

Making People Count: a workforce bulletin

January 2023

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Learning and Development

The trouble with young people: Part 481

Source: Personnel Today

In a nutshell: In this article Tom Ravenscroft, CEO of Skills Builder Partnership discusses the problems of labour shortages and that fact that “I increasingly see disillusionment setting in among younger workers and jobseekers.” Young people are more qualified than ever before but they are entering the post-Pandemic labour market with minimal work experience and many now occupy lower skilled, lower-paid position without progression. Tom Ravenscroft argues that the problem is the lack of the essential skills of teamwork and problem-solving: speaking and listening; problem-solving and creativity; teamwork and leadership; aiming high and staying positive. Recent research has found that these skills are associated with a wage premium of £5,900 p.a. and increased life satisfaction. The [Skills Builder Universal Framework](#) breaks these skills down into eight parts with teachable, measurable steps for each. “For HR teams, embedding this Framework means more effective and transparent assessment, clearer job adverts, better feedback – and therefore a greatly increased chance of hiring the right person for the right role. Meanwhile, young applicants spend less time deciphering a job description to make high quality applications and prepare for interviews. Equally, employers need to include essential skills in their outreach and learning and development provision. This builds familiarity at all levels of seniority with essential skills and metrics for measuring them: they’re taught throughout education and work experience, assessed in recruitment, and developed further during staff training.”

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/bridging-the-gap-between-young-people-and-employers/>

People Management

Are you getting The Stones or static?

Source: The International Journal of Human Resource Management

In a nutshell: Those brought up listening digitally might be unaware of the struggles older people faced attempting to tune an unfamiliar radio so you could catch Test Match Special in your caravan. It’s possible for managers to tune themselves onto the same wavelength as their employees as well, in search, not of the commentary from Lord’s, but of a common goal for the organization. This is known as resonant leadership and in this study Meena Ramaswamy, from Pondicherry University* in India, led a team of researchers investigating its effect on organizational commitment. The researchers studied 415 nurses and found that the more psychological distress the nurses suffered the lower their organizational commitment. However, both resonant leadership and workplace spirituality decreased psychological distress and increased commitment.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2022.2143273>

*For trivia fans Pondicherry is the rainiest place in the world

Are we queueing up for quiet quitting?

Source: shrm.org

In a nutshell: In August 2022 the Society for Human Resource Management surveyed 1,200 HR professionals to find out more about it. They found that 51% thought that quiet quitting was something to worry about, with 36% saying it was actively occurring in their workplace. 60% of them pointed to post-Pandemic culture with “diminished people-management capabilities,” and an “inability to maintain culture in a virtual environment.” 72% said they had witnessed quiet quitting among younger workers, with the problem particularly acute among those employed by the hour. And 28% had witnessed quiet quitting from “front-line people managers.”

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/winter2022/pages/is-quiet-quitting-happening.aspx>

Quiet quitting part II: “I’ll be back ... but not before my contracted hours”

Source: Employee Benefits

In a nutshell: Quiet quitting appears to have originated in a TikTok video from career coach Brian Creely and suggests that “some people who are fed up and feeling burnt-out at work are simply “taking it easy at work rather than quitting their jobs,” or doing anything else to resolve it; although others have argued that simply doing what you’re asked to do, without volunteering for extra work, is how most workplaces have historically functioned. Some argue that the solution is to prevent workers becoming burned out in the first place by setting clear boundaries about working long hours and checking emails from home. However, many employers don’t even recognize a problem in the first place. In some ways quiet quitting echoes the work-to-rule tactics of 1970s unions but done on an individual, rather than a collective, basis. People are now seeing their jobs as just a sequence of tasks and have lost their sense of occupying a role within an organization, leading to a lack of engagement

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://www.employeebenefits.co.uk/can-a-robust-employee-experience-counteract-the-quiet-quitting-trend/>

Are the young falling out of love with work?

