

Opportunity to do something new, bold and different Share your thoughts at info@wmemployers.org.uk

Welcome

by Rebecca Davis, Chief Executive, WME

It has felt a long-time coming, but this spring and summer myself and the WME Team have enjoyed being back in person at many of the conferences and events that have taken place. We hosted our first Round Table discussion for senior leaders and chief executives in partnership with the MJ and had an exhibition stand at the LGA Conference to name but a few.

It has been a reminder to us of the value of in-person conversations and whilst there are many benefits to digital working, as an organisation owned and led by the sector, we strive for maintaining a strong connection with the organisations and communities we serve.

Meeting many of you in person over recent months has helped us to share knowledge, generate ideas and connect people and will act as a catalyst for the improvement work we are doing. Lesley Shore writes more on the power of networking, in an article on Page 22. WME is in a unique position to convene people on addressing sectoral challenges and developing our workforce and we are pleased to be holding several events and conferences later this year, that will bring our Local Government community in the region together, so don't miss your opportunity to join us;

Coaching Conference

Trisector Challenge

HR, OD & Transformation Conference

Our focus through the summer and into the Autumn is also on working with councils to ensure our workforce is supported, we recognise we have unprecedented inflation, that many of our employees will not have encountered before. We have partnered with MAPS the Money & Advisory Planning Service and will be launching a new Financial Wellbeing offer for Councils, that will compliment provision available through Employee Assistance Programmes. We know that many employees will be impacted by the increased cost of living and will need help to make the right decisions to ensure their financial wellbeing. There is a strong link between financial wellbeing and mental health and by being pro-active and making independent advice available across our workforce we can help to ensure employees are supported and able to support the communities we serve. The service will be launching in the early Autumn.



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Adapting people practices to Support Employees and the organisations

By Gary Cookson, Director, EPIC HR Ltd Adapted by Shane O'Callaghan, WME

In this excerpt from his book, Gary explores the way in which organisations have, and have had to reconsider working practices ever since the global pandemic surfaced in early 2020. The focus here is both on the individual and the team dynamic and what 'hybrid' working actually means.

Few in organisations fully understood how remote working changed the nature of a team, and changed the role of its leader, as the Covid-19 pandemic hit. The retention of remote working and its integration into a hybrid model does the same, so we have a good and timely opportunity to look again at all of this.

Leaders need to focus more on different things – feedback, recognition, wellbeing, managing outcomes in different ways. What it means to work remotely vs in a physical workplace needs consideration in terms of which tasks are done where.

Teams themselves are different too. Team relationships have been reset during the Covid-19 pandemic and will be reset again when hybrid working commences. This is a

the way work is done, the way decisions are made, the way problems are resolved and the way that people communicate with each other.

golden opportunity to reform





The phrase "the new normal" can divide opinion – some feel it describes our situation well, but others have tired of it and consider it a cliché. The pandemic brought with it some significant, long-term changes to the way we live and work and therefore to the way people professionals need to act. The ways of working we adopted in a hurry in March 2020 are largely still with us – people working remotely, people working in a hybrid way, and other people still working where they always used to. The world created then is mostly still the reality for many and will continue to be.

It is one that has both significant advantages and disadvantages in perhaps equal measure. But the enforced nature of it during 2020 for most employees meant that many of these advantages were experienced alongside the disadvantages. However, it forced many individuals and their organisations to confront some previous, longstanding and wrongly held, "truths" about the nature of work.

One of the main lessons learnt during the Covid-19 pandemic was that the switch to remote working was not as simple as replicating what happened in the office but virtually. We can, therefore, safely say that hybrid working is not about trying to somehow merge the remote and face to face worlds of work, despite what the label may suggest. It is about something different, more conscious, and deliberate, something that changes both remote and face to face experiences of work into something greater than the sum of its parts, something better than either are individually.

In years gone by, remote working was about quiet time, focused time, time to get stuff done without interruption, without meetings. For remote work to be effective this is what it needs to largely return to. This, then, changes what the physical office needs to be – it can no longer be about doing individual work sat at one location and often not interacting with others. The physical workplace becomes a place for collaboration, for communication, for those oft-mentioned watercooler moments of inspiration.

If our organisations adopt hybrid working, we need to be really clear what we mean by that. Is it work from anywhere, any time or is it set days a week at home? Is it something that applies to ALL employees or something that only applies to some? As people professionals we are well-placed to help the organisation and its leaders answer these questions and no doubt many have, but many others will be struggling with it.

People do need some level of face-to-face interaction and in many cases crave it. Full-time remote working appears something that isn't attractive to many people at all, and so our people practices have to be able to operate across the different types of working situations we will face in the future – fully remote, fully face to face, and hybrid.

Excerpt from - HR for Hybrid Working, published June 2022 by Kogan Page

Connect with Gary here:

www.epichr.co.uk/

in www.linkedin.com/in/garycookson/

https://twitter.com/Gary_Cookson

To conclude it is sensible to suggest that further thought and consideration is given to how we bed in hybrid working into our organisations culture. Indeed in some cases this will take varying amounts of time and work to achieve the best possible outcomes for employees and employers, but it is an area that will need to be thought through for the benefit of all, whilst learning from the experiences gained during the pandemic.

Involving employees in shaping the future culture of organisations will also be crucial to not just short term, but long term success of future working methods for the positive benefit of all.



How to Build Inclusive and Thoughtful in your Organisation

By Mindy Gibbins-Klein Adapted by Chantelle Wooldridge

We were so thrilled to have Mindy Gibbins-Klein join us for our latest HOT event. Mindy is an international speaker and executive coach who turns leaders and experts into thoughtful leaders and published authors. She founded three multinational brands which have won and been shortlisted for 17 awards, has authored and co-authored 12 books, and her clients have written and published over 1000 books.

She also delivered a fantastic TEDx talk "Sometimes You Need to Change Yourself to Be Yourself" which has had nearly one million views. Don't worry if you missed the session because you can find more about Thoughtful Leadership opposite.



How Being Thoughtful Pays Off

Thoughtful leadership is a skill, possibly one of the most critical skills in society today, yet so few people know how to be a truly thoughtful leader. We know it when we see it, but many of us believe it is a kind of personality trait: some people are more thoughtful than others. Not true. Well, it is true that some people exhibit thoughtful behaviour more readily or more often than others, but everyone can learn to improve in this area. Not only that, but a focus on thoughtful leadership creates a wonderful return, in terms of morale, retention and overall success of the organisation. Who wouldn't want that? Read on, if you want to learn more.

