisations channelling into their learning cultures? ▶

MORSAIMAGES/GETTY IMAGES



**The pandemic saw demand for remote company-wide learning skyrocket overnight**

# Learning culture

“Covid-19 has created ongoing ramifications as to how organisations are set up. However, it has demonstrated the importance of identifying skills gaps, such as the ability to change, readiness and agility, and the need to have the right knowledge management systems in place,” says Melanie Green, research advisor at the CIPD. That said, Anderson points out that online learning isn’t for everyone, and the digital divide means too much emphasis on digital will see some of the workforce left out. “The pandemic has taught us that more learning can be achieved online than we ever thought possible. However, it does not replace informal, on-the-job experience as a basis for learning at work,” she says. A good learning culture makes space for diverse learning approaches, tailoring them to the needs of the individual, the team and wider organisation, notes Green. “It is how learning is delivered rather than the medium used to deliver it that is important,” she adds.

## Optimum learning culture

Acknowledging that continuous learning is a necessary element in organisational success, how can HR and L&D

professionals implement what is needed? Parry-Slater advises examining the organisation from every angle. “Consider what motivates people, what are the expectations of learning and working, and build up,” she says. “Start small. Try some new ideas. Evaluate those trials. Learn from them and go again. Revolution in learning culture happens when something systemic needs to shift at a culture level.”

**“It is how learning is delivered, rather than the medium used to deliver it”**

For Bajwa, the technology to manage learning systems is also an enabler for a burgeoning learning culture, and having an intuitive learning management system (LMS) aligned to performance management processes helps keep the learning organised and accessible. “We also encourage staff to share learning through presentations, masterclasses or digital uploads, and run events such as staff awards that showcase employees that have stretched their comfort zones to produce outstanding benefits for both themselves and customers.”

Paine adds that a focus on business metrics, business improvement and banishing statistics about how much and for how long people learn is important

to allow a learning culture to take root. “We need to change the role of L&D so it is about empowering and facilitating, not running course catalogues,” he says. “Do the field work. Find out what is holding people back; do not take a manager’s word for what the problem is. If you present an accurate picture of what learning can do to improve productivity, innovation and growth, the C-suite will listen.”

A one-size-fits-all approach is inappropriate, says Anderson. “Learning in small businesses will be operationalised differently than in larger settings. But learning culture should reflect a straightforward approach that makes sense to everyone.” It should also be supported by the HR function: “Recruiters need to help L&D by assessing skills gaps and hiring people with a learning mindset, which will help to embed a rich learning culture,” adds McLachlan.

Learning culture is essentially a mirror of the organisational culture, and is not something that can be implemented overnight. “It’s not only L&D’s remit but the whole company’s,” says Parry-Slater. “Work together on getting the setup right so the learning itself can flourish and a learning culture emerge,” she concludes. **PM**

★ Read the CIPD’s **Creating learning cultures: assessing the evidence** research at [bit.ly/CIPDLearningCultures](http://bit.ly/CIPDLearningCultures)

## Responding to pandemic panic with ‘just-in-time’ agility

Wendy James, leadership, learning, talent and diversity director at BT, explains her response to Covid-19

At BT, we use a variety of online platforms including Pluralsight Skills to provide on-demand, flexible training programmes to employees, with short, effective courses that can be completed in just 10 minutes. We allocate specialist learning platforms to people according to business priorities, and individuals decide what learning is relevant and at what level. All employees at BT have access to learning on whatever device they choose, at whatever time they choose and in multiple languages, with accessibility options. This provides employees with the autonomy to take control of their own learning and career pathways.

During the pandemic, we had to expedite our modernisation strategy and enhance our IT practices at a rapid pace. This meant the move to more online digital platform learning was sped up. Our team in India, for example, managed to pivot from mainly in-person learning to online within four weeks. Learning across hybrid working environments meant we had to generate a culture of continuous learning, which could be integrated into work and life.

To deliver this type of tailored, flexible learning, we adopted more just-in-time learning through Pluralsight, which provides relevant

upskilling that can be delivered immediately and put into practice. With technology advancing so rapidly and the skills needed to make innovation a success constantly changing, a just-in-time model is crucial for employees to learn effectively, while the business can respond to its adjusting direction of travel.

The pandemic helped many of us to accelerate our use of online learning and we will continue to look for ways to develop an effective online experience. The need for pace, scale, accessibility and the breadth and depth of the content needing to be covered means online is here to stay. We need to carefully evaluate the different resources, methodologies and technology we have available in the learning profession to ensure we deliver the right product to the right people at the right time.



