

London

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Business Matters

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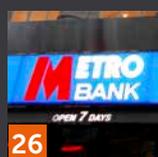
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Front cover: *Street Life* by Olivia Ritchie, a winner in the Global SinoPhoto Awards (Photo credit: Olivia Ritchie/Global SinoPhoto Awards)

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Okonjo-Iweala takes up top WTO post



This month former Nigerian finance minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala starts work as the director-general of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the first woman and the first African to lead the global trade body, succeeding Roberto Azevêdo at a critical time



Dr Okonjo-Iweala emerged as the preferred candidate after a rigorous process and her appointment has been widely welcomed as her long experience in economy, finance and development has been recognised.

Dr Okonjo-Iweala said a key priority for her would be to work with members to quickly address the economic and health consequences brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Challenges

"I am honoured to have been selected by WTO members as WTO Director-General. A strong WTO

is vital if we are to recover fully and rapidly from the devastation wrought by the pandemic. I look forward to working with members to shape and implement the policy responses we need to get the global economy going again. Our organization faces a great many challenges

but working together we can collectively make the WTO stronger, more

"A strong WTO is vital if we are to recover fully and rapidly from the devastation wrought by the pandemic."

agile and better adapted to the realities of today."

LCCI chief executive Richard Burge said that the appointment was a great result and sent his congratulations commenting that, as Dr Okonjo-Iweala had indicated, the real work would begin now and that he was among many ready to offer their assistance.

www.wto.org

Hot topic

This year's Tacitus Lecture - *Too hot to trade: world trade and climate action* - was given by Dr Kirsten Dunlop, chief executive of EIT Climate-KIC. Her mission in this role is to lead the speeding up of the world's transition towards a zero-carbon economy.



Broadcast to online audiences around the world, the lecture focused on how businesses can innovate to create profound systemic change and sustainable world trade.

Dr Dunlop's career spans academia, consulting, banking, insurance, strategy, design, innovation and leadership. She is one of 16 experts at the Economic and Societal Impact of Research and Innovation expert group, providing independent advice on how future EU research and innovation policy can best support sustainable development and the European Commission's priorities.

The World Traders' Tacitus Lecture was sponsored by the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry

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Business coalition urges support for London's essential role

In advance of this month's Budget, a coalition representing London's business community wrote to the Chancellor to outline the capital's needs from the 2021 Budget

The letter, from LCCI, London's Local Chambers, and the Central London Alliance, tells of measures that the thousands of businesses that they represent need to survive through the Covid-19 crisis, as well as ways that government can support London's economic recovery.

Sense of despair

The group report that London "businesses and workers are crippling under the weight of the pandemic" with its impact and related restrictions leaving the capital with some of the highest numbers in the UK in terms of unemployment and



job losses. "The most recent ONS survey estimated a record increase to 6.9 per cent unemployment. Furthermore, LCCI's most recent Quarterly Economic Survey with Sa-

Investment in the capital's transport infrastructure should therefore be treated as a necessary solution to building back better, rather than an impediment to national growth

vanta ComRes revealed the worst economic outlook amongst the capital's business leaders since the period following the financial crisis of 2008. The months of ongoing uncertainty caused by constant, rapidly changing restrictions and the absence of a path to recovery have created a genuine sense of despair among workers and business owners alike."

Whilst it is unquestionable that every part of the UK has felt the impacts of Covid-19, the coalition urge the government to recognise the significant difference in the costs of doing business in the capital and the disproportionate impact coronavirus has had on central London.'

Beneficial footprints

LCCI chief executive Richard Burge said: "This letter not only represents businesses in the capital, but many who have presence and other beneficial footprints into regions across the UK, and who also draw international investment into the country.

"As we look to recover from this pandemic we need the government to be loud and proud about London and the role that it plays both nationally and globally – as the economies of capital and country are intrinsically linked. Allowing London to

be levelled-down will not aid level-uping the rest of the UK. A thriving London is the main and essential way to help level-up the regions that desperately need the help."

The coalition urge the Chancellor to urgently:

- extend furlough beyond the end of April
- maintain the business rates holiday and extend the VAT relief scheme until March 2022
- extend the deferral of all other tax liabilities until the end of 2021, allowing until mid-2022 to resolve deferred payments and removing the obligation to pay interest on late payment on such liabilities
- increase the top level of business grants for the largest businesses forced to lock down, and remove the cap on discretionary grants to better reflect the high costs of doing business in London
- deploy the necessary funding and resources to put in place a long-overdue effective testing system
- introduce targeted support for the aviation sector, including full business rates relief for airports
- introduce targeted support for night-time economy and accommodation businesses which have been unable to open since last March

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- introduce targeted support for arts and culture by increasing theatre tax relief and providing tax relief to supply chain businesses that supply the arts and culture sector
- set out a clear solution for landlords and tenants to address the rent arrears crisis
- introduce a government insurance scheme for live events designed to cover the costs incurred due to lockdowns (nationally or regionally) and incurred by Covid-related risks.



Successfully functioning public transport will be absolutely critical to the recovery of London's economic activity

- Recovery**
- Looking toward recovery, the coalition call on the Chancellor to provide targeted support to help hospitality, travel, tourism, culture and leisure industries to reopen by:
- grant funding to help make cultural venues Covid-19 secure and to enable the reopening of venues
 - a reversal of the decision to abolish VAT refunds for all overseas visitors and making the scheme digital
 - abolishing the curfew for hospitality businesses
 - providing that the necessary measures are in place for this to

- be done safely (namely a suitably functioning testing system), re-introducing *Eat Out to Help Out* and exploring a similar scheme – or voucher scheme – for the culture sector
- introducing a scheme to fund the difference between ticket sales and break-even point and cover the cost of cancellation in the event of further movement restrictions
- investing in retrofitting buildings to improve their environmental performance and generate eco-

- investing in a global destination marketing campaign to encourage local, domestic and international visitors to travel to central London when it is safe to do so
 - investing in supporting businesses and workers at all skills levels to pivot to new opportunities where needed.
- Global reputation**
- The group urged that it is vital that the government agree a long-term settlement with Transport for London, as successfully functioning public transport will be absolutely critical to the recovery of London's economic activity and is essential to its global reputation and competitiveness as a world city.
- Both factors have a key role to play in the UK's overall recovery and competitiveness. Investment in the capital's transport infrastructure should therefore be treated as a necessary solution to building back better, rather than an impediment to national growth.
- Helen McIntosh, Chair of London's Local Chambers, said: "LLC is pleased to be part of this important business coalition and we fully support the proposals to help London return as a proud capital city."
- economic activity
 - reducing VAT on admission for currently non-exempt forms of entertainment, such as "commercial" performances.
- In addition to this, steps must be taken to revive the competitiveness of London's economy, particularly its Central Activities Zone (CAZ) including:
- expanding flexible rail ticketing to help workers adapt to changing work patterns,
 - incentivising new businesses to start up in or move into the CAZ,

Lockdown easing plan welcomed

Responding to last month's unveiling of the government's plan to ease lockdown, LCCI chief executive Richard Burge said that businesses would welcome the clarity provided by the Prime Minister and appreciate that there were respective dates for which to plan. "Whilst I'm sure some businesses will be frustrated they cannot yet open or fully function, the past has proven that

caution is required, and if this approach protects the vaccination programme and brings an end to this crisis then no one should argue with the process.

Economic impact

"The key now is for the government to continue to support businesses so that they can survive and be the bedrock of our recovery. It's clear that footfall, commuting,

business travel, domestic and international tourism will stay suppressed for some months to come. Across the country, but in London particularly, this will bring detrimental economic impact. So we need to urgently hear what support the government will continue to provide and over what time period."

Burge added that the roadmap document was extensive and

welcomed. "It's important now that government keep us updated on how the vaccination programme is reducing the impact of the virus, the progress of the respective reviews being undertaken, and how test and trace systems are being improved for both now and the future."

See pages 30-31 for details of the lockdown easing roadmap

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New app to help London's business community

LCCI is offering the capital's businesses a new, free, way to be part of its community, with the launch of a networking app designed to support business development and aid Covid-19 economic recovery.

The Chamber is providing the capital's firms, traders and entrepreneurs with free access to a new *London Chamber Community Network* – including a free app (available through mobile and web browser) that allows businesses to connect with one another digitally, talk on a one-to-one basis, join common interest discussions, engage with LCCI's research work about issues impacting London business, and access events and services – see box below for more details.

LCCI chief executive Richard



Burge said: "The impact of Covid-19 has affected businesses right across the capital, so I'm pleased that London Chamber of Commerce and Industry is able to broaden its offer, for free, to businesses across London's boroughs.

"Our new community network and app will bring more businesses and employees together, to connect with one another, do business, join sector interest groups, participate

continued on page 7



Getting connected

The LCCI Community App is a free B2B social network app for Chamber members and any business who registers with the free LCCI Community Network. Recognising that businesses are at their best when they come together, the app facilitates these connections digitally and allows businesses across London to connect, share and chat.

Designed to support business development, the digital B2B app enables professionals to:

- Connect with peers and start 1-to-1 chats
- Join sector and interest groups
- Find out about upcoming events
- Discover LCCI member product and service offers
- Get access, engage and provide comment on LCCI's policy, research and media activities.

Profile raising

The app has business interest groups that everyone can join and contribute to, as well as a selection of LCCI Member exclusive groups and sector-led groups. Take part to find out the latest news in your industry, find peers to collaborate with and share your business updates, events and opinion pieces. All this enables individuals and companies to showcase their expertise to the network.

One-stop shop

The app serves as a one-stop shop and gives a snapshot of LCCI's latest news and updates and ensures member news and interviews are highlighted. Users can gain quick insights with the integrated Twitter feed and list of upcoming events.

Open to all London businesses

You can download the IOS or Android app on your mobile by searching for 'London Chamber Community'. Or you can join on desktop at: <https://community.londonchamber.co.uk/login>

LCCI Members and Community Network participants can login to the app straightaway using their existing LCCI online account details. Make sure to customise your profile and join appropriate groups.

LCCI non-members welcome

During these challenging times for businesses, LCCI is providing the capital's firms, traders and entrepreneurs with free access to a new 'London Chamber Community Network'. With a Community Network account you can access a number of free benefits, including the LCCI Community App. **Sign up at:** www.londonchamber.co.uk/membership/london-chamber-community-network/

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in LCCI's policy and campaigning work, and access advice and services. Collectively we can deliver a stronger and faster economic recovery for London and the UK."