We were lucky to have a full hour to explore the topic of thoughtful leadership at the HOT session. I found that while many people had not heard the term, everyone knew exactly what it felt like. The interesting learning for me was how few people consider themselves to be experts, but we all want to share our thoughts and best ideas. Therefore, I think we need a way to share those thoughts and ideas without being annoying or arrogant. It's about being bold and sharing opinions, while remaining respectful at all times. In other words, do it thoughtfully!

It's very easy to become more thoughtful; it just requires an intention and a little commitment to learn this skill. Putting more thought and consideration into how you share your ideas, and how you support the people in your team, can have great dividends. Let's assume for the purposes of this article that your team members really want to feel valued and contribute the best of themselves. They do, don't they?

The secret to this whole game is to focus on how much you care about your people and then you will naturally put extra thought and consideration into your communications with them. Here are four ways in which you can become seen as a thoughtful leader, and then since you are a role model, you will encourage others to follow in your footsteps.





Reach

Every team member can be more vocal and visible, sharing their best ideas in writing, on video and in person. There are individuals who would love to represent the organisation and be recognised for sharing their ideas. You can make this part of people's development plans.



Engagement

How you communicate is critical. If you feel you are too busy to see people in person and resort to texts and emails, they will feel that lack of care. On the other hand, if you prioritise the relationships, you will create more loyalty and this can reduce expensive churn.



Authority

It's not only senior management who have creative ideas. You know a lot about your role and your field, but knowing something and not sharing it is quite selfish! You have wisdom to share (yes, you!) and so do many of your team members. If you create a culture where everyone gets to share their best ideas and gets recognition for sharing, you will see people shine, and you will attract even more great people to work with you. Start by allowing people to write articles and blogs, post on social media, record videos and speak at events.



Legacy

Finally, it's all about how people feel after you have left the room. Have you left them with something to think about? Are you even remembered? If you are part of a large team, you may think it's difficult for each person to contribute unique value. In fact, the larger the team, the more creativity and innovation you can harness, to make an even bigger impact with your clients and in the market.

Final Thoughts

So, is it worth it? Only you can decide that. What struck me about Mind'ys session was the impact that being a thoughtful leader has on the people around you and can be the difference in your team members feeling valued and empowered to demotivated and disengaged. Mindy has seen how thoughtful leadership delivers amazing results in the organisations she has worked with who have prioritised thoughtful leadership and developed a culture that rewards thoughtfulness.

Connect with Mindy here:

Mindy's Speaker Website: www.mindygk.com

The Book Midwife: www.bookmidwife.com

All other platforms and links: http://linktr.ee/mindygk



10 steps to help you bounce with energy and wellness

HOT

By Hansa Pankhania, Aum Consultancy

Do you want to live your life bursting with energy and flowing with happiness?







Here are 10 simple, easy and natural ways you can do this

None of the following tips involve the use of medication or stimulants such as caffeine or alcohol which give you a 'feel good' feeling in the short term but are harmful to you in the long term.

Calm environment

Keep your home and workspace clutter free and fresh. Create a calm environment by adding images that you find soothing, such as trees, the ocean, wildlife etc.

2 Exercise

Ensure you have opportunity for movement and exercise at regular intervals in your day. Go for a brisk walk/run or engage in stretching exercises. Walk on the spot when watching TV or dance through your household chores.

Nature

Connecting with nature is invigorating and healing. Plan your day so that you spend time in scenic places where possible. Take time to enjoy your garden, local park and green spaces around you. Observe and find out more about the trees, shrubs and wildlife you see.

4 Healthy eating and drinking

Make sure you are drinking two litres of water daily to flush out the stress toxins. Keep healthy snacks such as fresh fruit, salad and nuts instead of sugary snacks that sap away your energy.

5 Sleep

Ensure you get sufficient sleep. Plan your routine so you get at least seven to nine hours of sleep every day.

6 Relaxation techniques

These do not require a lot of effort and will keep you calm, alert and energised. You do not have to make additional time for them as you can use the time whenever you are waiting for something, e.g. stuck in traffic, advertising breaks during TV programmes or waiting at the dentist. Memorise the script of some of these so you can do them in bed if you cannot sleep or when you need to be calm such as before an interview. There are videos and podcasts of relaxation and breathing techniques on the free resources page on our website here.

Write it out

If something is playing on your mind, grab a paper and pen and write it out. Spill your thoughts and feelings onto paper e.g,

I am so frustrated about......
I feel stuck with my problems because......

This process will empty the stress from your head onto the paper, giving you clarity and space for solutions.

8 Take control

Make a list of the things you can control and focus your energies on these only. Let go of things and situations of uncertainty as you cannot control these but maybe expending huge amounts of your time and energy on them.

9 Talk to people you trust

Open up about any issues that are bothering you instead of struggling to make sense of these by yourself. Talking is cathartic and will highlight options for moving forward with your problems.

Consider counselling

Most large companies provide free counselling for their employees which is confidential and provides a safe space for you to talk about your worries. Speak to your manager about this.

If this is not available, you can get in touch with us at www.aumconsultancy.co.uk. We have a team of experienced counsellors located nationally.

It is my hope that you will begin to work on these steps one at a time and establish a routine where you are integrating all the above in your week. This will keep the stress at bay and keep you happy, healthy, focused, calm and bouncing with energy and happiness.

Hansa Pankhania is an acclaimed author and a renowned coach and speaker on wellbeing, stress reduction and resilience. She is an expert in managerial and corporate wellbeing and has provided coaching and consultancy services to over 300 companies their employees and leaders.

Hansa's passion is to help companies save money lost through stressful situations and develop mindful, thriving workplace cultures. She has published seven books including a series on 'Stress to Success', for adults as well as books helping children build resilience using natural techniques.

All her books are available on Amazon and through her websites.



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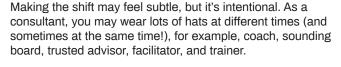
How to thrive as an internal consultant

By Anne-Marie Barlow, Director, Energise Development

So, you've found yourself with a new job title – maybe:

- OD Consultant OD Practitioner L&D Consultant
- · Change Consultant · Business Partner

...but what's really going to be different? And why make the change?



