

# BLUE SKY

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### NEWSLETTER

## BLUE SKY IS 10 THIS YEAR!



It's been 10 years since Beth and Kate gained approval from CIPD to deliver their HR and L&D qualifications. And so much has happened since then – added ILM qualifications to their portfolio, moved to Henderson Business Centre, worked with Colchester Institute to offer HR apprenticeships, moved to online learning through the Covid lockdowns, and introduced e-learning materials.

### 10 year Stats -

Started **454** students

**336** CIPD qualifications achieved

**113** currently studying

**95%** completion rate over 10 years

## NEW ONLINE LEARNING MATERIALS

We are pleased to announce that as part of our 10-year celebrations we are going to offer new online standalone learning modules. These will be available on our learning platform **Discover-Studyhub** where you can pay for one module or for a bundle of modules, depending on how much you want to learn!

Aimed at those who are interested in a specific area of HR without wanting the commitment of studying a full HR qualification, they are studied online in the learners' own time with an optional online induction and tutorial sessions available. Learners can also earn a Blue Sky certificate of achievement by completing an end of module test.

The first modules will be at Fundamental level and will cover the key parts of the employee life cycle – Recruitment & Selection, Employment Relations, Wellbeing, etc., with further modules to follow, including L&D and Intermediate level.

We will update you as these modules become available.

## LEVEL 7 APPRENTICESHIPS

Back in December 2021, after a lot of planning and waiting, we were able to start our 1st cohort of students on the level 7 Senior Professional (HR) Practitioner apprenticeship programme. The level 7 apprenticeship, as with levels 3 and 5, is delivered by Colchester Institute, with Blue Sky as the approved training provider for the CIPD study element. This leads to the CIPD Advanced Diploma in Strategic People Management which allows successful students to apply for CIPD Chartered Membership.

All 8 units are delivered via blended learning, which includes attendance at monthly group workshop sessions, most of which are now face-to-face again! Over the past 18 months the programme has developed and now the cohort has split into 2 groups – 1 in Norwich and 1 in Colchester. All units have now been delivered at least once, apart from 7OS01, Employment Law, which will be delivered for the 1st time, in June.

## HELLO & GOODBYE

Like many businesses after Covid, Blue Sky saw some staff changes. Trish McCarthy reduced her work commitment to us whilst taking on part time employment elsewhere, and Lorna Taylor has stopped tutoring but is assisting us with other HR related matters.

This year we welcomed Gillian Blackmore, Jane Cooke, Tanya Patchett and Jen Burrows to our team, delivering levels 3, 5 & 7 CIPD units. We also said hello to John Climpson as an associate tutor delivering Leadership, Management and Coaching programmes.



## GUEST SPEAKER SESSION

Last week saw the return of our Guest Speaker sessions and as this coincided with Stress Awareness Month we invited two speakers to talk on related topics. Trish McCarthy from Wild Stride Walkers began by telling us all about her expeditions to Everest base camp and the Arctic Circle, to name two, and how she now runs walking groups to improve physical and mental health as well as learn new skills. This was then followed by Daniel Belton from Norfolk and Waveney Wellbeing who spoke about stress, the causes and some of the possible ways to reduce it. The Wellbeing Service offer free workshops for organisations and groups on a range of wellbeing topics.





## YOU SAID...WE DID

Blue Sky seeks insight into the student and employer experience through a variety of feedback channels. Here's a summary of key issues from the last year and what we are doing about them.

- **Marking of assignments taking too long** – we apologise as this has sometimes been an issue with new units and tutors but we are meeting in May to share ideas on how to keep to the 4 week turnaround time and, where possible, shorten it.
- **Delayed response from tutors** – tutors have been reminded that they need to get back to students within 48 hours (excluding weekends). Please contact Kate or Beth if you are having any issues getting in touch with a tutor.
- **Room disruption at CI** - CI have now dedicated a room for HR apprenticeships.
- **Lack of power points at CI** -CI looking to resolve this in the dedicated room.