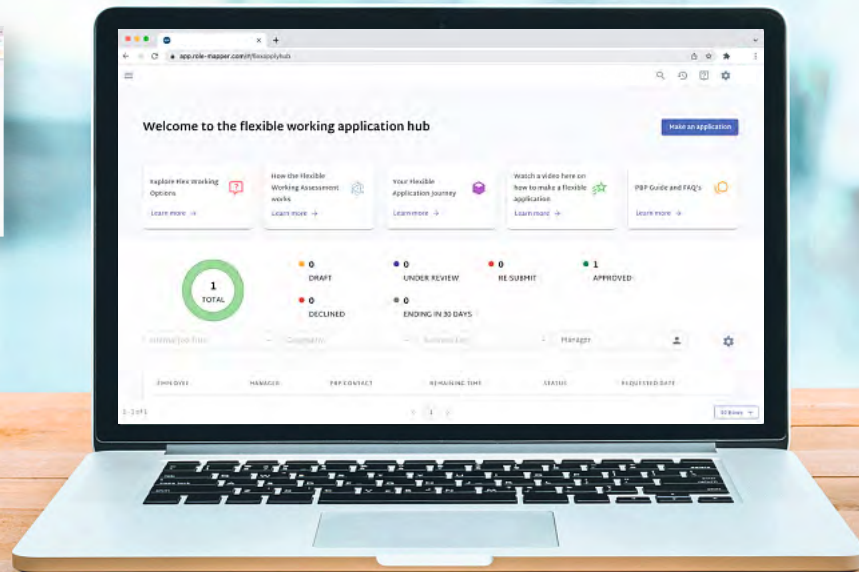
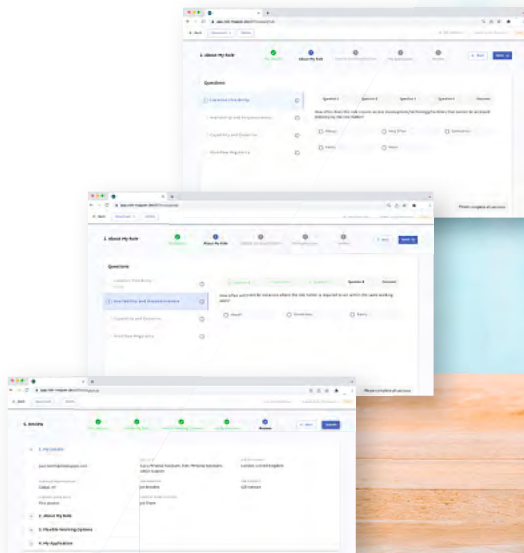
Wendy James says BT’s staff can access learning whenever they like, via any device



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# “In HR, we have a habit

*Cranfield HRM  
professor Emma Parry on  
separating fads from real  
trends in the future of work*

INTERVIEW FRANCIS CHURCHILL PORTRAIT JULIAN DODD



**T**he last two years were a massive upheaval for almost all organisations. But when it comes to the fundamentals of people management, Emma Parry, who heads up the Changing World of Work group at Cranfield School of Management, argues not as much has changed as you'd think.

The author of numerous publications on the subject, Parry has worked with organisations including the Home Office and the Department for International Development, as well as private sector firms. She is a firm believer in taking an evidence-based approach to HR policies and says context is king when understanding the needs of a workforce.

At a time when many organisations are still in a state of flux, *People Management* spoke to

the things that help keep people in an organisation. It's about having a good relationship with your line manager; equity and reward; being recognised for what you're doing; development and interest in the job; and meaningful work.

**Did we see a shift in the way people work even before the pandemic?**

We are seeing different emphasis on different things. Flexibility is the big one, not just in relation to ways of working, but in relation to things like careers, job roles and benefits. We're seeing people wanting personalisation of their employee experience and careers. People nowadays are much more willing to stand up for what they want, whether that's 'I'm worth more money so I'm going to move'; 'I'm not interested in this in career

about the way their industry is becoming more digital, and they're struggling because your typical civil engineer doesn't necessarily have digital skills. That's happening across sectors. We're struggling to forecast the skills businesses are going to need 10 years down the road.

Lower-paid roles like carers are some of the most important yet hardest to fill – how do we attract people into them?

It's about thinking how we can improve the employee value proposition so people get satisfaction from those jobs based on their meaning. You're reliant on people who have a calling to do that sort of work, and at the same time the conditions are often quite difficult.

They're not well paid, and perhaps the benefits aren't as good either.

# of following fashions”

Parry about what the future might hold for flexible working, the skills shortage, and much more.

**How do you understand the changing future of work?**

I'm a big believer in a contextual approach to HR: this idea that we don't have a 'one size fits all' approach, and what works in relation to people management is dependent on the organisation, sector, country, workforce, people, etc. That's led me to undertake a lot of work about how the context is changing, hence the future of work.

In HR we have a habit of following fads and fashions. We get carried away with big ideas that might not necessarily be based on evidence. Generations are a classic example: we've seen consultancies and whole industries crop up around designing policies and practices to attract Millennials or Generation Z and actually, if you look at it, the evidence is weak.