Engage

The new service has instantly hit the spot with a variety of users. Gareth West of Schroders Personal Wealth commented: "The app is a great and quick way to engage with the wider LCCI community as you can access via your phone. It has easy functionality and enabled me to build my network, for others to connect with me and stay in touch with what is going on in the wider world that may impact me and the business I work for"

Mark Jenkinson, director of Crystal Associates called the app a powerful tool. "If you're not yet on it, I'd say get on it – you won't be able to put your phone down!"



Timi Orija (pictured above), chief executive and founder of 4S Events said: "The app is very useful and easy to use. It's a great way to keep up to date with what is happening in real time and is fast becoming the 'go to' app to engage with the community."

New leadership at Centre for London

A decade ago, Ben Rogers set up the Centre for London, the capital's dedicated think tank with a mission to develop solutions for its challenges and make the case for a fair and prosperous city.

At the time, when asked by *London Business Matters* what had prompted him, he said: "I had worked in think tanks and always had an interest in cities. I was meaning for ages to write a book about London, specifically a history of the public realm here – it's the most distinctive feature of London and in some ways our most valuable asset. I thought the city needed a critical friend, someone to help facilitate conversations between different parts of London and government."



Now Rogers is moving on and is being replaced by Dr. Nick Bowes, (pictured) currently policy director at the Greater London Authority.

Bowes has had senior positions at the CBI, Make UK and the Roy-

al Society and between 2010 and 2015, was the special adviser to Sadiq Khan as Shadow Secretary of State for Justice and Constitutional Reform.

Longstanding issues

Bowes, due to start his new role in June said: "The decisions London's policymakers will take over the coming few years will decide the course of the capital for a lifetime. Covid-19 has exposed the long-standing issues faced by the city, and the recovery from the pandemic will dominate the policy agenda for many years to come.

Liz Peace CBE, chair of Trustees at Centre for London said: "Ben Rogers was always going to be a hard act to follow but I don't think we could have found anyone else as well suited to take on the mantle of running the Centre for London as Nick."

www.centreforlondon.org



Reaching a settlement of an employment issue



by Jonathan Mansfield

For most businesses it is better to settle an employment issue way before it reaches an employment tribunal. This way they can avoid the stress and time waste of a lengthy performance improvement, disciplinary or restructuring process.

If a claim has already been submitted to the Employment Tribunal, the most straightforward way to achieve settlement is to use ACAS. ACAS will act as an intermediary, and any settlement terms reached during discussions with them can be formalised into an agreement known as COT3. This is particularly useful for cases where a claimant is not represented.

In 2013, the term "protected conversations" was introduced under Section 111A of the Employment Rights Act 1996. It allowed companies to have "off the record" conversations with their employees who they might wish to part with. Such conversations cannot then be used in subsequent employment tribunal proceedings, which is good for the company because it might render a dismissal unfair by giving the impression the employee was targeted. An employee might also refer to the conversation as evidence that the employer is undermining trust and confidence and, therefore, constructive dismissal. Unfortunately, this process is limited to what is often referred to as "normal" unfair dismissals. These are typical cases where a dismissal occurs because of

poor performance, conduct or redundancy or similar. The protection does not extend to issues such as whistleblowing, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

For example, if your employee blows the whistle by raising concerns about health and safety and suggests that there is a public interest issue or if a discrimination issue is raised the conversation may not be protected. However, where there is a genuine dispute between the parties which might lead to litigation if not resolved, settlement discussions may be protected by the "without prejudice" rule. This does not mean that simply calling something "without prejudice" means it cannot be referred to in legal proceedings. There must be a genuine attempt to settle an existing dispute.

If agreement is reached in principle, and assuming there are no proceedings, the parties will need to record a Settlement Agreement. The agreement will have to be professionally drafted to comply with a number of specific rules. Employer and employees will both need to get independent legal advice on filling in the form. Working for companies, our employment lawyers can recommend how to initiate, negotiate and formalise a settlement in a way which properly protects the business.

Jonathan Mansfield, co-founding partner, Thomas Mansfield Solicitors

If you are interested in learning more, please join our webinar on 11 March 2021. You can sign up here: www.thomasmansfield.com/training-events/.





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Types of Sponsor Licences for UK employers under immigration rules

You can apply for “Sponsor Licence for Workers” or “Sponsor License for Temporary Workers” or select to apply for both types to sponsor both types of workers.

Under the new immigration rules, you will need a sponsor licence to employ someone from outside the UK including citizens of EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland if they arrive in the UK after 31 December 2020. This includes unpaid work, like running a charity or unpaid volunteering.

Worker licence

A ‘Worker’ licence will let you employ people for long-term or permanently. Worker license is required for sponsoring:

- **Skilled Workers** - the role must meet the job suitability requirements.
- **Intra-company visas** - this includes Intra-company Transfer and Intra-company Graduate Trainee, for multinational companies which need to transfer established employees or graduate trainees to the UK,
- **Minister of Religion** - for people coming to work for a religious organisation,
- **Sportsperson** - for elite sportspeople and coaches who will be based in the UK.

Temporary Worker licence

A ‘Temporary Worker’ licence will let you employ people on a temporary basis. Temporary worker license is suitable for sponsoring:

“Under the new immigration rules, you will need a sponsor licence to employ someone from outside the UK”

- **Creative or Sporting Worker** - to work as a high-level sports person (up to 1 year), entertainer or artist (up to 2 years)
- **Charity Worker** - for unpaid workers at a charity (up to 1 year)
- **Religious Worker** - for those working in a religious order or organisation (2 years)
- **Government Authorised Exchange Worker** - work experience (1 year), research projects or training, for example practical medical or scientific training (2 years) to enable a short-term exchange of knowledge.
- **International Agreement Worker** - where the worker is coming to do a job which is covered by international law, for example employees of overseas governments.
- **Seasonal Worker** - for those coming to the UK for up to 6 months to do farm work.
- **The UK Employers do not need a licence to employ:**
 - Irish citizens
 - those with settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme
 - those with indefinite leave to remain in the UK.

UK applies to join Pacific free trade area



The UK government is formally applying to join one of the world’s largest free-trade areas – the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). Current members are Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam. UK International Trade Secretary Liz Truss spoke with Min-

isters in Japan and New Zealand to request to join the grouping, the first formal step before negotiations start later this year. UK membership would enhance trade with CPTPP nations by opening up new markets and opportunities for UK businesses while encouraging greater inward investment and strengthening the UK’s ties with the Indo-Pacific region.

UK-Bangladesh trade and investment dialogue



The UK and Bangladesh governments have recently agreed to develop a future trade partnership that will increase mutual prosperity and further Bangladesh’s economic development as it graduates from Least Developed Country status.

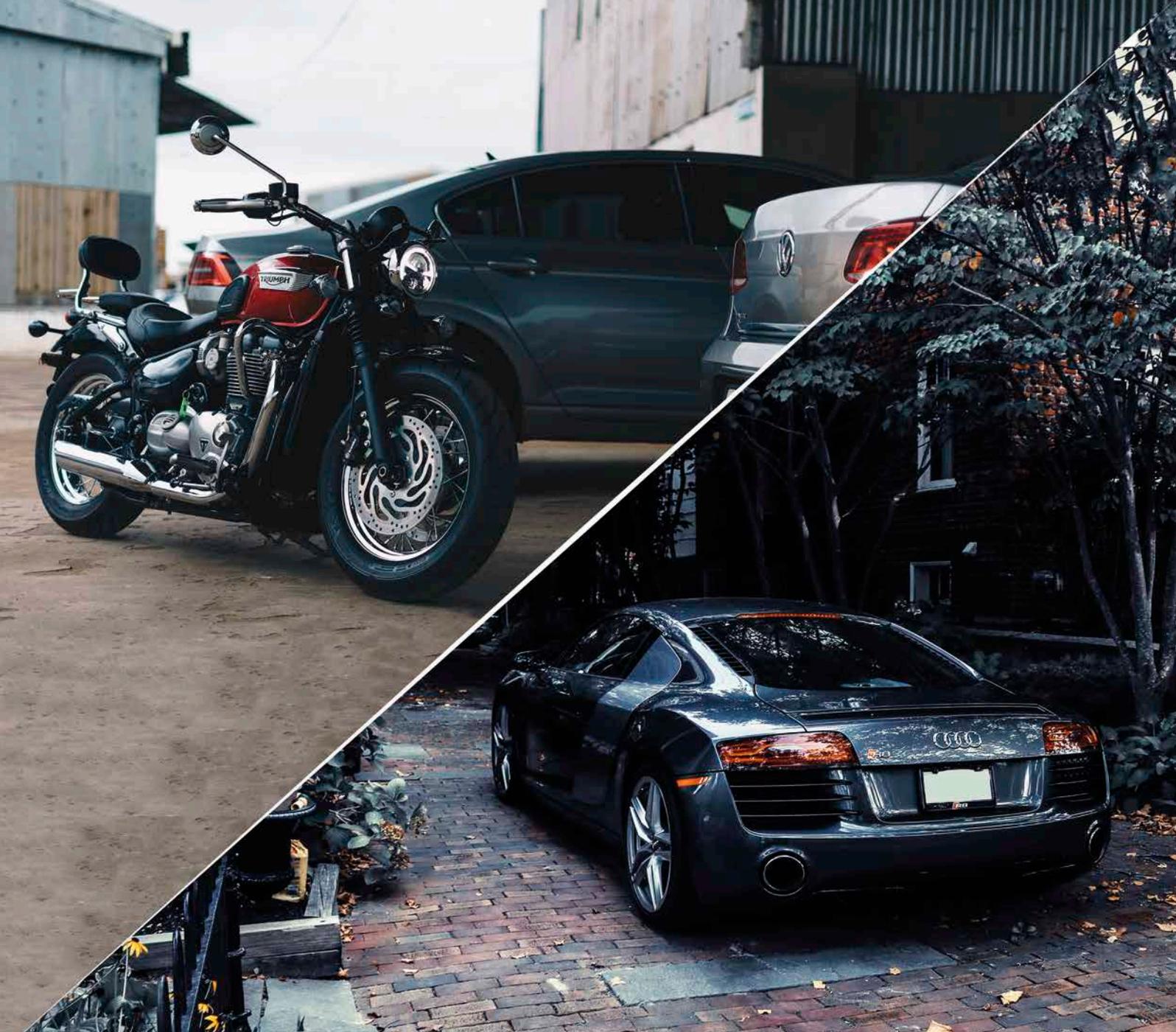
Both countries agreed to improve the trading relationship through a mutual commitment to private sector led growth, encouraging investment, and addressing barriers to trade faced by their companies when exporting goods and services.