You'll also work at different levels too, sometimes organisational-wide interventions, team/service-specific or individual led.

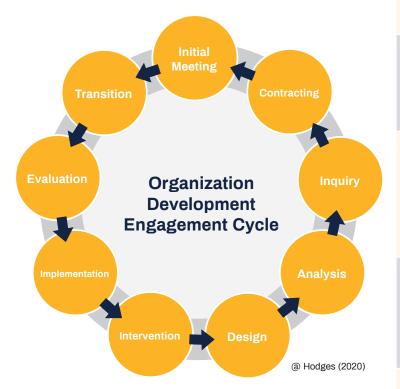


Get to know the consultancy cycle

One of the tools I have relied on heavily over the years is the OD Consultancy Cycle because it helps me to be more planful in my approach.

Having a tool like the consultancy cycle by your side can help you to structure how you approach an intervention. There are various iterations of the cycle but they mostly focus on the following themes:

- Agreeing how you'll work together and any challenges you might face
- Gathering data to build a picture of what's going on
- Analysing the data and sharing your findings and recommendations
- Taking action and evaluating the impact of the actions you've taken
- Agreeing what should happen next



The power of storytelling

When I moved into an internal consultancy role, I remember absorbing so much information; in often complex circumstances, it felt like it was all on me to solve everything.

As internal consultants, we know that sustainable change is important – yet we hold a lot of information as we explore and experiment with organisational change.

One of the tools I learned early on was the power of storytelling – taking complex data, insight and information and translating this into a story that people can not only understand but connect to.

Here are some tips to help you build a story:



Set the scene

Why are you here? What business issue needs some support? Who invited you into this piece of work?



Share the data

What do you know now about the business issue? What facts can you share? How have you gathered this insight? What data has influenced this?



Explore the experience

What are people experiencing right now? Both colleagues, customers and stakeholders? What themes have you identified? (using unedited quotes, or – even better – short videos can be really powerful)



Encourage collaboration

As you present the story, and before you move to potential interventions, pause and ask some questions – where has this story taken you so far? Can you connect with this? What's missing?



Progress

Show your work to date. What have you tried so far? What's next? What do you need support with?

Never underestimate the value of contracting

If I think back to when I've worked on projects that have felt a bit bumpy, it's more likely than not been because I haven't spent enough time on the contracting phase.

Contracting doesn't need to be overly complex, but sometimes the concept of jumping straight into an exciting project can be oh too tempting...

Here are 10 questions to help you contract with a client:

- What event(s) have led us to think that something needs to change here?
- If our work together is a success, what will be different for you?
- Has this particular challenge been explored previously? If so, what happened?
- What issues might I face with this piece of work?
- How will we know if we aren't working together successfully?
- Who is sponsoring the project? Who will be my primary contact?
- Who will be involved in this project? What are their roles and responsibilities?
- 8 What timescale are we working towards?
- 9 How often should I update on progress? And to whom?
- In what scenarios would we end this project early? When would we make that call?

If you don't have one already, how about putting together a template as a team?

Use of self (as an instrument)

Use of self as an instrument concept is a reminder that as practitioners, how we approach our work will be just as important to success as theories, models and tools to support us in our work.

In perfect world we might aim to create a separation between our persona and our practice. However, even with a really high sense of self-awareness, it's a challenge!

What we can do as practitioners is to make sure we are spending time understanding how we might influence the work we do and those around us.

Here are some tips on how you could approach this:

- Regular supervision
- Reflective practice, i.e. journaling
- Personality profiling
- 360 feedback
- Mentoring

Keeping an eye on bias

If we think about our roles as internal consultants vs external consultants we may consider ourselves privileged to know the organisation we are working with - we can build relationships quickly and understand the context we are working in. For lots of reasons, that is true.

However...it can also be a disadvantage. Why? Because all of this helpful information can mean that we can unintentionally hold a bias in our work.

You may have heard of the term confirmation bias. Confirmation bias, (according to our friend Wikipedia) is the tendency to search for, interpret, favour and recall information in a way that confirms or supports one's prior beliefs or values.

Even though we may not see this in ourselves, having prior knowledge about an organisation (and being an employee of that organisation) can influence how we think, approach and show up in our work.

Which leads me to my next point...

Data is your friend

...data really is your friend. Here's why:

- It helps you to focus on the reality of what's going on (diagnostics)
- It helps you to target your intervention
- It helps you to communicate the story
- It helps you track progress and evaluate the impact of changes

Data can come in many forms and each intervention or project may require and present different opportunities for gathering data. Here are a few examples of the different types of data you can explore: Taking a diagnostic approach, which is data-led not only means our work is more likely to succeed, it helps us to be transparent about why we are making recommendations, and evaluate the impact of our work.

Ann-Marie is an experienced OD Practitioner, Facilitator and Coach and has recently joined the WME Talent Bank. Prior to moving into a portfolio career Ann-Marie spent several years working within the public sector helping to lead change. Ann-Marie now works with a range of clients across a range of sectors to help lead change and develop confidence in OD practice.

If you found this article interesting, and would value OD support please contact us at info@wmemployers.org.uk to find out more about our OD Essentials and mentoring support programmes.

Hard data

For example, employee turnover data, sickness absence rates, appraisal information, organisational performance dashboards, grievance and disciplinary data, training attendance rates

Readiness data

What we know about how people experience change or have experienced change in the past, what lessons we have learned, or are still working on. How ready people are for change now

Soft data

For example, employee experience insights, customer feedback, employee forum feedback, market research data, trend research, assumptions or expectations about projects

External data

How people external to the organisation or team perceive the organisation/team, what their expectations are, what they hope for, what they are worried about

ONBOARDING

How West Midlands Employers Can Help Support You

By Priya Saini, Resourcing Advisor, WME

First Impressions

They say you never get a second chance to make a great first impression. This sentiment couldn't be truer when considering onboarding – a process which encompasses not only informal communication prior to a start date, but also a socialisation process for the new employee to understand the ways and norms of their new organisation as well as to learn the mechanics of their new role and team.

Getting onboarding right is a critical part of the employee experience, its the beginning of building a strong psychological contract. Here at West Midlands Employers, we can support you with your onboarding processes.