What people want from an employee hasn't really changed, and neither have

anymore; 'I've now got a family, so I want more flexibility'; or standing up against climate change.

**What does that mean for how businesses think about skills?**

It's about lifelong learning: how can we have this cycle of upskilling and reskilling people all the time so that they can adapt as their jobs adapt? That's what we're failing to do. Now, when someone comes into a job, they're trained and then they work their way up some sort of hierarchy. In the future that's not going to work, because we're going to see skills become obsolete; because we know organisations need to be more agile; and because we know that technological advancement means skills need to change.

Some of it's about agility, but some of it's about recognising skills. We began to see that during the pandemic – think about the shift we had, when suddenly delivery drivers and care workers had the skills that were most important. In business we're also quite reactive: I was talking to a construction company

**Are the changes businesses made during the pandemic here to stay?**

I'm talking to a lot of organisations at the moment where line managers are saying they want people back in the office. The proof of the pudding will be whether those organisations let that carry on, or whether they take steps to challenge their line managers' assumptions.

Of course, line managers are used to managing in a particular way. I'm used to managing in a way where I can see people in the office: they're visible, I know if they're working or not, and I can talk to them when I want to. It's easier when everyone's in one place. But we need to be helping team leaders performance manage people, communicate and collaborate and develop a team when not everyone is there and visible. You can have the best policies and practices in the world, but if the culture and line managers aren't working in a way that's inclusive and the culture isn't inclusive, those policies and practices are useless.

\* Listen to Parry discussing the future of work on the brand new **What If** podcast from the CIPD's *Work* magazine, available via all good podcast providers

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*Mike Cooke, Herd Group Head of Fleet*

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*Nigel Schroder, Herd Group CEO*

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# Career path

## Helping you get further

Research:  
scandals don't  
always affect  
a company's  
standing or  
reputation

p57

### Masterclass

## How to use EAP data intelligently



**Eugene Farrell,**  
chair of the  
Employee  
Assistance  
Professionals  
Association (EAPA)

Wellbeing might have rocketed to the top of HR priority lists, but what evidence is there that all the HR energy and investment has led to a healthier or more engaged workforce? If anything, problems with ill-health – particularly stress and mental wellbeing – have become part of the 'new normal'.

Employers have to bear much of the burden of the costs of ill-health. (The government's *Thriving at Work* report put the cost of poor mental health to employers between £33bn and £42bn. And that was pre-pandemic). In turn, HR needs evidence for strategy making and building a case for wellbeing that stands up to discussions with the board.

Employee assistance programmes (EAPs) are the most commonly used workforce health intervention in the UK, with around half of the workforce having access to one. Anecdotally, investment in EAPs translates into positive returns in terms of direct cost savings from reduced claims and indirectly through lower sickness



**EAPs should be more than just a helpline: used effectively they can lead to cost savings as well as improved staff wellbeing**

absence. But until recently, few employers were able to collect evaluation data beyond take-up and satisfaction surveys.

An EAP return on investment (ROI) calculator, such as the one developed by the Institute for Employment Studies, means HR can get a snapshot of its ROI. It can also look at the potential impact of different models of services, changing the level of investment or pushing promotional activity. The data is then just the start. The results are an opportunity to start conversations on how an EAP can be more about prevention and creating a healthy, resilient culture.

Data released in February 2022 reveals that for every £1 spent on an EAP in the UK from October 2020 to October 2021, employers have seen an average ROI of £8, compared to a previous average of £7.27. Usage levels rose to 11.4 per cent, up from 10.4 per cent, and as a result, ROI also went up.

The evidence makes a clear point: more proactive interest from HR in managing its EAP offering and encouraging awareness among staff leads directly to higher

### “Proactive interest from HR leads to higher ROI”

ROI. In practice, that means making the role of an EAP for supporting health and wellbeing loud and clear in both digital content and physically around the workplace. Make use of every format possible: posters, flyers, emails, infographics and video clips. A proven approach is to focus on individual aspects of the EAP, and running campaigns around topical issues such as sleep, finances, family relationships and gender health.

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## Who I am

Iain Alembick

HR manager at LW Theatres

**When I got the job at LW Theatres, people thought I was crazy** leaving a permanent job for a fixed-term contract. But I've always wanted to work within the theatre industry. It was a tough decision for me; I slept on it for a week and knew if I didn't take it I'd constantly be questioning 'what if?', and I didn't want that to happen. I joined in January at the dawn of Omicron, and luckily we have a great management team in all of the venues.

**My interest in people came from watching *Big Brother*.** I loved the fact that you can put a variety of people from different backgrounds into an environment, give them tasks and see how they work together – there'll be conflict, but then it's about how that conflict gets resolved. When I was looking at careers, this combined with my A-levels in psychology and sociology, which all seemed to link together in HR.