Source: HR Magazine

In a nutshell: “And if you must go to work tomorrow/Well if I were you, I wouldn’t bother/For there are brighter sides to life/And I should know/Because I’ve seen them/But not very often,” sang Morrissey. I was 13 at the time, innocent of many things, certainly work. But do today’s youngsters feel any more positive about their labours? Or are they, like Morrissey, “still ill”? Moneyzine.com have been asking people all about it, and found that workers aged 65 and over are nearly twice as likely to say that work is “an important part of their identity,” than those aged between 18 and 29. 54% of young women, and 49% of young men also feel that they have to adjust their appearance or presentation to fit in at work. And Generation Z workers are switching jobs at a rate 134% higher than they did in 2019, compared to a fall of 4% among Baby-Boomers. 45% of men aged 65+ say that work “is an important part of who they are,” compared to just 26% of men aged 18-29. For women the figures were 37% and 24% respectively. The researchers concluded that “half of American Gen Z workers who are old enough to work

witnessed someone in their household lose a job or take a pay cut due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Those slightly older will recall 2008's financial crisis very vividly. As a result, many young people likely feel sceptical that their own future will be stable enough to pin an identity on. A recent study found one third of UK workers between 16 and 25 believe their career prospects will never fully recover after COVID-19."

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://hrmagazine.com.hk/hr-features-archives/well-being/senior-talent-65-twice-as-likely-to-identify-with-job/>

Does the Incredible Hulk deliver the goods?

Source: Sustainability

In a nutshell: Green transformational leadership is a thing now, and not solely the preserve of the Incredible Hulk. It motivates employees to demonstrate green behaviours to achieve a greener organization. In this study Mou Lin from Universiti Sains Malaysia, led a team of researchers investigating the effects of green transformational leadership. They found that it was positively related to sustainable performance because it increased organizational citizenship behaviour towards the environment.

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/14/23/15568>

What gives people green creativity? Part 1

Source: Sustainability

In a nutshell: Turning the heating off, and staying in bed listening to Radio 3 in the morning, rather than driving the kids to school is an excellent way of reducing one's carbon emissions, albeit one not likely to be embraced in the workplace. Coming up with more palatable ideas for being green is called "green creativity," and in this study a team of researchers, led by Paulo Lopes Henriques, from the University of Lisbon, studied it in a sample of 146 workers. They found that leaders' green creativity was positively influenced by their subordinates' green self-efficacy and personal identification with their leader. Subordinates' green creativity was positively influenced by their own "green passion," and their leader's green creativity.

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1111/caim.12539>

What gives people green creativity? Part II

Source: Creativity and Innovation Management

In a nutshell: Also looking into creative ways to be green was a team of researchers, led by Adnan Ali, from Xi'an Jiaotong University in China. They found that entrepreneurial leadership had a positive effect on green innovation. Entrepreneurial leadership created an organizational learning culture which, in turn, led to more green innovation, a series of relationships which was moderated by environmental dynamism.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1111/caim.12538>

Creativity, power and risk-taking

Source: Personnel Psychology

In a nutshell: Van Gogh died an abject failure. He hardly sold any of his paintings, failed in his bid to found an artists' colony, and didn't manage to become a priest. Yet he remained remarkably creative. In this study Federico Magni, from ETH Zürich, led a team of researchers investigating the links between power and creativity in three separate studies. They found that a sense of power and creativity were connected positively because power made people more likely to take risks and negatively because power meant people found it harder to see others' perspectives. The positive connection between power and creativity was stronger when people were more open to experience.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12557>

Humble leadership and creativity

Source: Personnel Review

In a nutshell: In this study Zhang Zheng and Rahil Irfan Ahmed, from Shanxi University of Finance and Economics studied the effects of humble leadership on employees' creativity. They found that humble leadership was positively related to employees' creative performance and that one of the reasons it did this was by encouraging boundary spanning – looking outside the organization for solutions. This link between humble leadership, boundary spanning, and creativity was strongest in a more traditional environment.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-10-2021-0775>

How Islam makes work a better place

Source: Sustainability

In a nutshell: In this study Muhammad Ali Raza, from COMSATS University in Islamabad, led a team of researchers investigating the links between an Islamic work ethic and incivility at work. The researchers studied 258 people working in “the sustainable public-service sector,” and found that experiencing workplace incivility led to more “instigated workplace incivility.” They found that experiencing workplace incivility led to more stress which, in turn, led to more instigation of incivility. However, an Islamic work ethic meant that those experiencing workplace incivility were less likely to be uncivil to colleagues themselves.

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/14/23/16187>

Are you integrated in the spare bedroom?