Onboarding Site at West Midlands Combined Authority

In October 2019, WMCA, supported by WME, went live with TalentLink (applicant tracking system) with a view to modernise their recruitment processes. The ATS was the first phase of this programme of modernisation.

Based on the desire for continuous improvements, the next phase of modernisation for WMCA was the introduction of an onboarding microsite to support their onboarding process for new hires into the organisation.

From a new starter perspective, the purpose of the onboarding site was to visually represent the onboarding process with a 'warm' welcome. The site is also used as an opportunity for new hires to find out more about WMCA as an organisation as well as including information about the benefits of being a WMCA employee e.g. annual leave entitlement. In addition, the site was intended to inform new hires of WMCA's expectations of them as an employee of the organisation, based on the level of their role.

WME's project team worked with WMCA to establish the specification for the site and to understand what WMCA wanted to achieve in the short and long term. The key message was that the site needed to align with the strong corporate WMCA branding, outlining the vision, set of behaviours and core values.



West Midlands Combined Authority's Vision for Onboarding

WMCA has a long-term vision for their onboarding process. The aim of colleagues is that the process will be a fully mapped out, automated, person-centric experience that everyone experiences, regardless of whether they are an employee or agency staff. Onboarding will be central to setting new starters up for success – ensuring that the organisation is legally compliant (e.g. right to work checks) and using automation wherever possible to provide early days information to new staff early on in their careers with the Combined Authority.

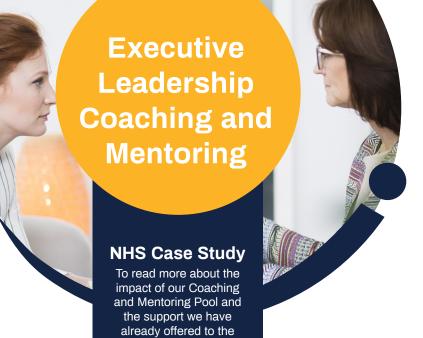
The microsite will be integral to this vision and will be the go-to source of information pertaining to directorate details, who's who, background history on the Combined Authority and strategic aims and objectives. As well as this, the site will provide details of the various networks available to staff (LGBT, BAME, Women's Network, Disability Diversity Network etc.) alongside details on ways of working, including hybrid working.

The team at West Midlands Employers are proud to be able to support West Midlands Combined Authority in working towards their vision for onboarding.

How can West Midlands Employers Help Your Organisation?

We are passionate about people and understand the value of a strong onboarding programme. We will work collaboratively with you to develop the focus points of the site as well as the brand image, which will be reflected in the microsite we create for you to warmly welcome your newest employees to your organisation.

For further information on how we can support your onboarding strategy, please contact us via email on info@wmemployers.org.uk.





By Hiba Bukhari, and Margot Walton, WME

NHS click here:

With the increased requests from our membership Councils for individual coaching – particularly Executive Coaching support for Senior Leaders and an increased interest in adopting coaching to support your leadership development programmes, WME have summarised our Executive Coaching offers making it more accessible to see how we are supporting leaders across the public sector navigate through the complexities of today's challenges.



In essence our latest brochure provides an insight into just some of the key themes we cover, including;

Our coaches

Our ever-growing bank of expert coaches have a wide range of experiences and skills, these can often range from chief executives in local government, leadership, NHS, third sector and private sector. So if there is a particular area you wish to explore we can support you to find a coach that best fits your needs.

To read more about our coaching and mentoring, and what we can offer you see our brochure here, or contact info@wmemployers.org.uk to let us help you choose the best option.

One to one executive coaching

Wellbeing & Resilience Coaching

Career Transitioning Inclusive Coaching

Mentoring

Inspire Academy

By Matt Gofton, CIPD & Manny Sandhu, WME

We are pleased to be delivering our 5th Cohort following on from our initial launch back in March 2021 during the midst of the pandemic. It is fair to say that whilst the initial impetus to establish this programme was to support our people professionals during a period of constant change and a significant business focus upon people services to 'lead' the way, those challenges and pressures have not stopped. Particularly we are





experiencing across all sectors a call upon people professionals to design new structures, create new innovative reward strategies and re-invent the way we attract candidates – the ask of people services is an ever growing ask and reflected in the modular content of the Inspire People Professionals programme.

As we work in an environment where leaders are willing to adopt new approaches, see learning from practice in other sectors and regions, the opportunity for our people professionals access continuous CPD is imperative and at the heart of our retention strategies.

We are pleased to share that the Inspire programmes offers just that for profressionals looking to gain and maintain CIPD membership.

WME Inspire programme offers the opportunity for a fast track route into CIPD membership via tailored Experience assessment. The content and development interventions within the Inspire programme are directly linked to the profession map, therefore the assessment process is simplified without jeopardising the robustness of the assessment process.

Upon completion of Inspire delegates will be invited to a professional discussion with a CIPD assessor, the assessors are there to help you to fulfilling the assessment criteria. The process identifies what knowledge and behaviours you have applied to create impact within your role.

Feedback from delegates is very positive as Experience Assessment is designed to be a reflective process has helped professionals to plan their future development and career aspirations.

There have been successful applicants from previous cohorts and one applicant was even upgraded to fellow level because of the quality of evidence submitted.





"The process was one of my most valuable development experiences, it was quick to complete and there was a range of help and support available at each stage."



"The process has helped me to understand how I can contribute more impact into my role."

If you are looking at ways to develop your people professionals' team and are working within the CIPD Professions Map then we would recommend the Inspire People Professionals Programme that will commence in September 2022.

For further information look at our <u>brochure</u> or <u>case study</u> to apply for one of the few places left click <u>here</u>.



COACHING NOW

Save The Date

Coaching & Mentoring Conference hosted by West Midlands Employers

The West Midlands Coaching & Mentoring Conference will take place on Monday, 7th November 2022 at Birmingham Conference & Events Centre and will feature a range of experts, thought leaders and coaching advocates.