**HR in the theatre world is important** because without our people, it would be incredibly difficult to put on our shows. We could have the most amazing productions, but if we don't have the staff that are giving amazing customer care, it's going to affect customers' experiences. But we also have on average 1,500 people attending a show and every night they have their own lives that are going on, so you want to be able to support not only your staff, but also the people that are buying your product.

**In 2019, I set myself the goal to see 100 shows that year. I ended up seeing 127.** I wanted to absorb myself in a passion, not because I want to be on the stage, but because I love the environment. I started pretty slowly with a couple a month, but while on a long-haul flight, made a list of all the shows I wanted to see. I started with two a week on average, but then did 32 days in a row.

**Everyone has been touched** by the pandemic in different ways so there's so much to learn about how we can move forward. I would hate us to just forget about the last few years from an HR perspective. Mental health, for example, has been a key focus, especially in the roles I've been doing, either training people or doing seminars and workshops. If that just stopped, which I'm seeing happening, it would be a shame.

**Theatre techniques are a medium of communication.** What I love about the theatre is you can choose a challenging topic and capture people's imagination for an hour or two, dealing with ideas you would not necessarily talk to friends or family about. Five years ago, I became a qualified coach and realised I used theatre at work. Training new people, I'd do it via a role play scenario and that interaction helps people learn.

## CV

Iain Alembick, Chartered MCIPD, started as HR manager at LW Theatres in January 2022, having previously worked in HR roles at The Gym Group, epay and Boots. He holds a degree with honours in Human Resource Management from Kingston University, and is also a certified executive coach from the Academy of Executive Coaching.



“Gratton explains how to ensure fairness when modelling and testing new practices”

## Reviews

# Redesigning Work

Lynda Gratton, Penguin Business, £10.69/£9.99 e-book

When *People Management* interviewed Lynda Gratton, global thought leader and professor of management practice at London Business School, at the tail end of 2021 ahead of her keynote appearance at the CIPD's Annual Conference, she was in the throes of editing her then-upcoming book, and described how she hoped that the myriad changes seen in the world of work during and immediately following the Covid-19 pandemic wouldn't be just another “fad”.

Fast forward six or so

months, and said book, *Redesigning Work*, is now out in the world and issuing another clarion call for businesses to move from rhetoric to action and grasp this “extraordinary opportunity” to capitalise on the upheaval brought about by Covid and give employees the working lives they really want.

Drawing on Gratton's research and teaching in this area, as well as insights



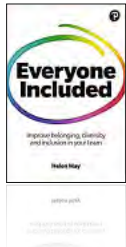
gleaned from the clients she consults through her firm HSM Advisory, *Redesigning Work* sets out a simple four-stage process for businesses to follow, encompassing understanding what matters to them;

reimagining the future; modelling and testing new ideas; and acting on the new model and creating new ways of working.

Particularly pertinent is Gratton's explanation of how to ensure fairness

when modelling and testing new practices; those such as younger workers, employees with caring responsibilities and who are unable to work from home are just three examples of groups who may stand to lose out – or at least not benefit as significantly – from any redesign projects.

For any HR leader or business owner looking to define and embed post-Covid working practices in the longer term but unsure exactly where or how to begin, *Redesigning Work* represents an excellent starting point.



{Book}

## Everyone Included

Helen May, Pearson Business, £11.79/£8.19 e-book

Having worked in leadership, talent and culture for a quarter of a century and been diagnosed with ADHD as an adult, May is no stranger to the need for businesses to be inclusive. In *Everyone Included*, she puts forward the idea that a sense of belonging among employees is key to successful inclusion and diversity initiatives, explaining her five principles as well as how to create this feeling among staff and embed belonging into the organisation's culture in the long term.



{Podcast}

## L&D Disrupt

Nelson Sivalingam, via all good podcast providers

Launched in 2021, *L&D Disrupt* promises to delve deep into the ever-changing world of learning and development as organisations and professionals navigate the new working landscape. Hosted by Sivalingam, the co-founder of HowNow, and with new episodes dropping every Tuesday, listeners can expect wide-ranging and thoughtful discussions with learning experts, including about the relationship between HR and L&D; the state of L&D in 2022; and using technology to enrich learning.

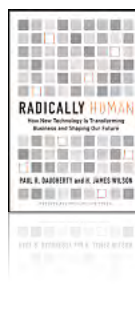


{Book}

## The Future of Recruitment

Franziska Leutner, Reece Akhtar and Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic, Emerald Publishing, £17.64/£17.76 e-book

Recruitment has already changed beyond recognition thanks to the pandemic, but it's due to keep up that momentum as the likes of artificial intelligence and gamification become more commonplace. Leutner *et al* have created a book that explores where the world of hiring is likely to head in an incredibly thorough and detail-rich way, but that also manages to avoid being dauntingly complicated or technical.