Source: Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology

In a nutshell: In this study Dana Unger, from the Arctic University of Norway, led a team of researchers investigating the effects of work-home integration. The researchers studied 371 workers and found that work-home integration preference was positively related to subjective

career success via home-to-work transitions and work-goal attainment and negatively related to subjective career success via home-to-work transitions and exhaustion. “Perceived supervisor expectation constrained work–home integration preference's direct effect on home-to-work transitions and indirect effects on subjective career success. Exploratory analysis revealed that exhaustion negatively affected all career success dimensions, whereas work goal attainment was only related to some. Our results indicate that supervisor expectation can override the effect of employee's work–home integration preference on home-to-work transitions which have a double-edged sword effect on subjective career success.”

You can read the abstract of this article at
<https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12416>

Does performance-related pay deliver the goods?

Source: Employee Benefits

In a nutshell: In *All Quiet on the Orient Express* a motorcyclist knocks over a tin of paint and, thanks to an unfortunate concatenation of circumstances, finds himself in economic bondage to a farmer by the end of the book, condemned to work as a labourer until he's paid off his debts. Many of us fear the same thing might happen if performance-related pay was introduced in our workplace but does it really work? Insurance company Willis Towers Watson have been researching this issue, surveying more than 800 global organizations. They found that employers using performance-management programmes were 50% more likely to financially outperform their industry peers and 25% more likely to report higher employee productivity. 49% of employers said they had “ongoing and meaningful performance dialogue between managers and employees in a remote or hybrid working environment.” However, only a third of organizations said their staff felt their performance was evaluated fairly.

You can read the whole of this article at
<https://www.employeebenefits.co.uk/employers-using-pay-to-drive-performance-more-likely-to-outperform-peers/>

Democracy and citizenship at work

Source: Sustainability

In a nutshell: In this study Enver Haskasap, from the Near East University in Cyprus, led a team of researchers investigating the links between organizational democracy, organizational citizenship behaviour, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment in a sample of 144 bank workers. They found that organizational democracy had a significant positive effect on job satisfaction and organizational commitment, but no significant effect on organizational citizenship behaviour. However, the increased organizational commitment produced by organizational democracy did, indirectly, produce more organizational citizenship behaviour.

You can read the whole of this article at
<https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/15/1/452>

Regrets, I've had a few

Source: Personnel Psychology

In a nutshell: In this study Jia Hu, from Ohio State University, led a team of researchers investigating the relationship between leaders learning from their mistakes and “expressed

humility.” They found that leaders recalling past mistakes helped them to formulate plans for learning and encouraged them to express humility - a positive relationship that was strengthened when leaders had “promotion focus,” (i.e. being keen to make good things happen, rather than just to avoid bad things). As leaders expressed more humility their teams’ “improvement-oriented behaviour,” increased and so, as a result, did their teams’ performance.

You can read the abstract of this article at
<https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12570>

Recruitment and Retention

Who has the last laugh? Scientists that’s who

Source: Personnel Today

In a nutshell: Lying in bed contemplating whether to walk the hundred or so yards to the library it was easy to feel you’d made a better life choice than all the people doing science degrees scurrying hither and thither for lectures, practicals, and seminars. As it happens, it now appears that the scientists are having the last laugh. New data from the Office for National Statistics shows that wages are failing to keep pace with inflation, apart for people working in professional and scientific roles. This group of workers includes people working in legal services, management, engineering, and scientific research whose pay has “sat above inflation since November 2018 and has kept pace with price rises over the past year.” In September 2022 pay for this group of workers rose 10.1% year-on-year, compared to the then inflation-rate of 8.8%. Four of the five industries where wage growth stayed above inflation in early 2022 (professional and scientific, information and communication, retail and finance), also had vacancy rates in June 2022 that were 1.5 or more percentage points higher than a year before. The public sector saw the lowest rate of wage growth at 2.2%, compared to an average of 6.6% in the private sector.

You can read the whole of this article at
<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/inflation-and-wage-growth-2022-professional-science-roles/>

The 2.5 million too sick to work

Source: BBC

In a nutshell: Every so often one unlucky country (apart from Germany, natch) is awarded the title of “The Sick Man of Europe.” The phrase has more than a ring of literal truth about it too as there are now more than 2.5 million people out of work because of a long-term health problem. The number has jumped by half a million since the start of the Pandemic but was already rising beforehand and the UK is in its fourth year of sharply rising chronic illness. The highest rates are among older workers (50-64) but there have also been significant increases in other age groups. The Bank of England thinks NHS waiting lists might be playing a part in this. Some of the largest increases are in people reporting mobility issues with bad backs and legs and with heart and blood-pressure problems, whilst many young people are suffering from mental-health problems. However, the largest increases is in “other health problems,” which is likely to include the effects of long Covid. Transport, retail and hospitality workers are particularly vulnerable and workers in low-paid, manual jobs tend to have poorer health and life expectancy in the first place. The highest long-term sickness rates are in Northern Ireland, North-East England, and Wales; in London the number of long-term sick has actually *fallen* by 3% since the start of the Pandemic.