Source: Evaluation Feedback Comments from Coaching Conference 2021

Since its inception in 2007, our conference has grown year on year with delegates citing this must-attend event as a 'great opportunity to network, learn and share'. This conference is extra special as it will also be a celebration of coaching & mentoring within the West Midlands Region – a coaching innovation that has been developed and sustained for 15 years.

professional important enjoyable inspiring thought-provoking interesting Uplifting connecting access important connecting challenging powerful reflective organised organised

As we reflect on the challenges post-pandemic times have had on our organisations, this conference serves as an excellent opportunity for beginner through to seasoned coaches, HR, OD, L&D professionals to come together in person and immerse themselves in current best practice. Under the umbrella theme of Coaching Now - Building quality conversations today for a better tomorrow there will be timely messages from speakers that include:



Christian van
Nieuwerburgh,
Professor
of Coaching
and Positive
Psychology, Royal
College of Surgeons
in Ireland

Renowned within the coaching community, Christian feels that coaching is a wellbeing enhancer and much more. Reciprocity is one outcome from the synergy of positive psychology and coaching that research endorses. Nuggets from his recent publication - Growth Talk - will infuse his keynote presentation.



Jiten Patel, Director, Diversync Ltd

A conscious inclusion thought leader, Jiten suggests that inclusive leadership coaching is a deeper conversation that supports others and in turn informs the diversity agenda that has become an essential aspect of thriving organisations.



Debbie Brown, Company Director & Learning Designer, Enigma

Are you seeking an emotional spa day?
Debbie's personable, engaging, and creative approach fosters an immersive learning experience that empowers and provides meaningful coaching conversations within organisations and their teams.

This one-time event is a personal and professional development to not miss. You are encouraged to save the date as more speakers are announced within the coming weeks.

Book now

Can you join the

Tri-Sector challenge?



By now you must have seen or heard about the Tri-Sector challenge if you have seen any of our emails, social media or even the last edition of the pulse. In partnership with Richard Wills, our lead organiser, WME are recruiting local sector teams to join and take part in this learning adventure for aspiring leaders.

In our previous edition we heard from our own principal consultant Lorna Wells who took part in the event as a Facilitator and how her day went. In this edition we delve a little deeper into the roles and how you can join the challenge yourself.

There are 4 main sectors that will comprise the teams on the day.

These are:

Local Government (County, borough and city councils)

Emergency Services (Fire and ambulance services)

Health (NHS)

Housing (Associations)

If you are a part of any of these associations and you think this challenge may of be benefit to your teams, you can submit a team of 6 to take part on the 7th of November.

If not, you can still help out and support us on the day through our various other roles available.



The LA Challenge, as previously known is something that Hereford have previously participated in. We took part in 2018 and today, as I have joined the council it is still talked about. We had plans to enter a team in 2020 and although it was cancelled we decided to absolutely ensure we had the budget set aside to enter when the opportunity arose again. The new tri-sector challenge format looks amazing and we feel it's a great opportunity for our rising stars to immerse themselves in the experience, which provides a safe space to come together to learn, develop and grow. The excitement and buzz already being created is worth the entrance fee and although we are yet to decide who will be in our team we hope they will enjoy the challenge and who knows hopefully take the win for Herefordshire Council!

Rachel Jones Head of L&OD Herefordshire Council



Roles within the Tri-Sector

Outside of the teams that submit to the challenge, there are also role players needed throughout the day. These role players and their key skills are vital in a successful event, so if you have the ability to think on your feet, manage your time and show a little patience and sense of humour you may be an excellent addition to the day.

The roles we are offering are:

Overlords

This name is usually given to a senior political figure within an organisation such as a leader, Commissioner and or Chair of Trustees.

Experience and skills:

Equivalent to Executive manager/Chief Executive Officer.

Confident with the ability to think on their feet.

Will be provided with a game play script to ensure a broadly similar scenario is followed for each specialisation.

Facilitators

This role will require you to play characters from different organisations in meetings with teams from across all specialisations.

Experience and skills:

Equivalent to head of department or a service manager.

Facilitators will meet with teams up to 10 times throughout the day. Each meeting will last 5 minutes and will be assessed, by the Facilitator, against a given set of criteria. They will also be required to participate in some additional ad-hoc (as far as the teams are concerned) meetings.

Media Facilitators

This role will entail working as a journalist or Media management role to question the public officials.

Experience and skills:

Ideally individuals within Media or Journalism roles.

Understanding of how journalists work and the type of questions to ask.

They will also be provided with a game play script to ensure a broadly similar scenario is followed for each specialisation.

Supervisors

This role is taken on by people assessing and monitoring (to a set criteria) each teams routines throughout the event. They are looking to pick up the positive and negative aspects of individual teams performances. This role may also require individuals to jump into other roles at short notice as required.

The event will offer a fantastic opportunity for aspiring leaders to gain exposure to issues outside of their normal work giving them a taste of what senior management is really like. To successfully complete the challenge teams will have to work with neighbouring stakeholders and partners to deliver a new strategy for their organisation.

Visit our website to fill out the sign up form here





By Lesley Shore – Corporate Director, HR and Corporate Services

The story is all too familiar to most of us – who can spare a morning, a day, a few days, away from our very busy computers to attend a network event, meeting or conference? We may all be guilty of prioritising the "day to day" (no doubt important) work over time-out to be in new surroundings, being presented with thoughts and ideas from others outside our organisation, with people we may not have seen for a while or connected with in person, or with new people and contacts we would not otherwise have the opportunity to meet.

What happens though when we step from behind the computer screen and go out into the networking world?

Rebecca, Manny and myself found ourselves at the LGA conference this year for the first time as a management team, post covid and with WME in it's new form. There is always a degree of trepidation in knowing what to expect, how valuable the effort would be both in time away from the desk managing a very busy workload and also in the resource commitment in attending a three day event, but part of WME's strategic plan is to reposition ourselves and to raise our profile as an REO – albeit that in person appearances have been delayed somewhat by Covid- so it seemed like the LGA conference was the right national stage on which to embark on such a mission.

Apart from the planning and organising such an event takes (thanks Team WME!) there is always a degree of personal preparedness required to network effectively. So before you set out on your next networking foray ask yourself:



Who are your key "targets" to speak to and how will you make sure you have a useful 2 way dialogue



What take-homes do you want from an event – is it contacts, ideas, or just to recharge and re-energise yourself by new surroundings?



How will you make sure you follow up on anything you bring back so that the impact is not lost when you get back behind your screen?

The benefits of networking, particularly on career progression, have been widely acknowledged. In the study, "The Strength of Weak Ties," it was found that 84% of respondents got their job through weak-tie relationships—acquaintances or casual contacts whom they saw only occasionally (Leslie, 2020), yet 41% of us would like to network more but don't have enough time (Marketing Expertus, 2020).