SCAN ME

## NEW ILM PROGRAMMES

Last month we launched a new package of units to gain a level 3 Award and Certificate and a level 5 Certificate in Leadership & Management. If you are looking to gain an ILM qualification covering key topics such as motivation, conflict, recruitment and coaching please get in touch.

## ALL THINGS AI

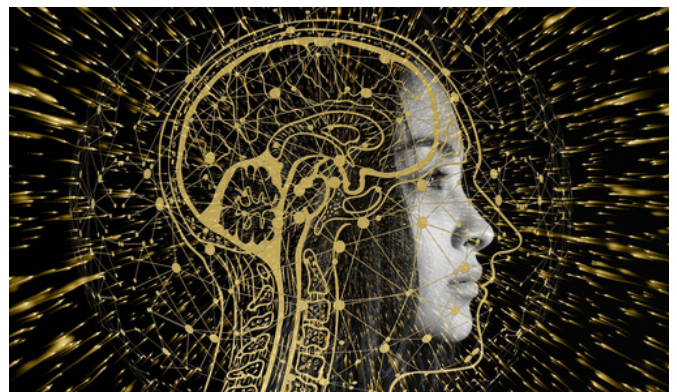
The topic that seems to be permanently in the news lately is the debate surrounding Artificial Intelligence (AI), especially the use of chatbots, such as ChatGPT. On the one hand this seems to offer a solution to some of the many more mundane HR tasks but at the same time there are areas of great concern about its usage, to the point that Geoffrey Hinton, so called 'The Godfather of AI' has resigned from Google, warning about the growing dangers from developments in AI. It has also been suggested that ChatGPT has violated GDPR legislation, something that HR must be mindful of.

As with most things there are both opportunities and risks, and for HR, we need to be aware of them both and actively participate in these ongoing debates in order to help control the agenda rather than just be affected by it. For further information please see CIPD's January 2023 report 'Using AI Responsibly in People Management' and its March 2023 report 'Impact of ChatGPT and other AI chatbots on the future of work'

<https://qrco.de/bdweyg>



SCAN ME



## CIPD QUALITY GRADES

Having started our 1st cohort of students on the 'new' level 7 CIPD qualification in May 2021, this was quickly followed up with us registering students for the new qualifications at levels 3 and 5.

Now, 2 years on, we have registered a total of 108 students on the new qualifications, of which there are 24 Advanced, 43 Associate and 41 Foundation.

As well as new content, structure and assessment briefs for these qualifications we also had to become familiar with CIPD's new external moderation process. We are pleased to advise that in the past 2 years ALL of Blue Sky's results have been confirmed and we have been given a risk rating of grade 1 for levels 3 and 5 and grade 2 for level 7, demonstrating that we are still maintaining a high level of quality for our CIPD programmes.

## PROGRAMME PORTFOLIO

### **Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)**

#### **Foundation**

Level 3 Certificate in People Practice

#### **Associate**

Level 5 Diploma in People Management

Level 5 Diploma in Organisational L&D

#### **Advanced**

Level 7 Diploma in Strategic People Management

### **HR Apprenticeships in partnership with Colchester Institute**

Level 3 HR Support Apprenticeship

Level 5 HR Consultant/Partner Apprenticeship

Level 7 Senior HR Professional Apprenticeship

### **Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM)**

Award, Certificate and Diploma in

Level 3 Leadership and Management

Level 4 Leadership and Management

Level 5 Leadership and Management

**Level 5** Certificate and Diploma in Coaching and Mentoring

### **Bespoke Training**

We design and deliver bespoke training packages that can also be linked to qualifications on subjects such as Leadership, Coaching & Mentoring, Recruitment, Developing staff, Delegation

## ABOUT BLUE SKY

After working together for over 20 years on CIPD and Management programmes, Beth and Kate started Blue Sky 10 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 now includes HR and L&D apprenticeship programmes.