You can read the whole of this article at

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-63625989?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=KARANGA

Immigration hits new records

Source: Personnel Today

In a nutshell: Last year net immigration rose to 504,000 with 1.1 million people arriving in the country between June 2021 and June 2022, 704,000 of whom came from outside the EU. Work visas accounted for 21% of non-EU immigration over this period, with an estimated 151,000 people arriving for work, up from 92,000 the year before. The number of work visas rose by 23%; mostly driven by an increase in the number of skilled workers. 57% of the growth came from the health sector.

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/huge-rise-in-immigration-and-work-visas/>

... but still there's a shortage of workers

Source: Personnel Today

In a nutshell: The latest to call attention to the labour shortage are sister companies Indeed and Glassdoor who have jointly produced [Hiring and Workplace Trends Report 2023](#). This concludes that a large and widening post-Pandemic participation gap and rising economic-inactivity rates, combined with an ageing population will mean employers will still struggle to fill post next year. The report points to similar problems in Canada, the US, and France. Job adverts remain at 42% above their pre-Pandemic levels. The report also says that pay is the main priority for jobseekers, with flexible working being the other priority. The number of jobs offering hybrid and flexible working has risen by 274% since the start of the Pandemic; this has widened the available labour pool for employers, and allowed opportunity to become more geographically-dispersed.

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/hiring-problems-set-to-continue-finds-indeed-report/>

The big MAC adding sauce to the immigration debate

Source: Personnel Today

In a nutshell: The Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) proffer advice to the Government of the day on this thorniest of issues. In its 2022 annual report the Committee says that the Government should resist calls to provide low-wage visa routes, “as it is not confident the Government could prevent the exploitation of migrant workers whose right to work in the UK ties them to low-paid jobs.” The Committee also noted that there was no coherent strategy to ensure the economy has the skills it needs, and for employers to improve pay and conditions and automate where appropriate.” The latest labour-market figures from the Office for National Statistics show that the total number of job openings remained at historically high levels from April to October 2022. Other findings reported in the MAC annual report are:

- Net migration rose to 504,000 in the year to June 2022 – the highest figure since records began; this was mainly caused by:
 - Refugees from Hong Kong and the Ukraine

- A rebound in worker and student visas after the Pandemic
- People coming to work in the NHS
- European nationals made up just 7% of the total skilled-worker route applications
- The health-and-social-care sectors accounted for 45% of the skilled-worker applications. IT and the professional, scientific, and technical sectors each accounted for 10%
- In the year ending June 2022 the main applicants to the skilled-worker and health-and-care worker routes accounted for 100,000 of the 222,000 people granted a work visa

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/migration-advisory-committee-2022-new-uk-visa-routes/>

Psychological capital. Are you rolling in it, or running out of readies?

Source: Sustainability

In a nutshell: In this study a team of researchers, led by Mohammed Samroodh, from Aligarh Muslim University in India, examined the links between the job resources of autonomy and perceived organizational support, psychological capital, work-life balance and people's intentions to stay in their job. They found that job autonomy and perceived organizational support had a positive association with employees' intention to stay. There was also a chain reaction which went as follows:



You can read the whole of this article at

<https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/15/1/551>

Top tips for holding onto employees

Source: clarowellbeing.com

In a nutshell: Pop music is full of farewells – *Say Hello, Wave Goodbye, Should I Stay Or Should I Go*, and *Don't Leave Me This Way* among many. Whilst for some employees it's "every hand waves me on/secretly wishing me gone/well I will be soon," for employers it's often the case of *Better the Devil You Know*. In this article Ciara Knight outlines a few ways in which employers can retain staff in 2023.