But it's not just about career progression or your next opportunity. It's also about contacts to help you bring in new ideas, wider and more varied perspectives and challenges to your existing

practices, learning from others and keeping an open mind to new approaches.

Mostly though it's about those one to one discussions which mean you grow in awareness, creative intellect, resource library and self confidence – and connect as humans to others.

A big thank you to all those we spoke to at the conference – from our regions Chief Execs who visited our stand to discuss their burning issues, life stories and next asks of WME, our Council Leaders and Elected Members for stopping to share their conference experience and ask the challenging questions of us, and for those contacts from other organisations, new and renewed, who we look forward to forging closer relationships with in the future.

Was it hard work? – yes, are we still playing catch up? - yes Are we doing it again next year? – Absolutely yes! 4th to 6th July Next year in Bournemouth – we look forward to seeing you there.

Is Bournemouth a bit too far? We will also be at a number of events for the rest of the year so make sure you come along and practice your networking skills.

HOT – Birmingham

TriSector Challenge

Coaching Conference





Wolverhampton Homes

changing our approach to candidate management in an ever-increasing competitive market for talent

By Dean Lathbury, WME

In the previous edition we introduced Wolverhampton Homes who manage and look after more than 22,000 homes on behalf of the City of Wolverhampton Council. In 2021 they undertook an internal service review to consider developments to their resourcing service and asked West Midlands Employers (WME) to support elements of this project in the autumn of 2021 in order to:

- Improve the candidate experience.
- Adopt and implement TalentLink applicant tracking system in line with the new resourcing process to utilise the functionality of TalentLink to manage the end to end recruitment process and support the incremental roll out of self-service elements to managers.
- Support efficiency savings to the recruitment service by streamlining processes within the recruitment workflow.
- Upskill relevant HR users to be able to confidently use the system.

Working with Wolverhampton Homes HR team, the project was managed entirely virtually with all training, meetings and support sessions moved online.

WME agreed to utilise a virtual programme of support using a "supported build" methodology, whereby WH team members configured the TalentLink system themselves, with the WME team on hand to offer support and guidance. This method allowed the local HR team to build the system "from the ground up" and practically embed this knowledge.



Cara Weatherley, HR Business Partner at Wolverhampton Homes said

"Having previously had no ATS system in place, TalentLink has enabled us to improve our recruitment process considering both efficiency and enhanced the candidate experience through an improved look and feel to the process and better communications throughout the applicant journey".

The new process went live in April, with WH are now looking to enhance their process further by introducing more elements of functionality and self-service.



Commenting on the implementation project Cara shared

"We received valuable support from the WME team to assist our implementation and ensure that we were equipped with the knowledge that we needed to continue to review and improve our use of the system. We look forward to continuing to work with the team and making the best use of the functionality the system offers".

The regional WMJobs and Talent Acquisition Software service – Talent Link is available to all public sector bodies within the West Midlands Region including Arm's Length Management Organisation's (ALMO's) like Wolverhampton Homes to ensure as a sector we have the best possible talent attraction and management approaches to help us gain the very best talent.

For more information on how you can access these services contact info@wmemployers.org.uk



Digital Identity Document Validation Technology (IDVT)



By Dean Lathbury, WME

In December 2021, the Government released their policy paper on Digital identity document validation technology (IDVT), announcing that from the 6th of April 2022 IDVT will be introduced to support employers and landlords with right to work, right to rent and pre-employment DBS checks. Further guidance around the certification process for suppliers of IDVT was released on 17th January 2022.

Essentially this will allow landlords and employers to use new digital identity document validation technology (IDVT) through certified identity service providers (IDSPs). This development will align with DBS' proposal to enable digital identity checking within their pre-employment checking process, through the introduction of its Identity Trust Scheme.

On 6th June 2022 the GOV site was updated to include what appears to be the first two accredited IDSPs (Identity Service Providers) – Yoti and HooYu Limited (Mitek)

Employers and landlords will be able to work with IDSPs to utilise Identification Document Validation Technology (IDVT) to carry out digital identity checks on behalf of British and Irish citizens who hold a valid passport (including Irish passport cards).

To share some information from Yoti as an example: they appear to provide several services, including the Right to Work Service, provided in partnership with the Post Office. The right to work service is summarised with 3 options:

Identity Verification

Verified Customers without the hassle Age verification Age checks within seconds

eSignatures

Secure and simple
eSignatures
Right to work
Digital right to work
checks
Digital ID
The digital ID app for
consumers

Health Testing

Simple health testing
Authentication
Multi-Factor log in
Right to rent
Remote right to rent
checks

How it works

Offer your candidates three easy ways to prove their right to work



Online

They can upload their documents and a selfie to your website or app



In branch

Those that prefer some human assistance can take their documents to a Post Office branch to be scanned by a Postmaster.



Digital ID app

Tech savvy candidates can create a reusable digital ID on their phone and share identity details pre-verified by Yoti

*For UK and Irish nationals

The following checks are made once the candidate has utilised one of the above options to provide documentation.

Verification checks

Automate the employee vetting process

Leave the verification to the experts and our AI





Yoti

"We'll send you a report including an image of the candidate's passport to you with the metadata that includes our certification as an Identity Services Provider (IDSP). You can securely store employee data on our encrypted systems and access it when you need."

They also state that "Our ID checks are compliant with GPG45 standards so you'll be good to go to perform a Basic, Standard or Enhanced DBS check."

This is clearly a new and "moving" initiative. As such, WME has made initial contact with Yoti and Hooyu to discuss service provision and we will share further details with you as this progresses.





Your public sector jobs board

Growing from Strength to Strength









62%

INCREASE in candidate account registrations



By Chloe Herrmann, Senior Resourcing Consultant, WME

2021 / 2022 was a fantastic year for WMJobs with growth in all areas, but we know that recruitment and resourcing is a challenge for everyone due to the current competitive candidate-driven market. Taking this into account, our focus for WMJobs in 2022 / 2023 is to increase the volume of quality candidates to WMJobs and raise awareness of careers in the public sector.

Here's a look at just some of the activities we will be focusing on;

Attendance at job fairs across the region

We'll be at job fairs across the region to promote WMJobs to a new audience outside of our sector.