{Book}

## Radically Human

Paul R Daugherty and H James Wilson, Harvard Business Review Press, £23.01/£12.34 e-book

Technology and humans are traditionally two very disparate entities, yet, as Daugherty and Wilson explain in the very first chapter of *Radically Human*, tech is quickly becoming more intelligent and less artificial. Explaining how a range of organisations across different sectors are redefining their approach using the IDEAS (intelligence, data, experience, architecture and strategy) framework, the book is a fascinating insight into the future of business technology.

## What's new

In **Strategic Redundancy Implementation**, Liverpool John Moores University senior HRM lecturer Dr Madeleine Stevens offers a rare one-stop shop for navigating the entire redundancy process using her three-step strategy, Re-focus, Re-organise and Re-build.

Meanwhile, in **Anti-Racist Leadership**, former CEO, chair and president of smoothie chain Jamba Juice James D White draws on his own experiences of a 30-year career as a Black man in corporate America to offer a comprehensive understanding of how firms can integrate their DEI agendas.



## Your problems



### Guest Fixer Idris Arshad tackles your queries

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

His replies are written in a personal capacity and do not reflect the views of *People Management* or the CIPD, nor are they a substitute for professional legal advice. Not all queries submitted can be answered, and personal replies are not possible. To pose an anonymous query, visit [bit.ly/pmfixer](https://bit.ly/pmfixer)

# Male bosses don't understand need for menopause support

**A number of our female workforce are of menopausal age and I'm acutely aware it's something we should be offering more support on, yet my company is dominated by men who either don't understand – or don't want to understand – the issues this section of our employee base is facing or is likely to be facing soon. They think that by providing a clean toilet area, we're meeting expectations. How can we show that this is not enough and make sure affected employees are adequately supported?**

This is a topic that's gaining momentum in awareness and understanding but, as a whole, we all need to do more, and quickly. Think about what matters to those in power and help them realise the business case for offering support to anyone

going through menopause or who is about to. Use research and data to show the impact menopause can have on people and the effect this has on the organisation in terms of cost and performance and, most importantly, mention it is the human thing to do.

**“Use workforce data and other sources of information that show the impact it is having”**

You could use workforce data related to menopause such as sickness absence statistics, staff survey data and other sources of internal information that show the impact it is having.

Once you have the senior management on board with the importance, develop a plan of action. It would be sensible to start from the beginning and get the whole organisation educated about what menopause is and,

specifically for managers, what their role is when supporting someone going through it. To help, you could think about implementing a policy or amending an existing policy to present how your organisation will support those going through

menopause. The CIPD has guidance on this.

While this is an important topic, you may want to think about using it as a platform to talk about similar matters. More broadly, you could develop a managers' toolkit to cover how they should be supporting employees through a range of other sensitive situations, such as a mental health crisis, the loss of a baby and financial difficulties.

\* [bit.ly/CIPDMenopause2022](https://bit.ly/CIPDMenopause2022)

## Was new manager promoted prematurely?

**I was recently recruited as an HR manager in a small family-owned business. There are only seven employees, but the managing director seems to have taken a shine to one account manager and has promoted her within nine months of her starting her role. She is now sales and operations manager and I am expected to report to her. She has no formal qualifications and in my opinion has bitten off more than she can chew. How**

**do I challenge her promotion without sounding bitter?**

Try to see this situation from the view of others involved and also test your own judgement. Let's begin with the promotion: ask yourself why you want to challenge it and what you are trying to solve. If the reason is linked to fairness and equity and developing an organisational approach to promotions and reward, it seems a reasonable conversation to have. The aspect

of sounding bitter is ultimately down to your CEO's perception. Your reasons for challenging it should be objective, not personal. Given the decision has already been made, it may be better to say to the CEO that you are happy to give advice in the future about any promotions they are thinking about, as this fits with HR's remit.

Use reporting to this person as an opportunity. There are pros and cons to reporting to a manager who is not an HR specialist. Focus on the pros of being able to indirectly teach her about good practice, and you'll be able to shape how HR looks

in the company; you wouldn't get this opportunity if you were reporting to another HR person. To be a manager, you don't have to be a specialist in the field; good managers can be comfortable in managing others and relying on their expertise while they focus on the non-technical side. Give her a chance and work with her to show your ability, as I'm sure she'll in turn be wondering how to manage an HR person. It's important to judge things over time with working relationships – there will be bumps, but you could be pleasantly surprised.

## Moves

Email us  
your moves  
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haymarket.com

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



DocuSign has appointed **Ilesha Berry (1)** as its first chief diversity and engagement officer. Berry has held similar roles in tech and banking and brings more than 20 years of experience in the field.

**Mette Hindborg Gade** has joined business tech solutions company Pleo as chief people officer. Hindborg Gade has an engineering background and was previously a partner at McKinsey & Company.