1. Create an unbeatable benefits package. 78% of people say they would stay in their role longer if they were offered access to a financial education and wellbeing benefits package
2. Make sure your company is a nice place to work for. Create a warm and inclusive workplace environment. Offer flexible hours, hybrid working, and support with child care. Have regular social events that cater to all interests and schedule regular check-ins with your team. If someone is unhappy find out why, quickly
3. Outline a clear progression path for every employee. 79% of employees who quit their jobs cited a lack of appreciation as a key reason for leaving. Clarify your appreciation for your team and "make sure that they know that their growth within the company is on your radar."
4. Encourage employees to be open about their workplace desires. Some may want more learning options, others would benefit from more insurance options. Eight in 10 workers say that a financial wellbeing programme would increase their job satisfaction. "The benefits of open communication stretch beyond poach-proofing your team and can trickle into everyday interactions."

5. Promote a healthy work-life balance. The UK is ranked 11th out of 37 countries for its work-life balance. Consider providing training budgets and education contributions for people or a Personal Project Day where members of staff get an extra day of leave a year to work on something outside their day-job.
6. Keep your team interested and challenged. Jobs can feel very same-y very quickly so be sure not to pin someone into a repetitive and mentally unstimulating role. “Calculated risks are what enables a company to grow, while also providing job satisfaction for its people.”

You can read the whole of this article at

https://blog.clarowellbeing.com/poach-proof-team?utm_campaign=employee%20benefits&utm_source=partner&utm_medium=referral&utm_term=poach_proof

Four in 10 doctors plan to quit

Source: The Guardian

In a nutshell: The British Medical Association recently surveyed 4,553 junior doctors and found that 40% of them were actively planning to quit the NHS as soon as they could find another job. A third planned to work abroad in the next year, with Australia being the top choice of destination. Junior doctors’ pay has fallen by more than a quarter in real terms since the 2008 financial crisis. The Government has spent an extra £90m to provide the most-experienced junior doctors with higher pay, and increase pay for those working weekends and night shifts.

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/dec/28/four-in-10-junior-doctors-plan-quit-nhs-survey>

Wellbeing

Days off. Is it “no can do,” if you’re Hindu?

Source: Personnel Today

In a nutshell: Rishi Sunak recently became the UK’s first Hindu Prime Minister but it’s not always as easy for his co-religionists. Business psychology consultancy Pearn Kandola have been looking into it and found that 38% of Hindus had had a request for annual leave to celebrate a religious festival turned down with only 5% feeling that their organization was happy for them to take time off for religious festivals. The researchers found that limited representation often left Hindu workers feeling lonely and isolated at work, with a lack of diversity leaving many feeling that they could not express their religious identity freely. Many employees also felt dissuade from wearing traditional Hindu costumes because of workplace guidelines on “dressing professionally.”

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/hindus-work-inclusion-diversity-research-kandola/>

NHS issues new menopause guidance

Source: Personnel Today

In a nutshell: One of the few things Gianni Infantino *didn't* claim in his oratorical [tour-de-force](#) at the beginning of the World Cup was being menopausal; maybe he's saving that up for Canada/Mexico in 2026. Of the million women working for the NHS it's estimated up to 260,000 could be approaching, or going through, the menopause and the organization recently launched some [guidance](#) for line managers. The guidance suggests that managers should:

- Reassure employees that they can ask for menopause support
- Increase their knowledge and awareness of symptoms
- Form links with occupational health and employee-assistance programmes to understand how they can support staff
- Share details of the menopause support available
- Encourage attendance at menopause support groups and peer networks
- Have health and wellbeing conversations with staff to consider whether any reasonable adjustments are needed
- Consider offering flexible working

Employers should also think about whether uniforms in breathable fabrics are available and whether temperatures can be adjusted, or desk fans provided, for those who need them.

You can read the whole of this article at <https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/nhs-menopause-guidance/>

Meet my son, the doctor

Source: Personnel Today

In a nutshell: Samsung have found that more than a third of workers from ethnic minorities have kept their career choice secret due to family or cultural expectations. Samsung polled more than 1,500 workers and found that ethnic minority groups felt this pressure twice as much as their White counterparts when choosing a career. Arab and Black workers were most likely to keep their career choice secret, with 61% of Arab workers likely to lie. Becoming a doctor, lawyer, or accountant were the most "accepted," career choices, with fitness trainer being the most frowned upon. When family pressure was taken away, the top career choices were the services industry (17%), or creative industries (13%). People from ethnic minority backgrounds were more than twice as likely to feel cultural pressure to choose the right career, with 70% saying this was the case, compared to 31% of White workers.