To date, we've booked to attend the following events and are looking to go to many more throughout the next 12 months ϑ beyond. Please let us know if you're also attending events – we can come along to support or provide you with WMJobs flyers for your stand.

Friday 26th August	Mercure Telford Centre Hotel, Telford
Wednesday 14th September	Walsall Works' Event
Friday 30th September	Molineux, Wolverhampton
Wednesday 5th October	Villa Park, Birmingham
Wednesday 26th October	Aston University
Wednesday 26th October	Coventry Building Society Arena

LinkedIn Sponsored adverts

Our 'Job of the Week' and 'Featured Job' enhancements now include a LinkedIn Sponsored advert to increase awareness and the reach of the roles.



Showcasing careers in the Public Sector

We'll be publishing career spotlight & 'day in the life' stories to showcase the variety of careers and unique benefits within the sector.



Improving SEO within WMJobs

By further improving our Search Engine Optimisation through both enhancements to our 'job type' and 'sector' landing pages, and an increase in quality careers advice articles, we will improve our organic search rankings.



Updating candidate help pages

To ensure that candidates have the best experience on WMJobs we'll be updating our candidate help pages.



Increased engagement with candidates

Our increased presence on social media, promoting individual roles and also quality careers advice plus attending events will increase our engagement with candidates to help them find the right opportunities.

We'd like all our local authorities represented within our articles to ensure we demonstrate the full breadth of opportunity in the sector, if you would like to get involved, please email c.herrmann@wmemployers.org.uk

We are excited about the future for WMJobs and hope you are too, watch this space for further updates about what we are working on for your regional jobs board.

CIPD People Impact Tool – Professionalising HR

Here at WME we recognize that our people professionals are at the heart of aligning to our vision to:

"Advocate, build and champion people centered organisations for a resilient and diverse public sector workforce that benefits everyone in the West Midlands"



By Hiba Bukhari, WME

Thus we are continually looking at innovative and research led initiatives that will enhance and develop the people function's effectiveness in councils. To this end we piloted the CIPD's People Impact (PI) Tool which is an admin-light, online survey tool to assess the **People function as a whole** against the CIPD benchmark to inform People development initiatives.

The tool was created following research involving a number of CIPD clients across Asia, Middle East and UK. Organisations wanted to understand their people function's capability and impact on business strategy, as well as readiness for the future.

The PI Tool captures perceptions from inside and outside the people function. The data captured creates further opportunities for more detailed diagnostic, development solutions etc.

It assesses the people function through three distinct lenses:

1
People
Function
Capability

2
Impact on the
Business
Readiness for
the Future

How can this tool support you?

- Access independent and trusted advice to help support people functions assess their current and future plans in a 'deep' dive that is not afforded to in other peer reviews
- Assess the readiness for the future and enable opportunities for benchmarking and networking across councils at a local, regional and national level (and beyond Local Govt Sector) and insights to inform regional and national strategies
- Provide the sector a systematic way to assess how people Functions are operating – a vital diagnostic tool for people leaders
- Inform people development initiatives at a local, regional and national level – aligned with CIPD Profession map
- Inform organisational redesign of people functions, providing measurable insights pre and post re-structures.

Our Approach

You will be assigned a dedicated CIPD team, who will work with you and the at a pace that aligns to your organisational needs. Typically, a People Impact Tool project follows the outline shown below.



Set up

- Survey set up client People team name and logo
- It testing Ensuring respondents can access the assessment
- Survey link is sent internally to participants inside and outside the People team (CIPD doesn't hold any email addresses) – Weeks 1-2



Delivery

- Participants complete the assessment online
- Weekly status reports on number of respondents
- Online assessment closes weeks 3-5



Results

- Data summary report is created and issues to client
- Consultation meeting to discuss the results weeks 6-7



Development

 Develop the HR / People team builds solutions to meet common HR development needs – CIPD can support this – Week 7+

We look to provide clear and engaging comms to accompany the launch and completion of the People Impact Tool. Its ease of use allows us to create specific comms for each respondent group, which can be easily distributed by the organisation.

We can adapt the comms to your specific needs, and ensure it aligns to your corporate voice and tone.

1 Intro email

What's coming • Purpose of the survey
 To individuals inside and outside the People team

2 Follow-up email

- Link/password to the survey What you need to do
 Confidentiality The results
 - 3 Closing Final page of the survey
 Thank you Link to profession map

Our Learning

Having piloted this approach in Walsall Council, who were keen to use a benchmarking approach to help them in their journey to review their current delivery models and ensure that future people strategy aligns with the needs of the business.



"Using the tool is the start of a journey and it gives you that external validation. We have a benchmark now and in two years' time I can go back and do it again and see what the difference is. I would recommend the tool to other local authorities." Michelle Leith

To read the full case study click here:

WME have worked on your behalf to agree a discounted rate for WME members wishing to us the CIPD People Impact alongside dedicated support from the WME team in digesting and create action plans which follow from the findings.

For more information on how this tool can benefit please contact info@wmemployers.org.uk



Demystifying Islam: Tackling Islamophobia

By Shakil Butt, HR Professional, Hero for Hire

The University of Birmingham survey 2022 revealed Islamophobia is the 'posh person's prejudice' stating people from middle and upper-class occupational groups are more likely to hold prejudiced views of Islam than people from working class occupational groups.





Middle and upper class occupational groups tend to occupy senior positions in the workplace thereby potentially negatively impacting a wide range of HR practices across the employee journey from recruitment to dismissal. Despite being second generation and third generation in the workplace Muslims are disproportionately under represented. There is now enough evidence of the double penalty faced in entering the labour market of racial discrimination as well as Islamophobia.

The Equality Act 2010 includes race and religion or belief as protected characteristics which affords certain provisions to enable a person to practice their faith without fear of being discriminated against. Islamophobia has been on the rise and has been amplified by certain elements in the media and political agendas so it is important to tackle Islamophobia to prevent discrimination.

The 'War' on Talent

Following Brexit and the 'great resignation' during the pandemic, there are a number of skill shortages across every sector and industry. Conversely only 19.8% of the Muslim population are in fulltime employment when compared to 34.9% in the overall population. Whilst 7.2% of Muslims are unemployed compared to 4.0% in the overall population.

The percentage of Muslims (over 16) with 'Degree level and above' qualifications is similar to the general population (24% and 27% respectively) which suggests a great opportunity for employers to address skills shortages and retention challenges by creating workplaces that are more inclusive and attractive to Muslims.

