

OCTOBER 2021



BluSkyHR

YOUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER,
WRITTEN FOR BUSY BUSINESS
OWNERS

HR insider

WHAT DID THE OLYMPICS TELL
US ABOUT EMPLOYEES'
MENTAL HEALTH?

Everyone had an opinion on Simone Biles when she withdrew from most of her events at the Tokyo Games. But, despite her critics, most people were hugely supportive that she had the courage to say "no" when her mental and physical health needed a break.

However, with a massive 51% of UK employees saying they feel the need to put on a brave face at work, even when they're miserable or unwell, it's clear that not everyone is as brave as Simone was. And it's a big problem for our businesses, because employees are risking a significant negative impact on their mental health.

Along with that comes burnout, productivity loss, disengagement and increased staff turnover.

YOUR HREXPERT



Tania Harland

It's time to ask yourself what lesson you could take away from the Olympics this year and how you could better support your staff to be more open and honest, when it comes to their mental and physical health?

If you don't already have one in place, consider a wellness initiative to help create an approachable and understanding environment for your employees, and to demonstrate that yours is a business that really does care about its people.



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LATEST HR NEWS

Are you guilty of underpaying employees?

Almost 200 firms were named and shamed for underpaying minimum wage employees in August.

These companies were ordered to reimburse more than 34,000 employees who were underpaid, as well as being handed fines of more than £3.2million by HMRC. However, the majority of these underpayments were unintentional or had been corrected prior to the investigation.

But, with firms like Pret a Manger and John Lewis on the list, it shows that even big companies can be caught out by errors.

When was the last time you reviewed your staff pay to ensure that it was in line with labour laws? Do you take things, like uniform allowance and reimbursing expenses, into account?

Should the Government offer more guidance and support to ensure businesses are paying staff correctly? And do you think it's fair that businesses were named and shamed, even though many of the mistakes were corrected years ago? We'd love to hear your thoughts on this one.

No job, no job

Covid vaccinations will be made compulsory for all care home staff from 11th November. If this applies to your business, it's important you communicate this message to all employees as soon as possible.

Will we ever see a 5-day working week in the office again?

1 in 4 businesses say they intend to allow their staff to work from home for at least part of the week and almost 1 in 5 businesses said they could make this happen for most of their employees. This is a big rise when compared to life before March 2020, when only 17% of employees worked remotely.

However, 1 in 5 businesses said they would not allow any of their staff to work from home after restrictions are lifted.

These findings come as the Chancellor has urged employees to return to the office, after dropping the official working-from-home guidance.

Have you changed your policy on remote or flexible working? Will you move forward with a hybrid working policy, or are you keen to return to business as usual as quickly as possible?

48% of employees think that disclosing a mental health issue to their manager will affect their career progression.

While they're more likely to discuss issues with their peers, it's important that we're creating supportive and trustworthy environments for our people and reassuring them that any disclosures will remain strictly confidential.



Sexual harassment at work has increased and has taken on new guises

Despite many of us working from home over the past 18 months, sexual harassment at work has increased and taken on new guises. This has been linked to the increased use of messaging apps and video platforms, along with the more casual attitude that comes along with working from home.

Examples of new forms of sexual harassment include taking screenshots and sharing them, making inappropriate comments or using suggestive or unprofessional emojis, or even a manager privately messaging employees in a personal capacity.

And while its upsetting for employees, it could also be damaging for business. If a firm stance isn't taken from the off, it has the potential to cause high staff turnover, with requests for settlements or even claims of discrimination or unfair dismissal. The main difference between office-based sexual harassment and this new type of WFH sexual harassment is the opportunity to save evidence.

The Government is aiming to take a hard stance on this, forcing employers to act quickly and to take all reasonable steps to prevent harassment. One of the intentions is to make employers legally liable if employees are harassed by colleagues, or third parties like suppliers or customers. Is it enough?



YOUR HR QUESTIONS ANSWERED



Q: How do I work out part-time holiday requests?

A: Part-time workers are entitled to 5.6 week's paid holiday (statutory), but this should be worked out in proportion to the hours they work. If they work 3 days, that's 16.8 days (3 x 5.6). It can get quite complicated, so it's always best to speak with us or use software to help manage this for you.

Q: What do I do if I don't want my team to work from home?

A: Following Government guidance on working safely during Covid-19, you'll need to carry out new risk assessments to ensure safety procedures are in place. Then, let your staff know of the new changes with as much notice as possible.

Q: An employee has sent me a grievance letter. What do I do?

A: Acknowledge it, take it seriously, and seek professional HR advice to avoid a potential risk for tribunals in the future. It can be complex, so never try and handle it without expert help.

EARN TO SPEND LESS TIME ON PEOPLE ISSUES & MORE TIME GROWING YOUR BUSINESS?

If the pandemic taught businesses anything, it is just how important proactive and responsive outsourced HR support is. That's what we do best here at BluSkyHR, offering you, the client:

- **A cost-effective solution-based service - saving you money compared to employing a qualified HR Manager.**
- **Sounding board/peace of mind with our retainer packages - including unlimited calls and emails.**
- **Independent, impartial Grievance Investigating Officer - external to your organisation.**
- **Providing you with options to make informed decisions - Providing a commercial view as well as risk-averse.**

**YOUR
HR EXPERT**



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Book your 15-minute exploratory call @ bluskyhr.co.uk/contact



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