

BLUE SKY

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NEWSLETTER

BRAVE NEW LEARNING

Welcome to our latest newsletter, written whilst working from home during the new experience of Coronavirus lock down. Although this is usually a mix of information on student successes and future Blue Sky plans (and this is no different) it would seem odd not to firstly say something about the dreadful pandemic and the new world that we find ourselves in.

As I'm sure you are aware, Blue Sky is continuing to deliver HR, L&D and management training, albeit virtually. In the main, this is down to the flexibility and professionalism of our tutors as well as our students, who are having to adapt to this style of learning with little or no warning. But what about the future? Many believe this is the way forward (and already have a lot of experience in the virtual learning arena) and that this may be a watershed to converting people to learning through these virtual tools. As a blended learning specialist we have been making plans to add virtual workshops to our suite of learning options, but we see these as just that - an additional option, and are really looking forward to seeing our students again - in the flesh!

This unusual time has also meant that for many of our HR students, you have found yourselves in the epicentre of this crisis, as HR is the focal point for employees wanting answers to their questions and employers guidance as to what to do next.



Many of these areas are totally new to the majority of us - who had heard of furloughing before? And some even training to be redeployed into other key areas of the business, so we are all having to learn very quickly - excellent CPD of course!

In addition, many of our students are supporting staff (and experiencing it as an employee themselves) who are now home-working, many with home schooling responsibilities, on changed hours or unfortunately having to be made redundant. This either means a very busy work time or, alternatively, a time when you can get ahead with your CIPD studies. Either way, Blue Sky will be as flexible and adaptable as we can in order to support you during this. Keep safe and well!

MORE THAN MENTAL HEALTH



We welcomed Tom Oxley, from Bamboo Mental Health, again in February for another instalment of the very popular breakfast seminars - More Than Mental Health. Tom invited a mix of guest speakers who looked at different aspects of mental health and its impact at work.

Daddy Kabuiku spoke first about his experience of the benefits of fitness on mental health, followed by Stuart Haysman who gave us the perspective of a Health and Safety expert on stress management. It was interesting to hear how the HSE now expects mental health to be managed in the same way as physical health. He noted that it was early days and the HSE are concentrating on education at the moment but prosecution was the next eventual step. It was then calming to hear the chimes from Sue Wright's singing bowl as she encouraged us all to take 5 minutes to meditate - not easy in a full meeting room but most did manage it. Lastly, Polly Johnson shocked us all with the gambling related statistics and how to spot the signs at work.

Tom will be joining us again, this time virtually, on 15th May talking about re-surfacing after lock-down and can it (should it) be business as usual?

100% pass rate

They've done it again!! Well done to our level 7 students and Paul, their tutor, for another excellent set of exam results. Unfortunately, the May exams have been postponed until September.

WELCOME TO NEW TUTORS

Welcome to our new tutor, Laura Philpot, who is joining us in Norwich to tutor on our CIPD and ILM programmes at levels 3 and 5. Laura, an experienced L&D practitioner, has worked extensively in a wide variety of industries, including finance, construction and oil and gas before setting up on her own.

Welcome also, to Tracey Fribbins, who we know from Colchester Institute. She will be supporting us in assessing students by marking assignments in her spare time!

NEW ILM COACHING & MENTORING

We are pleased to announce that we are applying for approval to deliver the new ILM Certificate in Coaching & Mentoring at level 5. This qualification covers 3 units, including the practical skills required to be a successful coach and mentor, and implementation of coaching/mentoring in the workplace.

The benefits of managers using a coaching style in business are wide spread. According to an article in The Harvard Business Review Nov/Dec last year 'The role of the manager, in short, is becoming that of a coach.' We will be pleased to help individuals and organisations to realise the potential of adopting this approach from the Autumn, when hopefully businesses will start to return to normal.



CIPD NEWS

Some of you may be aware that the CIPD has been reviewing the qualifications it offers with a view to updating them to reflect the new CIPD Profession Map. This is good news – to maintain relevance to today's HR profession, the qualifications must reflect the current business world we all operate in and the skills, knowledge and behaviours required to support organisations and add value.

Details have been released on what these new CIPD qualifications may look like and equally important the timetable for release. The new qualifications will be similar at Levels 3, 5 and 7 but the aim is to streamline the offer with a more up to date syllabus. More information about the specifics of what will be included is not available for another few weeks.

We did learn that registrations for these new qualifications will begin January 2021 and will stop for the current suite of qualifications in the autumn of that year. We will begin our approval process at the end of the summer this year in preparation.

So, we will let you know more as we find out, but rest assured, your current qualification will continue as normal and certification for these doesn't end until 2023.