Recruitment firm Head Resourcing, headquartered in Edinburgh, has announced the internal promotion of **Lyle Ritchie (2)** to head of talent solutions. Ritchie joined the company in 2013 and has progressed to his new role.

Big Table Group has appointed **Debbie Moore** as its new HR director. She brings more than 25 years' experience in retail and hospitality.

UK-based pensions and savings provider Cushon has appointed **Jo Bean** as its new

chief people officer. Bean brings years of experience in the tech sector to the role.

Workplace software provider essensys has announced the appointment of **Kally Kang-Kersey (3)** to the newly created role of chief people officer.

**Hannah Belton, Chartered MCIPD**, who is director and head of employment law at Morgan LaRoche, has been appointed as a fee paid employment tribunal judge sitting in the South West region.

IG Group has announced the appointment of **Barbara Duffy**, who joins from Centrica, as its chief people officer.

LNER has appointed **Claire Ansley** to the new role of people and customer experience director. Ansley, who has been customer experience director for four years, will now also oversee the people team.

**Paul Boustead, Chartered CCIPD (4)** has joined the

University of Leeds as chief people and culture officer. Boustead moves from Lancaster University, where he held the role of director of people and organisational excellence.

**Laura Chapman, Chartered MCIPD (5)** has left her role as head of HR business partnering at CarShop and joined tech start-up Carzam, in the newly created role of chief people officer.

Glasgow-based Startline Motor Finance has appointed **Amanda Miller** as head of HR. For the last two years she has managed her own human resources consultancy.

Equiti Group has announced the appointment of **Marta Ilbak** as global head of human resources. Ilbak has worked in a range of HR roles including as head of people at Deliveroo.

**Satia Rai (6)** has been appointed to the role of welfare and EDI director at the International Professional Security Association (IPSA).



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

**I'm currently working as an office administrator for an energy company. I have some experience with onboarding, and have studied for my Level 3 CIPD qualification, and am currently studying for my Level 5. I want to get into HR fully, but I'm having trouble as I can't take a pay cut because of the recent increases in inflation. I'm trying to get into volunteering so I can gain experience this way and still keep my full salary. Is this a good way to go about trying to enter the profession, or would I be better off taking an entry-level role so I can get my foot in the HR door?**

When you're trying to break into HR, it can seem like you're stuck in



a catch-22 of needing experience for entry-level jobs, says Zoe Hawkins (pictured), an executive coach and director of In Good Company. However, you're doing some great things, including the volunteering and CIPD qualifications, which show tenacity, a willingness to learn and your character.

While in your current job, there are some things you can do internally. Approach your HR department and see if you can get involved in projects.

Typically, HR is always working on cross-functional things and can be lightly resourced, and may take internal volunteers to help out on things.

If those opportunities are not obvious internally, then look

externally for the positions that you want and make the most of the experience you have. It sounds like you're also experiencing fear; we're often more afraid of the 'no's we receive. You can learn from the recruitment process itself, such as learning multiple ways to present your skills in a compelling way or honing your interviewing experience.

This also brings in another tip: make sure you tailor your CV. It helps if you present information on previous experience in the best way for the roles you are applying for. 'Administrator', for example, might read better than 'Office Administrator' if you are going for an HR admin position – and then play up your experience in the first bullet point.

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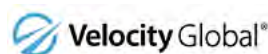
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## Research

# Company scandals don't always affect reputation

A study by Warwick Business School (WBS) has found that corporate scandals do not necessarily affect reputation.

The research, which was the first large-scale undertaking of its kind, looked at *Fortune* magazine's 2022 *World's Most Admired Companies* survey, which ranks the reputation of the top 50 global companies.

It then analysed media coverage of any corporate scandals affecting the listed companies, and compared this with where each company ranked on the list.

For each negative event, the study looked at whether it had led to legal action, affected a non-complicit stakeholder, (such as children, the disabled or those from a lower socio-economic background) or if it was otherwise undesirable.



Apple tops *Fortune's* most admired companies list for the 15th consecutive year despite ongoing criticism from rivals

It found that events on their own were not likely to lead to changes in reputation; however, if an event led to legal action, this was more likely to lead to reputational damage than if an event affected a non-complicit group.

The study also found that when a company had not been found culpable by a court, then stakeholders were likely to give them the benefit of the doubt. Companies that had previously invested in social responsibility efforts were more likely

to benefit from this effect than companies with a past negative reputation.

Irina Surdu-Nardella, associate professor of international business and strategy at WBS and one of the study's authors, said that stakeholders were likely to view the scandals "through the lens of their existing perceptions and often dismiss events that contradict their views".

The study "highlights how resilient a company's standing can be, and therefore, the value of investing in gaining a positive reputation in the first place", she added. "However, if it's a business people already dislike [being] embroiled in scandal, they see it, to a large extent, as merely confirming what they already thought."

