



# BluSkyHR

Your monthly newsletter  
written for busy Business Owners

# HR NEWS



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## How to manage absence this winter:

- According to GPs, sick note requests have risen by 78%. And sorry to say, it's probable that, as we head into winter, that figure will rise.

### So, what can you do to manage and reduce sickness this year?

- Firstly, look at your policy on medical appointments. Do staff have to take a day off to attend an appointment, or could you offer a set number of hours for use on appointments each year? People may be reluctant to use holiday time for medical appointments, so a flexible approach could stop them taking sick days unnecessarily.
- You may also consider relaxing rules on home working - during the pandemic we saw far fewer sick days being taken, so there's something to be said for a more comfortable working environment.
- Perhaps in some cases, where an employee has a bad back, for example, they may be able to work at home, whereas getting into the office and sitting at a desk all day could prove too difficult.
- Create a positive working environment and encourage your people to come to you whenever they feel they need to. This could help to reduce problems in the workplace and therefore reduce sick leave.
- You may also wish to take things a step further and offer staff perks, like gym memberships or subscriptions to mental health apps, like Headspace. As always, if you need any help implementing changes, give us a call.



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# LATEST HR NEWS...

## Tribunals relating to menopause are rising

- In 2020, we saw 16 tribunal cases relating to menopause discrimination. This figure was just 6 in 2019 and, in the first half of 2021, we have already seen 10 cases. This figure is set to rise as we become more aware of the impact of the menopause and as women become more comfortable discussing it.
- Many people still feel it is not taken seriously enough by employers. It's important that your business gains a better understanding of the menopause and how you might accommodate employees who may be affected.

## Workers would rather have a pay decrease to stay flexible

According to research, workers are willing to sacrifice almost £2,000 of their salary for better flexibility. For those earning the average salary, this is a 7% hit, but it may be offset by childcare and travel costs.

## 40% of workers will embrace hybrid working by 2023

- 2 in 5 employees will be splitting their working hours between home and the office in future, according to a new study. Only 10% of business owners expect to have their full workforce back in the office before 2023.
- But, for hybrid working to be successful and to make it work for your business, it's really important that managers remember to ensure all employees are treated equally and given the same opportunities, regardless of their working location.

## National Insurance increase will hit recruitment

Plans to increase National Insurance contributions for better health and social care have worried business owners across the country.

Thanks to the pressures already being faced, it's predicted that more employers will opt to hire self-employed workers to save costs.





# Could psychometric testing be the key to successful recruitment?

When you're hiring, you want to find the best candidate in the most efficient, reliable way possible. Psychometric testing may be your answer.

It has the ability to measure traits, like aptitude, communication and emotional intelligence, instead of relying on education, qualifications and experience, which don't always give us a realistic impression of someone. You know that many candidates will tell you what they think you want to hear during an interview, which can sometimes lead to a bad hire. People can't hide from a psychometric test!

This is a really great way to save time in your interviewing process, too. If you give your favourite candidates a psychometric test before you meet them, you'll be able to weed out those who definitely aren't suitable for the role, or the business, before you sit down to chat.

If you haven't already tried psychometric testing when hiring, you may wish to give it a go. It will give you a more consistent way of finding the candidates that not only have the right qualities for the role, but it can also give you an idea of how well their own values fit with your company's culture.



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## YOUR HR QUESTIONS ANSWERED:



**Q: What can I do if someone is really annoying in the office?**

**A:** Broach the subject in a positive, kind manner. Depending how serious the issue is, you may consider a more formal approach, or even disciplinary action if informal conversations are ignored.

**Q: I don't know if my team are actually working at home. What can I do?**

**A:** There is lots of software that can help. Project management software will allow you to see employee contribution to work, and time-tracking software can tell you how long is spent on each task - it can even send you daily reports.

**Q: Can I deduct money from my employees' wages for time off for medical appointments?**

**A:** This depends on your policy, however we would advise against it as it may lead to an increase in sick days taken and create poor working relationships. Consider a flexible policy for medical appointments instead.



Yearn to spend less time people issues and 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.**
- **Commercial view to your HR problems and not always risk adverse approach - providing you with options to make informed decisions.**



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Set up a 15 minute exploratory call at:  
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