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Me by Du Baoxian

Celebrating Chinese culture

The inaugural Global SinoPhoto Award winners were announced last month to coincide with Chinese New Year festivities at the start of the Year of the Ox. The awards, co-launched by Yintong Betser, a regular contributor to *London Business Matters*, celebrate Chinese life, heritage and culture through photography

The overall winner was Du Baoxian from Australia with a composite image, titled *Me*, of 10 self-portrait photographs shot during the lockdown in the spring of 2020. Winners in other categories were: *Above the Flames* by Ni



Mending the Nets by Susan Moss

Chen; *Preparing for Breakfast* by Aris Liem; *Chinese NY, Chinatown, London* by Olivia Ritchie, *Mending*

the Nets by Susan Moss; *Cloud Fishing* by Karen Moris-Lanz; and *Life in Squares* by Miao Qing.

Nearly 700 entries from 29 countries were assessed by a panel of judges of photography experts and artists

Reflections

Nearly 700 entries from 29 countries were assessed by a panel of judges of photography experts and artists, including Yao Lu, Beijing-based artist and Professor of Photography at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, who commented:

SPONSORED FEATURE

A Beginners Guide To Microsoft SharePoint

Microsoft SharePoint is a web-based platform with extensive collaboration and document management capabilities. No longer targeted solely at larger businesses, Microsoft now bundle the online version in with many Microsoft 365 subscriptions, making it a popular solution for businesses of all sizes. *Matt Dunn from Labyrinth Technology explains more...*

SharePoint has come a long way in recent years:

- Users can simply click on a file on the web interface to launch it in their desktop Microsoft Office application without the need to download or synchronise any files.
- Users can collaborate on files



Matt Dunn

- seeing changes other users make in real time through multiple applications like Microsoft Office and Microsoft Teams.
- Being available to most Microsoft 365 users, it is ideal for organisations of all



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sizes to use for file sharing, collaboration and presenting information.

- SharePoint is hugely scalable – it can easily be adapted to suit the needs of any organisation. We have delivered simple, low budget projects for 5 users and extensive projects for over 100 users.
- SharePoint is customisable – it can be adapted with advanced custom automations and integrations with third party systems.

Whatever your budget and requirements are, getting

SharePoint designed properly from the outset is the key to successful user adoption and access management. Over the last 12 months we have seen a huge increase in the number of small businesses looking to adopt it. Driven by many factors, not least WFH, SharePoint can improve the accessibility of your information, introduce collaboration capabilities to your business, and significantly cut costs.

Matt Dunn
Business Support Director
www.LabyrinthIT.com



“These reflections of Chinese culture are not only seen through the eyes of Chinese people in China, but also by people from all corners of the world, whether they are of Chinese origin or people of other countries who love Chinese culture.”

The Global SinoPhoto Awards were launched by Yintong Betser, managing director of ACTIVE Anglo Chinese Communications and Lynne Bryant, founder of The Architectural Photography Awards
www.sinophoto-awards.com



Above the Flames by Ni Chen



Preparing for Breakfast by Aris Liem

All images: credit Global SinoPhoto Awards



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LCCI members are eligible for discounts on courses at Morley.

Businesses ready to meet climate target



Stephen Jones on the latest LCCI business survey

LCCI – in partnership with London Councils – has released the fourth report of the *London Business 1000* series. This is an annual survey, undertaken this year by polling company YouGov, who asked 1,251 London business leaders for their views on a wide range of issues, from recruitment and training plans to climate change and views on local councils

The latest survey also asked firms about the impact that Covid-19 has had on their business and confidence. The figures will not be a surprise: 84 per cent of firms were less confident about London's economy for the year ahead. More than half of businesses were less confident about their own company prospects too. Indeed, two-fifths of firms reported a significant decrease in turnover as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, with the hospitality, leisure and retail industries the worst hit.

Recruitment

Predictably, recruitment plans were weakened in 2020 with just 41 per cent of firms looking to hire in the next 12 months. Larger businesses were much more positive, with more than three quarters responding that they would recruit over the coming year. Access to the necessary skills is still a challenge for many businesses. More than half of respondents who had difficulties recruiting in 2020 said that applicants lacked sufficient skills and experience,

Company take-up of apprentices remains low, with just eight per cent of firms saying they currently employ apprentices in 2020. This is down from 13 per cent in the 2019 *London Business 1000* survey, and despite the government's additional incentives to take on apprentices. Business size does play a role, with medium- and large-sized firms more likely to have taken on an apprentice. The apprenticeship levy is



Encouragingly, 81 per cent of business leaders were aware of the government's net zero emissions target for 2050

not having the intended boost either: 36 per cent of business leaders said they did not know if their firm did pay the levy, and just nine per cent expected to use levy funding to hire apprentices in the next 12 months.

Environmental impact

For the 2020 *London Business 1000*, business leaders were asked more in-depth questions on their plans for tackling climate change. Encouragingly, 81 per cent of business leaders were aware of the government's net zero emissions target for 2050. Furthermore, more than two-thirds were already taking steps to reduce their environmental impact. This rises to 83 per cent of companies with 250 employees or more.

Some of the key methods utilised by businesses to reduce their environmental impact are using green-

er technologies, and adapting their own products and services to be greener.

However, only 23 per cent of firms think there are no barriers to reducing their greenhouse gas emissions. Businesses recognise that they have a responsibility to help meet the 2050 net zero emissions target, but need the support from government to do so. More than half of firms said that financial incentives would be an encouragement to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Larger businesses were also more likely to cite increased profits and reputational benefit as key motivators to cut back emissions.

Workforce

The pandemic has forced thousands of businesses to shift to a working-from-home model in some shape or form. There are signs that this pattern will remain, at least for the coming year: 46 per cent of firms expect to have more than two-fifths of their workforce working partly from home in the next 12 months. This rises to 59 per cent for larger businesses.

Many companies are reassessing their office needs as a result of the rise in remote working. However, the *London Business 1000* also

revealed that remote working will form a key part of businesses' efforts to reduce their environmental impact. Indeed, tele-commuting and remote working is the most utilised method by firms to lower their carbon emissions.

Sustainable

It is encouraging to see firms are taking an active step to reducing their carbon emissions and looking to recover from the pandemic in an environmentally sustainable way. Businesses will need help from the government as the economy bounces back, and it is vital that key Covid-19 mechanisms – such as the business rates holiday and VAT relief – are extended for a further year.

What is also evident is that many firms are still facing skills challenges but are not turning to apprentices as the answer. The recent White Paper released by the Department for Education, which promises a much greater role for businesses in skills planning, was an important step. However, further reforms to how firms access the apprenticeship levy are needed to boost take-up.

Stephen Jones is policy and research manager at LCCI



Overseas business opportunities

Do you want to access a selection of business co-operation offers made by European companies wishing to work with UK firms? Every month Enterprise Europe Network publishes a Business Opportunities in Europe Bulletin, which contains the latest co-operation offers from companies across the EU and beyond. To find out more about this issue's listed overseas business opportunities or to subscribe to the bulletin contact Enterprise Europe Network London at enterprise.europe@londonchamber.co.uk or 020 7203 1929.

 **Poland**
Company experienced in machining of steel and cast iron parts is offering innovative vertical-axis wind turbines for on-grid, off-grid and hybrid applications. This solution ensures relatively low starting speed and higher power generating efficiency, regardless of wind direction. Products are already available. Commercial agreement with technical assistance is considered.
REF: [TOPL20210119001](#)

 **Korea**
R&D institute, specialist in ICT bio-healthcare, has developed a technology on reconstructing a 3D skeleton model of a patient's lower limb part with two X-ray images scanned vertically. It is safer and cheaper than conventional 3D modeling based on CT (Computed Tomography) and MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging). Companies or research centres can be a potential partner under technical cooperation and research cooperation agreement.
REF: [BRXK20210122001](#)

 **Sweden**
An innovative company has developed integrated electric servo motors that can be used in many applications requiring precise motion. The products stand out compared to other servomotors on the market due to the high torque, small size, and low weight. The integrated servomotors are within the range of 25W to 300W continuous power. The company is now seeking distribution agreements internationally to expand the growing export business.
REF: [BOSE20191016001](#)

 **Bulgaria**
A fast-growing software agency is looking for representatives abroad under commercial agency agreements. The company has several years of experience in developing, marketing and supporting different web and mobile applications for various clients.
REF: [BOBG20201202001](#)

 **Greece**
SME active in the field of e-services mainly for software

business solutions has developed a new e-shop and aims to expand their business in the sector of e-commerce of electronic products. The company is looking for suppliers or manufacturers of various electronic products. The type of partnership considered is supplier or distribution agreements.
REF: [BRGR20210126001](#)

 **Russia**
A manufacturing company from the Sverdlovsk Region, a specialist in the development and production of polymer compositions (organic resins, accelerators, hardeners) for the oil and gas and construction industries, is looking for partners abroad to establish cooperation under a subcontracting agreement.
REF: [BORU20210118001](#)

 **Kosovo**
Specialist company in bulk sale and distribution of food products like: meat products, dairy products, etc. on the Kosovan market wishes to explore new opportunities to import from quality producers, in order to enlarge its products portfolio under a distribution services agreement.
REF: [BRXK20210122001](#)

 **Slovenia**
Manufacturer of fiberglass parts for automotive industry and plastic injection moulded parts for different industries (automotive, electronics, pharma) is interested in enlarging production and is looking for partners for long-term cooperation under manufacturing agreement.
REF: [BOSI20210112001](#)

 **Italy**
SME has developed, patented and is producing an LED lighting intelligent bulb with integrated Central Processing Unit (CPU), sensors and communication via light itself. This bulb replaces standard T8 neon tubes allowing more than 50% energy saving if compared to traditional LED. The company is interested in commercial agreements with technical assistance or licence agreements with end users, technology intermediaries or lights manufacturers.
REF: [TOIT20210203002](#)

SPONSORED COLUMN

Off-payroll working rule (IR35) changes from 6 April 2021

By: Graham Caddock
Tax Director at Lubbock Fine



It now appears increasingly unlikely the Government will further delay the introduction of the changes to the IR35/ off-payroll working (OPW) legislation. Although we have a Budget on the horizon, the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are sure to lead to more, rather than less, tax raising measures, and therefore HMRC will be eager to get this project up and running as soon as possible. Indeed, HMRC has stated that although they will police the introduction of new rules with a "light touch", they will still seek to collect any tax/NIC and interest due to any deliberate non-compliance.