You can read the whole of this article at <https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/ethnic-minorities-career/>

M&S brings magic and sparkle to flexible working

Source: Personnel Today

In a nutshell: Marks and Spencer's underpants used to last almost as long as the shopping centres they could be found in and were equally capacious and aesthetically unsatisfying. Like much else in modern life they're more stylish, but less durable, nowadays but what hasn't changed is Marks and Spencer's reputation for treating its staff well. They've just launched a new Worklife programme aimed at providing more flexible working for their shop managers. Managers can now work in one of three flexible patterns: four days a week; nine days a fortnight; or a combination of the two. After trials the nine-day fortnight option proved the most popular and the scheme went fully live in January 2023. Engagement improved dramatically. Three quarters of managers who took part in the trial said working compressed hours had had a

positive effect on their family life. 73% said it gave them more time for themselves, and 79% were better able to balance work and personal-life commitments. Managers were more willing to work additional hours or change their working times if needed. And because staff were working longer hours on any one day the changeover between day and night shifts was longer and more effective. At the same time M&S also launched a job-share match platform. Managers can set up a profile outlining their skills and what they would like to work on, and the system then matches them with somebody else who would like a corresponding work arrangement.

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/marks-spencer-m-and-s-flexible-working-work-life/>

If only you could mine HRT

Source: Personnel Today

In a nutshell: According to new research from Superdrug demand for menopause medication, advice, support, and other products has risen dramatically in the last five years. Superdrug analysed NHS prescription data and found that there had been a 149% increase in prescriptions for menopause medication since 2015. Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire reported the biggest increase (214%), followed by Somerset and Gloucestershire (199%), and Shropshire (197%). Searches for “menopause supplements,” rose across the UK by 175%, while searches for perimenopause rose by 173%. The biggest increases in searches was in Durham, up an astounding 1,400%. Last year NHS England produced [national menopause guidance](#) which recommended that health workers be offered flexible working and access to occupational health support to help them manage their symptoms.

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/demand-soaring-for-menopause-support/>

What’s the best way of dealing with addiction at work?

Source: Employee Benefits

In a nutshell: Human beings complaining about hypocrisy is a little like cuttlefish whingeing about the damp in the spare bedroom; it’s an occupational hazard of being alive, both as recipient and participant. In this article Tracey Ward, Head of Business Development and Marketing at Generali UK, discusses the ins and outs of dealing with addiction at work. According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) most organizations have a specific policy on drugs and/or alcohol, but for around half this is focused on disciplinary procedures and inappropriate behaviour, with far fewer organizations providing information about sources of support. Only 22% of employees have referred workers with drug or alcohol problems to specialist treatment and rehabilitation support. Some drug and alcohol problems can stem from attempts to deal with physical pain so early referrals to physiotherapy can help as well as signposting to community support services such as [Andy’s Man Club](#). Deaths from alcohol-specific causes in the UK have increased over recent years and during difficult times certain groups may be particularly vulnerable and require additional support although one US study found that more than 70% of people with alcohol or illicit drug use continue to maintain employment. Other triggers can include trauma – experienced either as a child or adult – physical-health problems, anxiety, and social pressures. Behaviour “creep,” can be common with what starts out as the odd drink after work tuning into an every night occurrence. Ill effects can include: personal health and wellbeing being affected; relationships going downhill; sickness absence; presenteeism; inappropriate behaviour; poor decision-making and reaction times; lost productivity; errors, and accidents. What’s important is to make sure that “looking out for each other,” becomes a cultural norm.

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://employeebenefits.co.uk/addiction-changing-the-conversation-at-work/>