\* [bit.ly/WBSReputationStudy](https://bit.ly/WBSReputationStudy)

## Good working relationships lead to creativity

Supportive friendships between coworkers are likely to lead to increased levels of creativity, a study by the University of Bath School of Management has found.

200 dual-income, heterosexual couples, of which 80 per cent had children, were asked to keep a weekly diary over five weeks and record their coworker work-family support.

It found that during weeks when a participant received informal support from coworkers, such as a colleague listening to

personal issues or providing cover for absence if a child is sick, they benefited from a positive home environment.

This led to an increase of creativity in work, demonstrating that coworker work-family support led to a "positive resource gain spiral".

Yasin Rofcanin, professor of management and one of the study's authors, said that employees who receive support may be more likely to "open up about stresses, seek to resolve issues, or make improvements to the juggle of work-life arrangements".

Employers can put policies and procedures in place to minimise work-family conflict, added Rofcanin.

\* [bit.ly/BathCoworkerStudy](https://bit.ly/BathCoworkerStudy)

## Sustainability investment benefits SMEs

Research by Belgium's Vlerick Business School has found that small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) benefit from investment in sustainable initiatives through their increase in creditworthiness.

The study analysed the environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance of 350 Belgian SMEs and measured this against their level of credit risk. It found that on average, an 11 per cent increase in ESG performance led to a decrease of credit risk by 3.5 per cent.

According to the study, good ESG performance may benefit firms by increasing cash flows: this can be done via an increase in a firm's client base, or an increase in shareholder utility, as some investors value ESG products and services as well as financial performance.

David Veredas, professor of financial markets at Vlerick and one of the study's authors, said that capital is the biggest obstacle for SMEs that intend to increase their sustainable endeavours.

"This has resulted in greenwashing, whereby companies share disinformation regarding their ESG practices," he said.

\* [bit.ly/VlerickSMEStudy](https://bit.ly/VlerickSMEStudy)

## CIPD Ireland HR Awards: winners



*CIPD Ireland recognises innovation and excellence at annual awards event*

On 25 March 2022, the people profession reunited for the glamorous and prestigious CIPD Ireland HR Awards at Mansion House, Dublin. The annual awards recognise and reward innovation and excellence in the fields of HR, L&D and people management.

Throughout the pandemic L&D functions have had to pivot on a sixpence, and again, in the last 12 months have had to adapt to newly adopted working practices. This year's Rising Star of the People Profession, Jason Martin from PwC, impressed the judges in realigning L&D initiatives with the people strategy and business priorities, in what proved to be a great example of pivoting to a hybrid learning environment, retraining tutors and creating new content.

Reflecting on the event, Mary Connaughton, CIPD director Ireland, said: "The CIPD Ireland HR Awards are the perfect opportunity to bring together our members and community, to support each other and recognise our achievements. "The awards process is about learning – our reflections along with insights from the winning organisations. Congratulations to all our winners, who made such a strong impact on their organisations."

The awards also welcomed the introduction of a new category in Sustainable Change Management, with judges looking for change stories with strategic solutions for a sustainable future. Congratulations to the inaugural category winners Boston Scientific and Xenergie.

\* [bit.ly/CIPDIreland2022](https://bit.ly/CIPDIreland2022)

### CIPD IRELAND HR AWARDS 2022: WINNERS

#### HR/L&D team of the year

Department of Foreign Affairs led by the HR Abroad Local Staff Team

#### Rising star of the people profession

Jason Martin, PwC

#### Embedding a culture of workplace wellbeing (large)

Department of Foreign Affairs

#### Embedding a culture of workplace wellbeing (small/medium)

The Office of Government Procurement

#### Employee empowerment and trust

Spark innovation Programme in collaboration with Health Innovation Hub Ireland

#### Flexible and hybrid working

Permanent TSB

#### Inclusion and diversity

FINEOS Corporation

#### Learning and development

Iarnród Éireann Irish Rail

#### Sustainable change management (new)

Boston Scientific and Xenergie

#### Talent management

Iarnród Éireann Irish Rail

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### Ukraine crisis: resources

The war in Ukraine is having a devastating impact on millions of people's lives with repercussions felt around the world. Whether their workers or their families are directly affected, employers will want to help their people as best they can during this troubling time.

\* [bit.ly/CIPDUkraineResources](https://bit.ly/CIPDUkraineResources)

### Tackling in-work poverty

Supporting your people to achieve a decent standard of living is an essential element of good work and responsible business. With one in eight workers trapped in poverty, and the current cost of living crisis gripping the UK, financial wellbeing is an issue too difficult for employers to ignore. Learn more about the role employers can play to loosen poverty's grip.