When will the change take effect?

The changes were originally scheduled to come into effect on 6 April 2020, but will now "go live" on 6 April 2021.

Who will this impact?

Primarily medium and large companies (using the Companies Act definition) that hire workers operating via their own Personal Service Company (PSC), but also other parties in the labour supply chain such as agencies, payroll departments and the workers themselves.

What does this mean?

Before making a payment to a worker's PSC, a business must decide, ignoring the existence of the PSC, if the engagement

between the worker and itself is truly one of self-employment ("outside IR35") rather than one of employment ("inside IR35"). A written copy of the decision (a Status Determination Statement (SDS)) must be given to the worker and the party in the supply chain makes the actual payment to the PSC. In addition, a formal process must also be introduced to resolve any status determination disagreements that may arise.

What SDS method can be used?

Although HMRC's own assessment tool (CEST) is a useful starting point, any method that produces a fair appraisal of the actual role undertaken can be used.

What are the consequences of failing to implement the rules properly?

If caught by the rules, PAYE/NIC must be deducted before any payments are made to the PSC. Employers NIC at 13.8% will also be payable.

How can we help?

The new rules are complex with many traps for the unwary. It's therefore essential to identify any workers, freelancers or contractors paid via a PSC, to ensure a thorough process is in place to correctly assess their status for IR35.

If you require any help, please get in touch with Graham Caddock (grahamcaddock@lubbockfine.co.uk).

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Chartered Accountants
Advice that adds up

Survey confirms UK-EU trading difficulties

Results from a British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) business survey show that half of exporters are facing difficulties in adapting to the changes in the trade of goods following the ratification of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) on 1 January 2021.

The survey sought to understand the extent to which businesses found it easy or difficult to adapt to changes in trading goods and/or services and moving people in the month since the ratification of the TCA. Businesses reported the highest proportion of difficulties in adapting to changes in trading goods.

- Overall, around a third of respondents reported difficulties adapting to changes to moving or trading goods in the first month of the year, while 10 per cent said they had found adapting to the changes easy. Forty five per cent said trade in goods was not applicable to their business, and 16 per cent said it was too early to say
- However, the percentage facing difficulties in adapting to changes in trading goods rose for exporters, where half reported issues, as well as manufacturers, where the percentage facing difficulties was more than half
- Fourteen per cent of firms said that they faced difficulties in adapting to changes in the trade of services. Ten per cent said they had found adapting to the changes easy. The percentage facing difficulties rose for exporters, where 21 per cent reported issues. When asked about the specific difficulties businesses were facing, commonly cited concerns included increased administration, costs, delays, and confusion about what rules to follow.

Need for action

The BCC and member chambers like the LCCI will continue to support UK businesses through its trade documentation services with the issue of certificates of origin and



ATA Carnets and the processing of Customs Declarations in the Chamber Customs scheme.

BCC is calling on the UK government, and where necessary with EU partners, to:

- work with the Chamber network to identify the most significant blockages for business and to publish plans for resolving those problems
- create tax credits allowing firms to offset their spending on adaptation to the new UK-EU requirements against their tax bill, helping businesses navigate new burdens and requirements better
- push back the imposition of additional Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) checks (from April) and full customs checks (from July) on imports into the UK. SPS checks are scientific tests on animal and plant goods
- look at key areas of the new relationship and work with EU partners on easements to minimise unhelpful burdens, including on aspects of rules of origin and VAT.

Hard hit

Commenting on the results, BCC director general Adam Marshall said: "Trading businesses – and the UK's chances at a strong economic recovery – are being hit hard by changes at the border.

"The late agreement of a UK-EU trade deal left businesses in the dark on the detail right until the last min-

ute, so it's unsurprising to see that so many businesses are now experiencing practical difficulties on the ground as the new arrangements go live.

"For some firms these concerns



are existential, and go well beyond mere 'teething problems'. It should not be the case that companies simply have to give up on selling their goods and services into the EU. Ministers must do everything they can to fix the problems that are within the UK's own control, and increase their outreach to EU counterparts to solve the knotty issues that are stifling trade in both directions.

"This situation could get worse if the UK sticks to its guns and introduces additional SPS checks in April and full customs checks on imports in July. These timescales need to change – and the support available for businesses who are battling

to adapt to new trading conditions significantly increased."

Difficult moment

BCC director of trade facilitation and Chamber Customs Liam Smyth said: "Underneath the overall figures, firms' concerns fit broadly into three areas.

"First, difficulties arising from the challenges adjusting to the new arrangements, such as the sheer volume of paperwork and significant new costs of adjusting to those.

"Second, issues about how new rules have been implemented, such as new customs arrangements.

"Third, core provisions of the TCA which are currently of significant concern to businesses, such as on rules of origin and VAT.

"Taken together, and on top of decreased revenue and cash flow as a result of the pandemic, this is a difficult moment for exporters. Some tell us they will respond to the challenges by switching away from international trade or by moving their operations overseas. The government needs to respond to this risk by giving firms tax credits to help with their ongoing adjustment and leaving no stone unturned in educating businesses and removing every barrier they can."

For LCCI's Customs Declaration service go to:

www.londonchamber.co.uk/export-documents/custom-declarations



India in the UK

Over 1.4 million strong, the Indian diaspora is one of the most prosperous and dynamic ethnic minority communities in the UK

Grant Thornton's new report in collaboration with the High Commission of India and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry shows that the rate of employment among Indians in the UK is higher than among any other ethnic group: more than 50 per cent are qualified to degree level and over 40 per cent work in managerial and professional occupations. It also throws a spotlight on the contribution of the diaspora in areas such as politics and public service, science and the arts, and sport.

Whilst people of Indian origin have undoubtedly been successful in all fields of life, the report highlights five key areas in which entrepreneurs should focus in order to achieve even stronger growth:

- Improve strategic planning

- pay more attention to succession planning
- focus more on upon employee development
- increase the use of third-party capital
- strengthen post acquisition integration.



www.grantthornton.co.uk/insights/india-in-the-uk-the-diaspora-effect

Tata committed to continued investment

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has announced that it will recruit 1,500 technology employees across the UK over the next year

This builds on the iconic Indian company's 45 year history in the UK and follows a visit to Mumbai last month by UK Trade Secretary Liz Truss.

By partnering with some of UK's largest corporations in their growth and transformation initiatives and helping them harness the power of emerging technologies to launch new innovative products and services, TCS has been an integral part of the UK economy's initiatives to

remain globally competitive.

Tata chief executive Rajesh Gopinathan, commented: "This development builds on the great work TCS is delivering to our UK customers. Our sustained investments have made TCS the preferred growth and transformation partner of our valued customers in the UK, allowing them to digitally transform their business for competitive growth."

Free enterprise

Liz Truss, UK Secretary of State for International Trade, said: "India is the world's biggest democracy and a nation that shares our belief in free enterprise. Deeper trading ties will create opportunities for UK businesses that were simply not there as part of the EU, and set the stage for a much closer partnership with one of the economic powerhouses of the present and future, ensuring more investors like Tata Consultancy Services bring jobs and growth to the UK. We will be collaborating much more closely in the industries of tomorrow like science, tech and green growth, so we can build back better and deliver an export-led, investment-led, jobs-led recovery from coronavirus."

The Digital Mindset – Harness the Digital Pragmatists in your Business



Helen Fawcett

Head of Business Consulting

It has been a rollercoaster of a year and we've all learnt to do things differently, both at home and at work. We've adjusted to our new surroundings using our creativity and the things that were readily available to solve our problems.

People have embraced digital enablers at a faster rate than ever before. There has been lots of talk about technology that is on the up in the hype cycle, for example, blockchain and AI but the global pandemic has mainly swept that aside in favour of Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Office365 and even Excel (though maybe not for important government datasets).

When speed was of the essence, we needed to give the people in our organisations the tools that would allow them to make good decisions and to test ideas out quickly and effectively. We weren't looking for perfect solutions, just incremental changes addressing a pressing need.

These tools allowed our people to solve team and organisational problems in a short space of time. Those who could embrace this fast pace of change and who were happy trying new tools thrived.

This approach of a business first focus underpinned by pragmatic technology know-how was key to success in this new world. The 'digital pragmatists' that understood your business but wanted to use technology to improve it were innovating quickly and putting solutions in place and everyone was benefitting from that. So how can you continue to support the digital pragmatists in your organisation?

1. Identify them in your organisation, at all levels – Those closest to the problem often have the best solutions.
2. Give them the access to tools and training – Maximise the chances of success and minimise the risk to your organisation by ensuring they are security aware. Give them options and training in the tools they can use and then let them loose on the problems!
3. Trust them – people will only feel able to implement something new if they feel they are in a safe environment and there will not be recriminations if something doesn't go quite right. Innovation needs space to learn from the hiccups on the way not only successes.

If you'd like to talk to Waterstons about supporting the digital pragmatists in your organisation with the right tools and culture get in touch or visit: www.waterstons.com/digital

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Business & IT Consultancy



Liz Truss

Trade with the EU export documents update



Exporting to EU countries

Duty free entry for goods shipped from the UK into the EU is now limited to 'originating goods' i.e. their origin must be in accordance with the rules of origin in the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA).

Origin rules are based on the principles of either being 'wholly obtained' or 'substantially transformed' with three basic rules which can be applied: value added, change of tariff classification and manufacture from certain products or through specific processes. Cumulation of origin is allowed in the



TCA which means that materials originating from the EU, as well as production carried out within the EU on non-originating materials, may be considered as originating in the UK. See here for more on origin rules:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/rules-of-origin-for-goods-moving-between-the-uk-and-eu-from-1-january-2021

Origin must be demonstrated by self-certification via a declaration on the invoice which must include a UK EORI number. The statement of origin should appear on an invoice or similar commercial document describing the original product in sufficient detail to enable its identification. For imports into the EU it will be valid for 12 months from

the date the statement was made. The text appears in Annex ORIG-4 of the TCA – page 482 of the document which exporters are advised to consult.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/agreements-reached-between-the-united-kingdom-of-great-britain-and-northern-ireland-and-the-european-union

If the goods are not originating and do not comply with the rules of origin in the TCA, no special document is required so in some cases the buyer/importer may call for a non-preferential certificate of origin which the LCCI can issue. The duties paid in the EU can be accessed here.

ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/

[business/calculation-customs-duties/what-is-common-customs-tariff/taric_en](#)

In all cases traders should know the Harmonised System Commodity Code ('HS Code' or 'tariff number') of their products.

www.gov.uk/guidance/finding-commodity-codes-for-imports-or-exports

Changes to exporting to markets beyond the EU

Certificates of Origin

EC Certificates of Origin (CO) for non-preferential trade have been replaced with UK Certificates of Origin. Traders should ensure they have sufficient stocks of these. Contact edocuments@londonchamber.co.uk to either purchase new UK CO blank forms or to request replacement of the existing stocks that you may have (existing EC CO stocks will be replaced free of charge).

In terms of processing UK Certificates of Origin, there are minor changes compared to the procedures used when the UK was in the EU:

Box 1: Changes to multinational company rule – UK companies applying for CO on behalf of their EU



Importing and exporting – government advice

■ Make sure you have a GB EORI number You will need a unique trader reference number, called an Economic Operator Registration and Identification (EORI) number, to complete customs declarations from 1 January 2021. If you do not yet have one, you can register for free by going to www.gov.uk/eori.

■ See if your imported goods are eligible for staged controls If you import non-controlled goods into Great Britain from the EU, you may be able to defer import declarations until 1 July 2021. Most traders with a good compliance record will be eligible. More information is available at: www.gov.uk/guidance/usingsimplified-declarations-for-imports.

declarations-for-imports.

■ Check the Controlled goods list to see if you need to complete declarations from January. If you're importing and exporting goods that are categorised as 'controlled' you'll need to submit declarations from 1 January 2021. To check if your imported goods are on the Controlled goods list, go to www.gov.uk/guidance/list-of-goods-imported-into-great-britain-from-the-eu-that-are-controlled.

■ Decide how you're going to make customs declarations Most businesses choose to hire a person or business to help with importing and exporting, such as a customs

agent, freight forwarder or express operator. They can help you with declarations and ensure you're providing the necessary information. For more information, go to www.gov.uk/guidance/appoint-someone-to-deal-with-customs-on-your-behalf.

■ Check if Import VAT is due at the border If you import any goods from the EU into Great Britain, you may need to pay Import VAT from 1 January 2021. Import VAT will not be due at the border if goods in a consignment are worth less than £135. The only exception to this is consignments containing excise goods, where Import VAT (along with Excise and Customs duties where applicable) will

be due at the border. For more information, go to www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-vat-treatment-of-overseas-goods-sold-to-customers-from-1-january-2021.

■ Decide how you will account for import VAT when you make a customs declaration If you're business is VAT-registered, from 1 January 2021 you'll be able to use postponed VAT accounting to account for Import VAT, for goods imported into the UK from anywhere in the world. This means you can account for VAT on goods imported through your VAT Return. For more information, go to www.gov.uk/guidance/check-when-you-can-account-for-import-vat-on-your-vat-return.



subsidiaries are currently able to list their EU subsidiary as a consignor in this box. Now, applications for any foreign company will need to be structured as UK company name and address 'on behalf of' the EU company name and address. LCCI will be able to issue UK COs for shipments from the EU provided that the UK establishment is the head office or main logistics/supply chain hub for the group and that LCCI holds a Formal Undertaking for the UK company.

Box 3: must reference individual EU countries (as opposed to stating European Union only). The correct format for this box will be to list United Kingdom first (if applicable) and then any other countries.

Origin requirements will remain the same.

There is no change to Arab-British Certificates of Origin. The format of the certificate and the way the document is issued remains the same.

Preferential Movement Certificates

A UK version of the EUR1 Movement Certificate now applies for countries that have established or rolled over a trade deal with the UK. Countries listed are currently eligible for preferential trade with UK: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Bahamas, Belize, Botswana, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Faroe islands, Eswatini (formerly Swaziland), Fiji, Georgia, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Iceland, Israel, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kosovo, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua, North Macedonia, Norway, Palestine, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Seychelles, St Christopher and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Ukraine and Zimbabwe.

A.TR or EUR Certificates are no

longer be applicable for shipments to Turkey. Exporters should now self-certify the origin for originating goods being shipped to Turkey using an invoice declaration method, provided they have an EORI number.

ATA Carnets

ATA Carnets (temporary admission documents used to export professional equipment (tools of trade, specialized engineering kits, broadcasting equipment, sports equipment for competitions, musicians' instruments etc), commercial samples to be shown to potential buyers (jewellery, pottery, clothing etc) and goods to be displayed at fairs and exhibitions) are now an option to use for the temporary movement of goods to EU.

www.londonchamber.co.uk/export-documents/ata-carnet

Customs Declarations

Any UK businesses importing or exporting goods will have to declare their shipments to HMRC. This is done in the form of a customs declaration, an official document, which lists exactly what is being imported or exported and provides information required to evaluate the safety and security aspects of the goods as well as to calculate and collect any applicable duty and VAT.

It is businesses' responsibility to declare all movements of goods to HMRC promptly and accurately. This includes obtaining any applicable licences, permits and complying with quotas. Incorrect declarations could lead to delays with clearing the goods through ports and potential punitive action by HMRC.

LCCI has an experienced unit of Customs Declaration operatives and is part of ChamberCustoms, a brokerage service designed to help businesses to comply with import and export rules and lodge their customs declarations. Companies can register for the service at:

www.londonchamber.co.uk/export-documents/customs-declarations

EU Trade Hub

Information and advice on staff employment, business travel, exporting, importing, international trade paperwork, costs, logistics, data protection, e-commerce, accounting and auditing, public procurement, intellectual property and taxation. Plus webinars to join to help companies navigate EU exit.

www.londonchamber.co.uk/eu-trade-hub

The EU Trade Hub is supported by re:TRADE



SPONSORED COLUMN

Employee Mental Health – What Are Your Responsibilities?



Lianne Lambert, Managing Director, Lighter HR

The third lockdown seems to have been the hardest so far. Everyone that I've spoken with – family, friends, clients and colleagues – all seem to be finding this one far harder to navigate. There are people way more qualified than I am who can shed some light on why that might be, but the toll that it is taking presents some additional challenges for employers. Knowing what you should and shouldn't be doing when it comes to helping employees who are presenting with mental health issues can be difficult.

One of the most important things for employers to be doing at the moment is checking in with employees. When everyone is in the office you can quickly see if someone's behaviour or demeanour changes, and so you can have an early intervention conversation to understand what the cause may be and offer the relevant support and guidance. This is lost with remote working. You should make sure that there are one-to-ones in place for each employee and, wherever possible, this should be done with video so that you can see for yourself how someone is really doing.

If you do find yourself speaking with someone who expresses concerns regarding their mental health, it's important that you know what to do. Your role is to signpost the individual to the places where professional help is

“If you do find yourself speaking with someone who expresses concerns regarding their mental health, it's important that you know what to do.”

available. If you have an Employee Assistance Programme in place, make sure that employees know how to access the service and what it offers. Alternatively, you can guide them towards their GP and, at the moment, individuals are able to self-refer for talking therapies provided by the NHS.

Finally, we strongly recommend that you encourage your employees to take their holiday. Lots of people don't want to take holiday at the moment as they can't go anywhere or do anything and at least working provides some degree of structure. However, continuously working, particularly if the working days are extending as there is no commute time, isn't good for anyone. If people don't want to take a week off, try to encourage them to take some long weekends so they do take a bit of time away from working.

Employers have a key role to play in employee health and well-being, so additional check-ins and signposting employees towards the right professional services are ways that you can support your team in these challenging times.

For guidance on this or other HR matters, contact Lianne at LSL@LighterHR.co.uk or call **0203 319 1649**

LighterHR
www.LighterHR.co.uk

Lord Frost leads on new relationship with EU



Former LCCI chief executive David Frost takes on a ministerial role this month to continue the one he started as the PM's chief Brexit negotiator. His job will be to maximise the opportunities of Brexit, including on international trade and economic issues.

As a Minister of State in the Cabinet Office Lord Frost will be responsible for:

- co-ordinating relations with the EU institutions and the 27 member states
- domestic reform and regulation to get the most out of the UK's EU exit
- central coordination and policy resolution on international trade policy, working closely with DIT.

He also takes on the UK chairmanship of the Partnership Council and the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee.



Bumpy

Lord Frost has stated that relations with the EU have been "more than bumpy" since the UK's exit and cus-

tom paperwork has been ramped up as the EU treats the UK as a 'third country' for trading purposes. There are though reports that post-Brexit

freight costs are showing signs of settling. Lord Frost's in-tray will also contain a mandate to produce a trade in services agreement; and to overcome trade tensions with Northern Ireland.

Agreements

Welcoming Lord Frost's appointment, LCCI chief executive Richard Burge said: "I fully support the appointment of my predecessor at the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry to this role. A single post at the Cabinet table in charge and responsible for our developing relationship with the EU is essential.

"The current agreement is a very basic platform. We need to work hard, fast and comprehensively to create a new and sustainable series of agreements with our largest trading and services partner. It is not going to be easy. It never was."

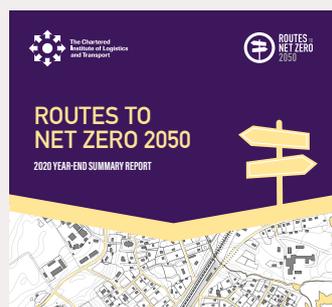
How to get to net-zero by 2050

The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) believes that net-zero can be achieved by 2050 through a range of measures and recommendations in its report *Routes to Net-Zero* which covers all transport modes and activities

CILT chief executive Kevin Richardson comments: "Transport accounts for 28 per cent of UK carbon emissions and, despite the downturn caused by the coronavirus pandemic, transport emissions will grow with recovery unless action is taken. Government is clearly the key player, but industry, organisations and individuals are also urged to take action, and we believe there is plenty to be achieved, starting today."