Turning dormice into squirrels

Source: Personnel Today

In a nutshell: Dormice are sensible creatures. Every autumn they gorge themselves, then build a cosy nest, curl up into a ball, and go to sleep until Spring. Unfortunately most employers tend to favour rather more energetic rodent role models – if not rats, then at least squirrels, full of forethought and alertness, and gambolling energetically around the canopy. In this article Kate Martin, a qualified counsellor and head of psychological services for PAM Wellbeing, addresses the issue of “winter depression,” and how employers can help staff cope with it. Symptoms of seasonal affective disorder (SAD) can range from persistent low mood, lethargy, and a loss of pleasure or interest in normal activities, to feelings of despair, guilt, and worthlessness. Over two million people are affected – add rampant inflation, strikes, and a crumbling NHS to the mix and the problem could get even worse. A lack of serotonin, due to reduced sunlight, is an important factor, so it’s good to encourage people to go outside during daylight hours every day. Distress signals can include reduced motivation and concentration, missing deadlines, or changes in attitude or appearance, due to reduced self-care. Managers can set an example, by taking “fresh air breaks,” and leaving their desk at lunchtime. Sunrise alarms can help people get up on dark mornings, and lightboxes – which simulate the intensity of summer’s mid-day sun – can boost mood and concentration levels. Individuals should be given the opportunity to have a wellbeing check so they can talk one-to-one, in confidence, with a counsellor about how they’re feeling. “This can provide a safe space for them to identify what they can do to manage their situation to protect their mental health... If further support is needed the counsellor can also signpost them to their GP or any additional psychological support services their organization might have in place, such as counselling, or cognitive behavioural therapy.” Kate Martin concludes “the overall aim should be to support individuals at the earliest opportunity possible, ideally while they’re still in work, to help them build their resilience and reduce the risk of them going off sick with stress, anxiety or depression during the winter months.”

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/winter-depression-how-can-employers-reduce-mental-health-related-absence/>

The companies turning salaries back to wages

Source: Employee Benefits

In a nutshell: “Honour and magnify this man of men/Who keeps a wife and family on £2.10/Paid weekly in an envelope/And yet he never has abandoned hope.” Thus Stevie Smith, in her poem *Alfred the Great*. Even allowing for inflation many people still find themselves with too much month and not enough money. An increasing number of employers are trying to help their staff by allowing them to dip into their monthly salary before it’s due in salary-advance schemes. An online survey by *Employee Benefits* has found that 18% of organizations offer such a scheme and 31% are planning on introducing one in the future. Last month contract caterer Compass Group launched a salary-advance scheme for its 50,000 British and Irish staff. Employee can withdraw up to half their earned pay before payday and can make up to three withdrawals per pay cycle. Tesco – who employ 280,000 people – allows its employees to access up to 25% of their contractual pay early, with a single set fee of £1.49 per advance.

You can read the whole of this article at

<https://www.employeebenefits.co.uk/18-of-employers-offer-staff-a-salary-advance-scheme/>

Lancing the office Frankie Boyle

Source: Research in Organizational Behaviour

In a nutshell: Opinions vary on Frankie Boyle. Some consider him a latter-day combination of Jonathan Swift and Samuel Beckett, excoriating sentimentality and hypocrisy, and confronting the bleak realities of a nihilist, atheist worldview with gallows humour, whilst others simply think he's needlessly offensive. Either way he'd be a nightmare for an HR department. In this article Naomi M. Fa-Kaji, from the University of Virginia, and Benoît Monin, from Stanford University, outline four types of strategies managers can use to address offensive remarks at work:

- YOU – strategies focus on the offender and prioritize correction
- ME – strategies focus on the confronter and leverage an existing connection
- THEY – strategies highlight third parties to de-emphasize the confronter-offender relationship
- WE – strategies highlight shared organizational values and norms to affirm group connection in the service of correction

Or you could just make them stand in the corner for half an hour wearing a dunce's cap – but maybe that's "problematic," too. Who knows these days?

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2022.100166>

Tell me about your mother – but only if she's out of earshot

Source: The Journal of Mental Health Training, Education, and Practice

In a nutshell: Thanks to the wonders of modern technology people can now receive counselling for social anxiety and agoraphobia without leaving their bedroom; maybe even complain about the deleterious effects of their parents while their mother brings them breakfast in bed. But what effect does this have on the psychologists themselves? In this study Heather Tolland and Emma Drysdale, from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, studied 161 clinical psychologists' experiences of working from home during the Pandemic. They found that the psychologists had experienced a number of challenges, including communication difficulties and risk assessment and had had fewer opportunities for collaborative working, alongside a number of technical and/or equipment issues. 46% had experienced fatigue, 45% felt stressed and anxious and 30% felt more lonely and isolated than usual. 37% had had back pain and 40% had had more headaches and migraines.

You can read the abstract of this article at

<https://doi.org/10.1108/JMHTEP-08-2021-0098>