\* [bit.ly/CIPDTacklingPoverty](https://bit.ly/CIPDTacklingPoverty)

### Addressing workplace incivility

In any workplace, employees will have different experiences and perspectives. But during times of heightened tension, this can sometimes lead to misunderstandings and disputes. The CIPD's latest evidence review explores key drivers of bullying and incivility, offering key recommendations to help shut down unwelcome behaviour quickly.

\* [bit.ly/CIPDWorkplaceBullying](https://bit.ly/CIPDWorkplaceBullying)

### Long Covid support

An estimated 1.3 million people in the UK were experiencing long Covid as of January 2022. While we are still learning about this condition, supporting employees with long Covid to return to – and stay in – work is vital. Explore the CIPD's guides for people professionals, line managers and colleagues.

\* [bit.ly/CIPDLongCovid](https://bit.ly/CIPDLongCovid)

The CIPD has compiled materials for employers wishing to support workers through the crisis in Ukraine





*“The hub explores how supporting financial wellbeing and workplace progression is pivotal”*

# CIPD launches new UK Learning Shop

The CIPD has launched a new Learning Shop, which is designed to deliver world-class, cutting-edge learning to people professionals – anytime, anywhere, on any device.

It allows members and non-members to purchase courses from a suite of rich learning experiences, which supplement those already included in the CIPD membership. The resources will reflect the latest industry developments and include expert insights to help HR practitioners prepare for whatever challenges tomorrow may bring.

A ‘self-assessment lite’ tool helps users identify their own skills or knowledge gaps by assessing their capabilities against the Profession Map (which sets the international benchmark for the people profession). They then receive recommendations on which courses will be most relevant to them.

The Learning Shop can be accessed through the CIPD Learning Hub, which was launched in November 2021. It is designed to help people professionals take control of their personal learning journeys, keep track of their progress and reflect on what they’ve learned.

Courses from The Learning Shop are available via a subscription or as one-off purchases, and are discounted for CIPD members.

\* [shop.cipd.org](http://shop.cipd.org)

# Making work a route out of poverty

The current cost of living crisis in the UK has made financial wellbeing an issue that’s too hard for employers to ignore. Even before living costs began to soar, one in eight UK workers were already struggling to make ends meet.

To inspire employers to play their part in supporting better financial wellbeing and loosening poverty’s grip, the CIPD has launched a new in-work poverty hub, in collaboration with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Commenting on how employers can tackle in-work poverty, Louise Woodruff from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, said: “This isn’t just a question of paying people more, it’s also about policies and support that allow people to plan, to know what their income will be in advance, and to know how they would meet an unexpected cost.”

While the biggest difference an employer can make is to pay a fair and liveable wage, the hub – focused on raising awareness of in-work poverty – also explores how supporting financial wellbeing and workplace progression is pivotal in helping your people achieve a decent standard of living.

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

## Member benefit: CIPD membership renewals

With CIPD membership, you’ve got a career partner that will give you the resources to keep driving forward, make confident decisions and ensure your organisation can thrive. In the past year we have published more than 60 reports and guides to support you, from implementing hybrid working to supporting financial wellbeing. The launch of the CIPD Learning Hub offers a number of free learning opportunities to help members nurture their personal growth and develop as a professional.

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

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Doctor Adam Kay and colleague Shruti Acharya would have benefitted from a more "consistent, top-down" approach from management

ALBUM / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

## Could HR solve...?

# THIS IS GOING TO HURT

*Overwork and lack of support are just some of the problems faced in the series*

### The problem

Burned-out doctor Adam Kay is struggling to look after patients in an understaffed ward, and his superior gives him the impossible task of discharging more patients during a busy shift. Judgement clouded by stress and lack of sleep, he sends home a woman who turns out to have serious complications. He is also reported by his colleague, who says that his poor decisions are affecting staff. But could better communication and management have gone some way to helping Adam's decision-making?

### The solution

Clearly, the issues affecting NHS staff reach far beyond this example, but one of the most important things for a properly functioning department is for management to take a "consistent, top-down" approach to employee progression, says Resa Galgut, director of 88 Keys Consulting (pictured). This takes a while to embed, but a hands-on approach is "essential", she says.

In particular, Adam's superior needs to take ownership: "He seems to have an attitude that says: 'I did it



this way, and suffered, so it has to be inflicted on you,' she says. If he had intervened after Adam mistakenly sent the patient home,

instead of "brushing it under the carpet", some of the wider issues around stress, lack of sleep and poor job design may have surfaced earlier.

A performance review system would have gone some way to helping Adam, who seems to default to an "if I don't know the answer, I'll just make it up" response. If someone had outlined clearly what is expected of him, and signposted him to wellbeing resources, then the situations seen in the show may have been avoided.

It's clear a cultural change is needed in this workplace, says Galgut. "It could be as simple as HR having a coffee with everyone to find out what is going on and how it could be improved," she says.

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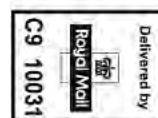
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