Recommendations for government include:

- Taking an international leadership role in 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) and the G7
- Setting carbon budgets for the



- transport sector
- Mandating the use of sustainable fuel
 - Continuing to incentivise the take-up of electric vehicles through grants and incentives
 - Setting a clear, long-term policy that taxation will be aligned to decarbonisation, resource efficiency and levelling up, including the replacement of fuel duty and vehicle tax by road pricing, and a review of Air Passenger Duty.
- Local government is recommended to play its part by implementing policies in ways that suit their circumstances, including:

- Rolling out schemes for electric bikes
- Ensuring new developments include vehicle charging points
- Preparing active travel plans.

Collaboration

Transport providers should implement decarbonisation schemes, some of which will require either direct government funding, support, or collaboration with industry, such as:

- Home delivery providers should move to all-electric fleets by 2030
- A rolling programme of rail electrification to enable the end of diesel-only traction by 2040
- A trial of electric aircraft on short domestic routes
- Campaigning to persuade people of the benefits of public transport. Industry and academia are the key players in research and development, and CILT's recommendations for them are:
- Continue to develop innovative transport decarbonisation technologies, ranging from apps to massive industrial projects to

produce hydrogen and sustainable fuels, and to remove greenhouse gas

- Ensuring that sufficient, affordable green electricity is available when and where it is needed.

Decarbonisation

Paul Le Blond, chair of the aviation policy group at CILT(UK) and editor of its *DeRoute to Net-Zero 2050 Year-End Report*, says: "The government and many others published some key documents in 2020 indicating the way forward, notably the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, and this is expected to continue in 2021.

"All those within the profession have a key role to play in transport decarbonisation. We must spread the message that transport can achieve net zero by 2050 by a range of measures, some technological, some societal and some through policies."

<https://ciltuk.org.uk>



Carnet records



The ATA Carnet – known as the passport for goods – has been the preferred method of moving goods temporarily across borders for over half a century

In that time the LCCI has issued Carnets for hugely valuable works of art such as Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*, world tours from Pink Floyd to the Royal Opera House, and countless types of equipment for all varieties of trade shows. No Carnet has yet though been issued for goods as heavy as the Bombardier transportation rolling stock carriages weighing in at nearly 40 tonnes each and currently in transit.

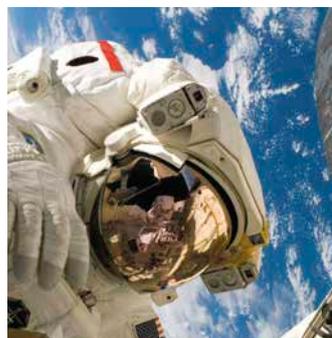
Spread the load

The carriages are heading from the UK to a test centre east of Prague in the Czech Republic where they will be homologated i.e. they will undertake certification and approval processes to prove they meet regulatory standards and specifications for safety and tech-



nical requirements. The company expertly handling the operation for Bombardier Transportation Ltd is Meridian Generic Rail Ltd. So heavy is the rolling stock they have had to spread the load over two ferries in the cross-channel leg of the journey.

The Carnet record book may soon also have to be amended for the highest equipment ever facilitated for temporary exportation. Negotiations are in place for specialist exercise kit to be inspected and tested which, if suitable, will be used by astronauts in space.



www.meridian-generic-rail.co.uk
www.londonchamber.co.uk/export-documents/ata-carnet

New border measures

In response to last month's government announcement of further measures to protect UK borders from Covid-19 variants, LCCI chief executive Richard Burge said: "At this point in the UK's pandemic response we understand that the government must tighten border protection measures.

"We still need to see the science behind these measures and we want to know why their introduction has been delayed.

"The economic impact of these measures is obvious. The government must sufficiently support our aviation and travel companies, as well as the downstream hospitality, inward tourism and cultural sectors. They have to be preserved as they are key to London and the UK's economic recovery. This government support should be announced now and should be as open-ended as the protection measures themselves"

SPONSORED COLUMN

IP considerations for international trade



By Sean McDonagh –
Trade Mark Attorney at HGF

Introduction

Over the past year, Covid-19 has significantly impacted the global flow of people, trade and capital. However, with society and commerce becoming increasingly digitally connected, information and ideas are being disseminated online with ease, irrespective of border closures. For companies with an international presence, both now and as economies begin to recover, an effective IP strategy remains crucial to incentivise innovation and ensure intangible assets are protected, managed and enforced.

Five key elements of an effective international IP strategy:

1. IDENTIFY

At any stage of a business' lifecycle, it is important to be aware of the different types of intellectual property assets it holds. IP audits can be extremely useful to identify IP assets and evaluate the best method of protecting them, whether that be in the form of trade marks, patents, designs, copyright or trade secrets.

2. SEARCH

Prior to launch in a new country, it is important to conduct a Freedom-to-Operate (FTO) analysis to ensure proposed IP is free to use and register in the territory of interest. Registered trade mark and patent searches, in particular, are crucial to mitigate the risk of being on the wrong end of a cease and desist letter and/or a threat of infringement action.

3. PROTECT

Any problematic earlier rights revealed by the FTO analysis should be fully considered. Where there are obstacles to adoption, consider with an experienced IP attorney how they might be overcome. If the proposed IP is free to adopt, protection should be secured. The level of protection sought should be in line with priority levels and budgetary constraints. For instance, on a limited budget, high revenue generating assets should be given greater priority over less profitable assets.

4. ENFORCE

Be prepared to enforce your rights when a third party encroaches on your IP so as to prevent consumer confusion, the dilution of IP assets and loss of revenue. Understand the various options for enforcement such as cease and desist letters, civil, criminal and customs actions, notice and take-down procedures and domain name complaints. Trade mark and patent watching services are recommended to monitor the registers for conflicting third party applications.

5. REVIEW

The IP portfolio should be periodically reviewed as new products are developed and technologies evolve. Ensure critical IP is renewed and obsolete rights are pruned so as to keep budgets reasonable and to extract maximal value from the portfolio.

If you have any questions, please contact Sean on smcdonagh@hgf.com



Ignore misinformation and take the vaccine

by Tony Matharu

There are many lessons to be learned from the Covid-19 virus and the government's responses to it. Now may or may not be the time to investigate what happened and what lessons we can learn – because coronavirus is not the first pandemic and, I suspect it will not be the last, despite the havoc it has wreaked across the globe with massive loss of life, irreparable damage to livelihoods, economic and financial devastation and long term consequences on the health and welfare of populations, especially the young.

We have all suffered. Mistakes from the past must become lessons for the future. But now is not the time to ignore the best chance we all have to release ourselves from the grip of the virus. We must take full advantage of the government's vaccine programme – something which we should embrace and we should acknowledge that in this respect the UK has done things well.

At risk

We know that Covid-19 and its variants and mutations affect or potentially affect every human being on earth. To that extent it is indiscriminate – reaching populations in every corner of the globe. Yet it is discriminatory. It affects the elderly, the obese, diabetics, males and black and Asian populations more than others. Those most susceptible and most at risk must now take every opportunity to protect themselves, their families and others and to take the vaccine.

Recent revelations from the city's public health chief reporting that London's Asian communities have been hardest hit by the Covid-19 second wave, spiralling rapidly out of control in North-East London before spreading elsewhere, emphasises the importance of taking up the vaccine when it is available.



Regrettably there are reports that the communities most at risk are also those that are most hesitant. This is concerning and every effort must be made to reassure high-risk minority ethnic groups of the efficacy and safety of the vaccine and to encourage them to come forward for their vaccination when invited. The vaccines are extremely safe and effective and vital for saving lives and providing a route out of the cycle of lockdowns.

Safety

To be clear: there is no meat product, no pork, no alcohol. Faith leaders have endorsed the vaccines. Misinformation must be ignored, particularly when data from the first wave shows that ethnic minorities were

“Scepticism, hesitancy and ignorance are fatal, especially when those who most need the vaccine are disproportionately impacted.”

twice as likely to die from Covid-19. Scepticism, hesitancy and ignorance are fatal, especially when those who most need the vaccine are disproportionately impacted and are most vulnerable. Indeed, there is a good argument to suggest that key workers – disproportionately from black and ethnic minorities – and those from other high risk groups should be prioritised for their safety and for the safety of others.

We should pause for thought. It does not take too much imagination to consider what state we would be in if there were no viable vaccines available to help us with the battle.

Sharing our knowledge

Hope now exists where otherwise there would only be despair and

fear. The speed and efficiency of the production, purchase and roll out of vaccines is the envy of others. Yet there should be no vaccine nationalism or bragging. The sound delivery and efficiency of vaccines distribution to date should be commended and the advantages exploited – even if mistakes were made that led us to where we are now. Equally the UK's innovative rapid genome sequencing, which allows us and the world to better understand and adapt to mutations and new strains should be applauded. Sharing our knowledge helps protect ourselves and enables a more secure world. This must also be encouraged.

We can at last breathe more freely, albeit behind our face masks. We must dismiss the vaccine pessimism and take up the vaccine opportunities when they arrive, to lead us all into a better, more optimistic and a healthier future.

Tony Matharu is chairman of the LCCI's Asian Business Association and founder and director of the Central London Alliance.
www.centrallondonalliance.com

This article first appeared in Eastern Eye newspaper published by Asian Media Group.



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Webinars and events

What's been on ...