L&D APPRENTICESHIP

For those Learning & Development professionals amongst you, we will be introducing the Level 3 Learning and Development Practitioner apprenticeship to our portfolio of courses by the end of the year, again in partnership with Colchester Institute. It will include the CIPD Certificate in Learning and Development, although this is not a mandatory part of the apprenticeship we know that students and employers see the benefit of gaining a CIPD qualification whilst accessing the learning through their levy pot.

The qualification includes skills required for all aspects of the training cycle as well as knowledge of current learning theories and business acumen relating to development of employees. According to the Institute for Apprenticeships, '... the L&D Practitioner (Apprenticeship) is future focused, understands the business context / culture and has a good grounding across the whole training and learning cycles.'

WORKING FROM HOME - A DREAM COME TRUE OR...?



Since the lockdown (or safe mode as some are starting to call it) began in March, many people have been required to work from home. Some of those people had previously requested this from their employers and had their request denied. That type of request will be much more difficult to refuse in the future as we've all been making arrangements to be as productive as possible from our home 'offices'.

Reading Facebook and LinkedIn posts, I've noticed that many people are enjoying the freedom of being able to adjust their working hours to suit their personal circumstances. Some individuals know that they function best early in the morning and are able to begin work at dawn and finish by lunch time. Then there are the night owls who prefer to work when everyone else is sleeping. Others are now able to work around their caring responsibilities.

In recent years, open plan working has become more and more common, as has hot-desking. Some employees will be relishing the opportunity to get away from the communal workplace so that they can have some headspace and thinking time.

And yet there is a dark side to home working. There are a raft of health and safety issues to consider from lone working which can lead to feelings of severe isolation to workstation assessments. (On this front the Health and Safety Executive has produced resources which can be accessed here: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm>.)

And then there are the considerations of others in the home environment. Whilst it is sometimes difficult to concentrate in a noisy workplace, it can be even more difficult when you are being called on by children, partners and animals just as you are getting to the critical point in your data analysis or report to the Board (or CIPD assignment!!).

As HR professionals, we are being asked by our employers to provide best practice advice on how best to support new working arrangements. As we enter the next stages of the pandemic, our new challenge will be to help our organisations take a fresh look at working practices and to ask ourselves what the new world of work should look like.

The CIPD is supporting us with some fantastic resources and will continue to do so (<https://www.cipd.co.uk/news-views/coronavirus>), but it is up to us to review the advice, guidance and information so that we can decide how best to advise our organisations as they plan for the future.

Here are some questions to ask ourselves as we prepare for the coming months:

- What are our revised business goals and plans?
- What tasks and activities will we need to undertake in order to achieve those goals and plans?
- Which of the tasks and activities require collaboration?
- What methods of collaboration will best support the achievement of the tasks and to what extent can that collaboration be achieved digitally?
- How many of our employees can practically continue home-working?
- What arrangements will we need to make to ensure that home-workers are supported to be both productive and safe?
- To what extent were our previous working arrangements necessary and to what extent were they simply "the way we've always done things around here"?
- What opportunities exist for us to become better employers?

As HR professionals, our professional body is all about championing better work and working lives. The CIPD states that "We believe work can and should benefit everyone - not just businesses and economies, but the people that drive them and the societies they form part of too." How can we play a part in helping this vision to be a reality in the post-Covid 19 workplace?

PROGRAMME PORTFOLIO

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)

Foundation Level 3 Award, Certificate and Diploma in Human Resource Practice
Foundation Level 3 Award and Certificate in Learning and Development
Intermediate Level 5 Award, Certificate and Diploma in Human Resource Management
Advanced Level 7 Award, Certificate and Diploma Human Resource Management

HR Apprenticeships in partnership with Colchester Institute

Level 3 HR Support Apprenticeship
Level 5 HR Consultant/Partner Apprenticeship

Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM)

Level 3 Award, Certificate and Diploma in Leadership and Management
Level 4 Award, Certificate and Diploma in Leadership and Management
Level 5 Award, Certificate and Diploma in Leadership and Management

Bespoke Training

We design and deliver bespoke training packages for HR and Managers that can also be linked to nationally recognised qualifications on subjects such as

- Leadership
- Coaching & Mentoring
- Recruitment
- Developing staff
- Delegation
- Motivation

ABOUT BLUE SKY

After working together for over 24 years on CIPD and Management programmes, Beth and Kate started Blue Sky 7 years ago. Established in Norwich, with the aim to deliver first class programmes with individualised support leading to high success rates, this was soon extended to Colchester and last year included HR apprenticeship programmes.

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