In understanding this, WME are now introducing a workshop designed to tackle some of the common misconceptions that are often the drivers of Islamophobia.

Delivery emphasis will be on challenging the learners assumptions and educating them to enable them to be able to distinguish between fact and fiction to better understand Islam and Muslims more widely to engage with their Muslim colleagues whilst creating a safe space for all involved.

This workshop will be delivered by Shakil Butt, who is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (FCIPD), the board champion for Inclusion at the CIPD and a Diversity and Inclusion specialist with over 30 years of working with diverse communities, 23 of which was working at Islamic Relief Worldwide, an international relief and development charity, at a senior level. Shakil features regularly in leading HR publications writing on a range of issues tackling racism and discrimination in the workplace.

He has extensive experience in the design and delivery of a variety of training interventions, is a skilled facilitator and an accredited Institute of Leadership Management (ILM) and Action Centred Leadership (ACL) trainer.

Shakil is well known by WME clients through his work on various diversity and inclusion workshops, allyship programmes and his work dealing with complex employee relations discrimination cases.

This session, 'Demystifying Islam: Tackling Islamophobia' has been designed from his extensive personal lived experience and he is interested in sharing this with all staff but particularly managers in a safe space to help create a successful inclusive working environment.

To read more about this workshop and to find out how it can benefit you and your team click here.



New to WME

Andrew Pain

Andrew is on a mission to prevent burnout and create decisive and resilience communities of people. Working as a TEDx, and approved VISTAGE speaker and ICF accredited coach, Andrew helps organisational leaders to overcome some of the most challenging questions they face today, like:

How do you deliver on your responsibilities and aspirations without burning out and sacrificing your health, sanity and most precious relationships?

How do you know when to play it safe, do something audacious, hang in there or walk away?

How do you delegate a task to your team and massively increase the chances of the job being done on time and to the standard you want?

How do you develop resilient and proactive teams of people, when resources are scarce and the goalposts keep moving?!

Andrew delivers inspirational and content-rich workshops/ talks, working with varied group sizes from 3-4 people, to groups of 15/20 people and up to groups of 800 people, delivering specialist talks on hugely important leadership subjects:

- Burnout Critical Decision Making Delegation
- Time Management and personal performance
- Resilience and tackling adversity

With 25 years post-graduate HR and business development experience, including; recruitment, general HR, business development, coaching, learning and development, Andrew now runs his own speaking and training business, working with diverse clients including; Amazon,

with diverse clients including; Amazor Lloyds, Aston University, Yorkshire Ambulance Service, Essex County Council, Birmingham City University, Chartered Institute of Marketing, Association of Project Management, Federation of Small Businesses, Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, Institute of Directors.



Ann-Marie is an experienced leader in Local Government and OD Practitioner.
Ann-Marie now works with clients across a range of sectors to help them to lead change and improve organisational health. As well has her work in leading change, Ann-Marie specialises in supporting OD practitioners to develop their confidence and expertise as internal consultants.

- Mentoring in OD practice
- · Change readiness assessments
- Culture interventions
- Leadership and management development programmes
- Strengths-based profiles
- Psychometrics for both executive recruitment and coaching
- Employee engagement & employee experience
- Coaching at all levels

Prior to setting up my own business, Energise Development, in 2020 I spent most of my career in Local Government.

In 2018 the work I led on helped the tri-council partnership I worked for to win the MJ Workforce Transformation Award.

In 2019 I took a lead role in helping to shape a brandnew unitary council. Bringing together six councils into one brings both challenges and opportunities, and organisational change on this level means that the human side of change is of critical importance.

I now work with clients across a range of sectors to lead change and improve organisational health. Having a portfolio career means that from time to time I work as an interim leader, this helps me to stay connected to the challenges that the public sector faces and continue to design my work around the reality of organisational life.

- Association for Coaching Member
- Hogan Psychometric Suite Coach and facilitator
- Strength scope Coach and facilitator
- ILM Coaching and Mentoring L5
- ILM Leadership and Management L4
- ILM Team Leading L3

MJ Awards Winners CONGRATULATIONS







Telford & Wrekin Council

Council of the Year



Wolverhampton Council

Winner of Innovation in both Adults & Childrens Services



Warwick
Council CEO Monica Fogerty

CEO of the Year at MJ Awards



Warwick County Council - Nigel Minns

Strategic Director of the Year (Director of People)

Worcester County Council - Highly Commended Innovation in Diversity and Inclusion

Dates for your diary

WME Calendar of Events 2022

Wednesday 28th September 2022	HOT in Person - Birmingham
Tuesday 11th ୫ Thursday 13th October 2022	Employment Law - Virtual
Monday 7th November 2022	Coaching Conference - Birmingham
Thursday 10th November 2022	Tri-Sector Challenge - Birmingham
Wednesday 7th December 2022	Heads of HR Lunch - Birmingham

WME Products



Investigation Grievance and Disciplinary Services 2021



Job **Evaluation**



Mediation



Service Restructure Support



Introduction to Coaching & **Mentoring**



Aware Management Development Programme



Embracing and Advancing Equality, **Diversity and Inclusion**



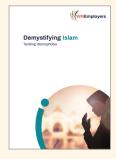
Human **Conversations Masterclass**



Inspire People Professionals Academy



WME 360



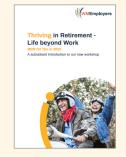
Tackling Islamophobia



New Ways of Working



Managing our Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace

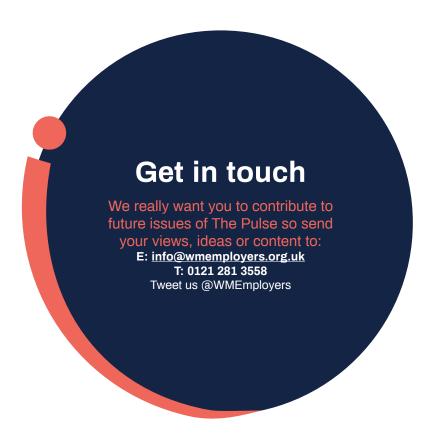


Thriving in Retirement



Executive Recruitment

Next issue in Autumn!





Proud to design for WME

WYCHAVON

DISTRICT COUNCIL

good services, good value