FEBRUARY

Business Owners Club: Strengthening and Growing your Business for the Future - Workshop Part 3

Martin Brown, CEO, Elephants Child Advisory Ltd, Robert Palmer - Palmer Wealth Management, St. James's Place Wealth Management, Neil Rowland - Rowland Wealth Management Ltd, St. James's Place Wealth Management

Property & Construction Online Briefing

Christopher Hayward, Sheriff-Elect of the City of London
Sponsored by Advanced UK and Menzies

Hong Kong: One-to-One Business Clinics

Richard Thurbin, Head of Hong Kong Trade Council (HKTDC) UK Business Matching Department

How to Improve Sales Effectiveness

Justin Stephenson, Sandler Training

Hospitality, Leisure & Tourism Private Online Roundtable

Tony Matharu, Founder and Chairman, Integrity International Group and Blue Orchid Hotels
Sponsored by Crowe UK

Thinking Differently: creative problem solving and the digital mindset

Helen Fawcett, Head of Business Consulting and Alex Waterston, Head of Data and Analytics, Waterstons

Capital Conversation

Rob Elder, Agent, Bank of England, Agency for Greater London

Business Owners Club: Strengthening and Growing your Business for the Future - Workshop Part 4

Martin Brown, CEO, Elephants Child Advisory Ltd, Robert Palmer - Palmer Wealth Management, St. James's Place Wealth Management, Neil Rowland - Rowland Wealth Management Ltd, St. James's Place Wealth Management

Transport & Infrastructure Private Online Roundtable

Tom Moran, Managing Director, GTR
Sponsored by Blake Morgan



Private Online Roundtable

Sian Berry AM, Green Candidate for Mayor of London

Private Online Roundtable

Luisa Porritt, Liberal Democrat Candidate for Mayor of London

Go Connect! At Lunchtime Online Networking

Future leadership: tips for leadership in a flexible working world

Nick Mayhew, MD, Alembic Strategy



Defence & Security Cyber Security workshop - The 4 types of employee and how their behaviour affects the security of your company

Asad Naveed - Security Consultant / Technical pre-sales Consultant, Charles Hunter - ISC re-sales Consultant and Mike Buckley - Technical pre-sales Consultant, Nettitude

Business Owners Club: Early Funding for London Based SMEs

Paul Shadbolt, The FSE Group, Dele Akinyemi, MMC Ventures and David Woods, British Business Bank
Sponsored by OnBoard

Go Connect! At Breakfast Online Networking

Homeworking Best Practice

Simon Garcia, Director, Freedom Wellbeing Inc.

Black Business Association: What does it take to become an Entrepreneur?

Lord Hastings, Chair, BBA; Alae Ismail, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Manager at Imperial College Business School; Isaac Kikabi, Property Entrepreneur and Senior Trade Analyst at Lloyds; Kojo Marfo, Founder and Director of My Runway Group; Michelle Chivunga N, Founder, CEO and Investor of Global Policy Houses
Supported by Imperial College Business School

Capital Conversation

Professor Tony Travers, Director of LSE London



... Coming up

MARCH

Tuesday 2 March at 10.45am – 11.45am

Property & Construction Online Briefing with Pat Hayes, MD, Be First
Sponsored by *Advanced UK and Menzies*

Wednesday 3 March at 11.00pm – 12.30pm

Linking on to the UK Defence and Security Supply Chain

Wednesday 3 March at 2.00pm – 2.45pm

Thriving after redundancy: top tips and advice to help manage the transition with Alistair Stirling, Founder, Stirling Careers Consultancy

Thursday 4 March at 3.30pm – 4.30pm

Private Online Roundtable with Shaun Bailey AM, Conservative Candidate for Mayor of London

Tuesday 9 March at 10.45am – 11.30am

Business Owners Club: Practical Tips and Tricks with Duncan Hopwood, Hopwood PR, Vandana Dass, Davenport Solicitors and Stephen Holmes, Endeavour
Sponsored by *OnBoard*

Wednesday 10 March at 12.30pm – 2.00pm

Go Connect! At Lunchtime Virtual Networking with Fife Chamber of Commerce

Thursday 11 March at 12.45pm – 1.45pm

EU Exit - Business Opportunities in Germany with Dagmar Wülknitz and Andrew Harfoot from NRW.INVEST, York-Alexander Von Massenbach, Partner and Head of London Office, Luther and Philip Dietz, Partner, Luther

Tuesday 16 March at 12.30pm – 2.00pm

Asian Business Association Spring Online Networking
Sponsored by *Trinity College*

Wednesday 17 March at 2.00pm – 2.45pm

Power up your PowerPoint. How to pitch and present with impact online with Robin Kermode, Founder and Communication Coach

Thursday 18 March at 10.45am – 11.30am

London Chamber of Arbitration and Mediation with Chris Parker, Partner; Craig Tevendale, Partner; Rebecca Warder, Senior Lawyer at Herbert Smith Freehills and Kathryn Britten, Managing Director, AlixPartners

Tuesday 23 March at 12.30pm – 1.30pm

Business recovery: restructuring and insolvency procedures to help businesses experiencing financial distress with Alejandro Worthington, R3 London and South East Chair, and Alison Goldthorp, R3 Back to Business Committee Co-Chair

Wednesday 24 March at 9.15am – 10.15am

Go Connect! At Breakfast Virtual Networking

Wednesday 24 March at 2.00pm – 2.45pm

How to get the most from LinkedIn, Pinterest and Google Display Advertising with Carl Winter, Digital Marketing Director and Alex Francis, Paid Social Lead, MCM

Wednesday 31 March at 11.00am – 11.45am

How Phishing Attacks Work (And How to Protect Your Business) with Jorge Geddes, IT & Cyber Security Sales Manager

APRIL

Tuesday 7 April at 11.00am – 11.45am

Storytelling: The Importance of Empathy and Emotion in Marketing with Christine MacKay, CEO, Salamandra UK

Tuesday 13 April at 2.30pm- 3.30pm

Property & Construction online briefing with Richard Morris, Chief Executive (UK), IWG Plc
Sponsored by *Advanced UK and Menzies*

Wednesday 14 April at 10.00am – 10.45am

Digital Transformation for SMEs with Paul Goldsmith, Managing Director, Goldstar IT

Wednesday 14 April at 12.30pm – 2.00pm

Go Connect! At Lunchtime Virtual Networking

Tuesday 20 April at 10.45am – 11.30am

How to sell Delivery Duty Paid (DDP) to the EU: Top tips from the experts with Charles Hogg, Commercial Director, Unsworth; Laurent Deneubourg, Director, Bansard and Michael Boulanger – CEO, RM Boulanger

Tuesday 20 April at 2.15pm – 3.00pm

Capital Conversation with Georgia Gould, Chair, London Councils

Wednesday 21 April at 12.30pm – 2.00pm

LCCI Virtual Networking – Property and Construction focus
Sponsored by *Advanced UK and Menzies*

Thursday 22 April at 2.00pm – 2.45pm

How to secure your first non-executive director role with Elise Perraud, Chief Operating Officer, NEDonBoard

Thursday 22 April at 10.45am – 11.30am

Interactive Cyber Briefing for Business Leaders: Secure your business against the evolving threat with Kieran Fowler, Senior Information Security Consultant; Stewart Hogg, Head of Information Security, Waterstons

Wednesday 28 April at 11.30am – 12.15pm

How to get to the top of Google with Christopher Clowes, Co-Founder, HC Media

Thursday 29 April at 10.45am – 11.45am

Fraud and the Pandemic with Robert Brooker Chair of London Fraud Forum; Head of Forensic & Fraud PKF GM,

David Clarke Chair of Fraud Advisory Panel, Ashley Hart, Head of Fraud, TSB and Rich Wentel, Cabinet Office

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Fighting fraud – how Metro Bank are helping to beat the scammers

Fraudsters and scammers have taken huge advantage of the pandemic to prosper. Data from the first lockdown has seen *Action Fraud* report a 29 per cent rise of clone firm investment scams with the average loss being a staggering £45,000. Meanwhile, UK Finance recorded more than 15,000 cases of impersonation scams in the first half of 2020, nearly double what it has been previously. Metro Bank offer tips on how best to beat the scammers and avoid becoming victim to fraud

If it's too good to be true, it usually is ...

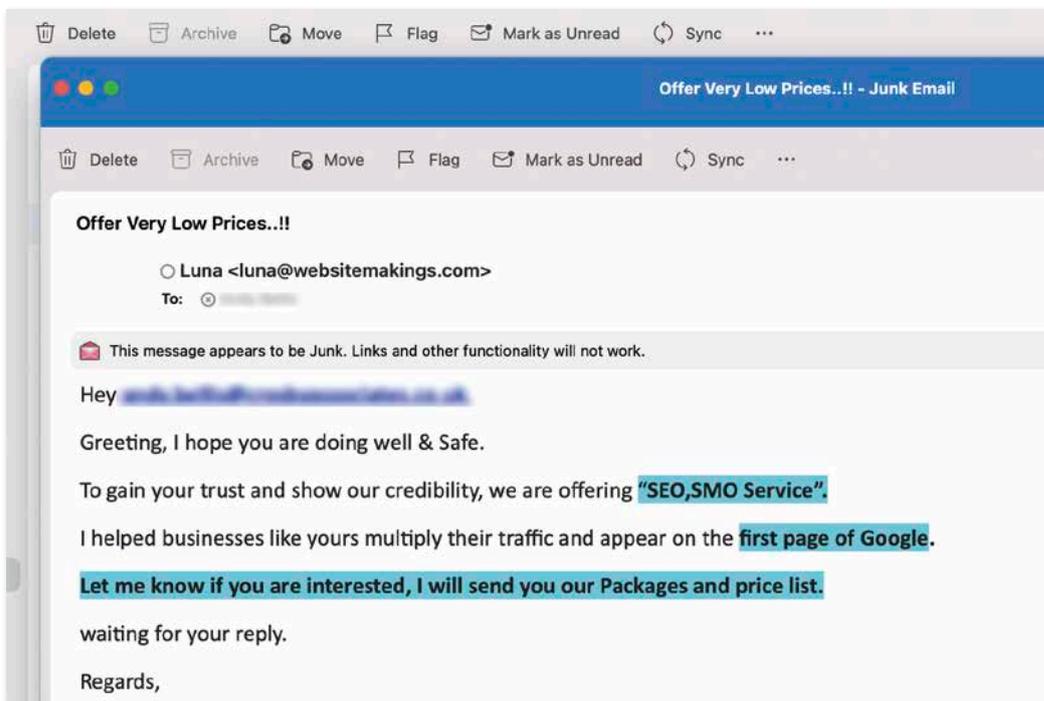
We've all seen some good deals or offers online before, but these few steps will ensure you are buying legitimate items from a reputable seller:

- Don't click through on social media – visit the seller's website independently to ensure you are not visiting a fake site.
- If you see an item for sale online, always offer to pay on collection to ensure you receive what you're paying for.
- When it comes to the payment always try to pay ideally with a credit card or through a trusted merchant provider.
- Have a look at independent reviews of the website or seller to check other people have been satisfied with their purchases and confirmed receipt of the goods.

