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YOUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER,  
WRITTEN FOR BUSY  
BUSINESS OWNERS

# HR News

## WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON'T PROVIDE FLEXIBLE WORKING TO YOUR STAFF?

It's estimated that a third of employees may quit their jobs if flexible working policies aren't made permanent after the pandemic.

While that may seem like a high number - especially considering the sharp rise in redundancies we're expecting to see when the furlough scheme ends - it demonstrates just how much we've benefitted from home or remote working.

Full-time employees who had worked from home during the pandemic are the keenest to maintain the arrangement, with a huge 47% preferring the new set-up. A quarter of all workers are hoping to continue their role in a hybrid capacity, splitting time between remote and office working.

So, while we were forced into this new way of working, it appears that businesses may now risk losing their best people if they don't implement a permanent remote or hybrid working option for their teams.

### Is this something that your business will be doing?

If so, it's worth bearing in mind that not all of your people will prefer working from home. In fact, it can be detrimental to the motivation and mental health of some workers, not to mention the impact from a CPD perspective. So it's important that you approach it in the right way for your business.

### YOUR HR TROUBLESHOOTER



Tania Harland - HR Consultant

You probably noticed which members of your team flourished during lockdown and which struggled. It's important to speak to everyone individually to discuss any changes you plan to implement and how that may affect them.

Remember that you will need to adjust the way you manage hybrid and remote teams and ensure people aren't 'forgotten' when you don't see their faces every day. You should be mindful of including everyone on projects and continue both 121 and team meetings for all.

Keep an eye out for signs someone is struggling with stress or burnout as it might be harder to detect in homeworkers. Have you thought about whether they have the right tools to carry out their job to the usual high standard away from the office? Are you confident that you meet H&S legislation that homeworking brings?

**Need help transitioning to a permanent flexible workplace? We'd love to help. Just give us a call.**



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# LATEST HR NEWS

## How approachable are you?

A recent study has shown that a whopping 1 in 3 employees would rather quit their job than voice their concerns to their employer. 83% of people feel they're not heard fairly or equally in their workplace and almost half feel that under-represented voices are undervalued by employers.

So, what does this say about open and honest communication in businesses? There doesn't seem to be as much as we would expect. And, in turn, that's leading to a disengaged, unmotivated workforce.

Is it time you take an honest look at the communication in your workplace? What are you doing to ensure that your managers are approachable and available to your people?

A good place to start is regular 121s with every member of the team. This is a great way to create a trusting and honest relationship between team members and managers and provides a regular safe space where people can speak freely and honestly about their concerns.

**Want to increase engagement levels in your workplace? We'd love to help! Give us a call today!**

## A new right to flexible working

A Labour MP has proposed a Bill to parliament that would give workers a right to flexible working.

The Bill has been co-sponsored by MPs from Conservative, Lib Dem, Labour, Green, SDLP and SNP parties, and thousands of people are writing to their own MPs to support it.

The aim is that the current right to request flexible working will be updated, as it's currently too easy to reject. Figures suggest that requests from fathers are turned down at almost half the rate of requests from mothers.

The new Bill would overhaul the right to flexible work, making it a day-one right for everyone rather than a perk of the job for the few.

## 39% of workers have taken less holiday during COVID, survey finds

A study commissioned by Acas discovered that 39% of workers took less paid time off during COVID – with employees from SMEs being the most affected.

Not only is this bad from a wellbeing point of view – it's important for your employees to be well rested and have the breaks they need – but it could also cause you a bit of a headache too.

Especially if you've offered to carry over their unused time into this year. More staff on holiday = staff shortages and problems managing work schedules. To avoid this from happening in the future, encourage your team to take the holiday they're entitled to and need.

# CAN I FIRE AN EMPLOYEE FOR A SOCIAL MEDIA POST?

Cast your mind back to England playing in the finals of the Euros. **What's the one thing that stands out in your memory?**

Probably not the missed penalties but rather the unacceptable, abhorrent racial abuse directed at the players afterwards.

**So, what would you do if you discovered that one of your employees was a culprit? Do you think it's an employer's place to take action for this kind of behaviour outside of the workplace? And how far can you go when it comes to taking action?**

Social media has become an ingrained aspect of our daily lives. It has such a reach that it wouldn't be unheard of for a client or prospective client to search for both your business and team members online. **How would it affect your working relationship if they were to see a troubling social media post by one of your employees?**

It could be very damaging for a business. That's why we would expect a company to discipline an employee if this kind of thing occurred. As a business, you need to demonstrate a zero-tolerance stance on racism and other anti-social behaviour.

If the post was a comment made in the workplace, you would certainly have to speak to your employee about it. The outcome of the conversation may be a disciplinary or a verbal warning, depending on the severity of the comment. And that's how you should deal with social media posts too. This includes old posts that resurface.

While we don't recommend that you obsess over monitoring staff social media, if another member of the team has made a complaint or flagged something up to you, you should carry out a full investigation.

Just be mindful though, that covert monitoring of employees social media accounts has the potential to destroy the trust in your working relationship or could result in an unfair dismissal claim.

Remember, if you do find yourself in a situation where you need to fire an employee because of their behaviour online, it's important that you follow a fair dismissal process in line with the ACAS code of practice.

Do you have a policy on social media in your company handbook? If not, perhaps it's time you created one so that employees are in no doubt of the consequences of such behaviour.

At BluSkyHR we help lots of clients draft their employee handbook so do get in contact if your handbook is out of date and you would like some help!



## YOUR HR QUESTIONS ANSWERED



**Q: I'm taking on my first employee, what do I need to do?**

**A:** First, you'll need a job description to outline all of their expected duties and a clear advert detailing what skills, experience and attributes you are looking for. This will help attract the right candidate for the role. Draw up detailed contracts of employment to protect both your business and your new hire. Then, make sure you carry out right to work checks as fines for illegal employment can be huge.

**Q: Do I need to give my employee a written contract of employment?**

**A:** Yes! You'll need to provide a written statement of particulars by the first day of employment. Failing to do so could lead to a tribunal, with compensation typically being between two and four weeks' pay.

**Q: What do I do if I know my staff are socialising while off sick?**

**A:** Start an investigation. Carry out a return-to-work interview and, if you have any suspicions that their sick day was actually a day in the pub, for example, ask them about it. If appropriate, you may take disciplinary action and/or withhold sick pay. However, you must act reasonably and be consistent.

## LET'S TALK ON THE PHONE

Here are three questions for you:

1. Yearn to spend more time on your business and less time on people issues?
2. What causes you sleepless nights when it comes to managing people?
3. Would you like some free advice?

If the pandemic taught us anything, it is the importance of getting proactive, responsive HR support. That's what we do! And we're now taking on new clients!

Set up a 15 min exploratory call at <https://bluskyhr.co.uk/contact/>

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