Don't be tricked into sending your money to the wrong place

Scammers will try to convince you to send funds to an account which they control. They do this using many methods such as impersonating your bank, acting as a police officer, as HMRC, or even pretending to be your manager at work. They can intercept communication channels and amend payment details so remember:

- Metro Bank will never ask you to transfer your money to a 'safe account'.
- Don't be pressurised on a phone call to act immediately with any transfer of money.
- Be aware that scammers can spoof telephone numbers to appear as



though they are calling from a recognised and trusted number such as a bank or HMRC.

- Ask the caller to confirm who they are, terminate the call and call the number on the back of your bank card.
- Consider if this payment or activity is unexpected and look for differentiating details/errors that the scammer may make. Has a large sum of money been taken from your account without authorisation?
- Immediately change your online banking credentials to ensure scammers don't have access to your log ins and passwords.

- Don't pay an invoice you weren't expecting or accept new account details without checking them out with the originator on a confirmed genuine contact number.
- Always verify payments through a different communication channel and through a trusted email address/phone number.

Always make sure you invest through a reputable and reliable investment company

- If you receive a suspicious looking message – even if it looks like it's from your bank – take action. Metro Bank asks for a screenshot to be sent to ReportFraud@metro-bank.plc.uk for investigation.

When considering an investment opportunity

We all want to make sound financial investments, but when considering an investment opportunity always take precautions.

- Visit FCA investment warning list www.fca.org.uk/scamsmart/warning-list to check if this type of investment is a known scam. Remember, if a company isn't on the warning list, it doesn't mean they are genuine, further research must be done.
- Always make sure you invest through a reputable and reliable investment company.
- Research the company you're investing with and review all documents before committing to an investment.
- Verify your independent financial adviser and check they are on the FCA register on <https://register.fca.org.uk> before trusting them with your money.



www.metrobankonline.co.uk/ways-to-bank/i-want-some-information-about/fraud-and-security

Cleankill's Gold renewal proves dedication to staff

Cleankill Pest Control is celebrating after retaining its Investors in People Gold Award gold accreditation.

Gold accreditation demonstrates that Cleankill has a full range of important policies in place and that everyone in the company takes ownership for making them come to life.

Only 17% of the Investors in People accredited organisations achieve Gold. In 2018 Cleankill became the first pest control company in England to be certified 'GOLD' by Investors in People and in 2021, following another intensive audit, retained the Gold status.

Now with a turnover of more than £3 million and employing 50 staff, Cleankill has won a string of awards for being 'green', customer service and corporate social responsibility as well as being named Company of the Year in the 2019 British Pest Management Awards run by the British Pest Control Association.

Commenting on the award, Cleankill Managing Director Paul Bates, said: "Retaining our Gold status was not a given and we had to demonstrate that we are constantly improving.

"We believe that the success of our organisation begins and ends with our people. If we make work better for everyone, we make work better for our customers."

In her report the Investors in People assessor said: "Your USP and strengths lie in being open and honest, demonstrating integrity and you have successfully created that family atmosphere, certainly not cor-



Cleankill Directors Clive Bury, Paul Bates, Ian Miller and Jon Whitehead with the Gold Investors in People award that they have retained following a recent assessment.

porate, there is no us and them and this attitude comes from the top.

"100% of interviewees said they would recommend Cleankill as a great place to come and work and are real ambassadors for Cleankill. People can describe why they think Cleankill is a great place to work and they are proud to say they work for you."

Paul Devoy, CEO of Investors in People, said: "We'd like to congratulate Cleankill Pest Control. Gold accreditation is a fantastic effort for any organisation and places Cleankill in fine company with a host of organisations that understand the value of people."

Launched in 1995, Cleankill Pest Control has grown year on year and now has several thousand clients throughout London, Bristol, Buckinghamshire, the South East and across the UK. The company's head office is in Croydon, Surrey, and it has offices in East Sussex, Bristol and Buckinghamshire.



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Two minute interview



Sarah Wilson – chief executive of ACE Travel Management



Who are you?

I am the owner and chief executive of ACE Travel Management, an independent business travel management company with decades of experience servicing clients across the world.

What is your connection with the London Chamber of Commerce?

ACE Travel has been a member of LCCI for about eight years.

What was your first job in London?

I left school at 18 and worked for a business travel agency in Great Titchfield Street W1. What a difference from the North Essex village I grew up in! I loved the job, the clients and the people. I had fantastic 'supercharged' training as we were a small company and I learned quickly from the owners.

Which one business achievement over the last 12 months are you most proud of, and why?

The one that stands out is winning the business from a production company making a travel documentary for TV – although it was very demanding for the team.

"If there is one thing I hate about my job it's ..."

... there are things that are annoying but you have to accept it. There is nothing I'd say I hate."

If you were advising a young entrepreneur which business person would you suggest as a model?

Easy question! Kanye King has inspired me most – founder and

chief executive of Mobo awards. A very astute, hard-working and creative businesswoman who deserves everything she's gained.

How is the current pandemic affecting your business?

Covid is affecting ACE hugely. The quarantine regulations and health worries mean companies are reluctant to allow employees to fly – even when it has been allowed – which has meant very little business for us. We've kept close and engaged with our clients – albeit virtually – and assisted them with travel policy reviews and carbon off-setting policies. We have also started a UK leisure company. Trawling for UK holidays in specific markets is awful so we have built a bespoke niche brand. www.ourstay.co.uk

What measures have you taken?

Working from home was easy as we compute in the cloud anyway. We've continued to work from home for the moment.

"When life resumes as normal, couldn't there be more trains?"



"I hate to see the homelessness – so sad and wrong in such a powerful city."

How is your business reacting to Brexit?

Supporting our clients with pertinent travel information such as reminders that EHIC won't be available. It will be sad to see less people able to move freely around – many of our clients were able to work on contracts in Europe and live in the UK or vice versa.

How do you think the transport system in London can be improved?

The worst thing is rush hour tubes.

Not a problem at the moment of course but when life resumes as normal, couldn't there be more trains?

What is your favourite and least favourite thing about London?

I love the diversity of London, hearing so many different accents, I love the contrasting architecture between old and new. I hate to see the homelessness – so sad and wrong in such a powerful city.

If you were Mayor of London for the day which one thing would you change?

More shelters for the homeless.

www.acetravel.co.uk



Is something bugging you about your company's security?

Do you feel your business' security has been compromised, or is it just something you want to prevent from happening...

International Procurement Services (IPS) recognizes the importance of keeping your discussions and intellectual property as secure as possible. In today's world, wherever there are large sums of money, and proprietary information, there will always be someone interested in gaining access to it, by fair means or foul! It takes just one well placed electronic listening device (or bug) to jeopardise your critical or confidential information, perhaps to a competitor or leaked to the press.

Gerry Hall, of IPS says, "10 years ago, eavesdropping was a specialist and expensive business, however with the advent of GSM technology and miniaturization of electronics, listening devices have become small and inexpensive requiring specialised equipment and search teams to detect"

Based in Central London and established in 1989, IPS's core business is the provision of Technical Surveillance Counter Measures (TSCM) equipment to government and corporate clients together with sweep services.

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Roadmap – stage by stage – the beginning of the end?

How will lockdown restrictions be eased in England?

Monday 22 February 2021 saw the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, unveil long-awaited plans for a 'roadmap' to lift lockdown restrictions in England. (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are following their own paths).

A new four-step plan could see all existing legal restrictions on social contact, business and activities lifted by 21 June if strict conditions are met at each stage. Lockdown easing is conditional on the following four tests being met at every stage.

1. The vaccination programme continues to make good progress
2. Evidence shows that vaccines are reducing Covid-19 deaths and the need for hospital treatment
3. Covid-19 infection rates do not cause hospital admissions to soar
4. Any new Covid-19 variants do not alter the risk of lifting restrictions.

There will be a gap of at least five weeks between each stage of the plan to assess the impact of changes on Covid-19 infection rates and hospital admissions.

Lockdown: Boris Johnson unveils plan to end England restrictions by 21 June

■ www.bbc.com/news/uk-56158405

Lockdown roadmap: what is reopening and when?

■ www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/lockdown-restrictions-end-timetable-dates-march-b1805693.html

What is being proposed at each stage of the 'roadmap'?

Stage 1 – Monday 8 March 2021

The government has made education and a limited amount of socialising the initial priorities for the first stage of the lockdown easing process. (Stage 1 is in two parts).

All schools will reopen to pupils in all year groups in a 'big bang' approach, as will further education colleges.

Outdoor after-school sports and activities can also re-start. University students will return for practical courses.



Credit: Number 10/flickr.com [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0]

Two people from different households can meet outside for recreation, which could include sitting on a park bench or having a picnic.

One regular indoor visitor will be permitted to see a relative in a care home but they must wear PPE and take a lateral flow test to ensure they are free from Covid-19. Physical contact should be kept to the minimum.

COVID-19: All schools in England to reopen on 8 March as Boris Johnson outlines roadmap to ease lockdown

■ news.sky.com/story/covid-19-all-schools-in-england-to-reopen-on-8-march-as-pm-plots-course-to-ease-lockdown-12225278

Care home residents to be allowed one visitor as part of cautious easing of lockdown

■ www.gov.uk/government/news/care-home-residents-to-be-allowed-one-visitor-as-part-of-cautious-easing-of-lockdown

Stage 1 – Monday 29 March

People will be allowed to meet outside, either with one other household or up to six individuals from multiple households. This can be in a private garden or in a public open space.

- Outdoor sports facilities will re-open, such as golf courses and tennis and basketball courts. Grassroots outdoor sports such as football will also be permitted.
- Parent and child groups can meet outside with up to 15 par-

ticipants. Indoor groups will be permitted for vulnerable children and where parents depend on the groups so they can go to work.

- Weddings can go ahead with up to six people in attendance.
- However, the advice will remain to "stay local" and to work from home where possible.

When can I meet friends outside and how many?

■ www.independent.co.uk/life-style/lockdown-roadmap-friends-rules-outside-b1805719.html

Golf courses to reopen in England on 29 March, confirms Boris Johnson
<https://www.golfmagic.com/golf-news/golf-courses-reopen-england-march-29-confirms-boris-johnson>



Stage 2 – No earlier than Monday 12 April

The second stage would allow the following services to reopen.

- All non-essential retail
- Personal care businesses, such as hairdressers, beauty salons and nail bars
- Libraries
- Outdoor hospitality settings such as beer gardens or outdoor restaurants. There will be no hospitality curfews or a requirement to eat a 'substantial meal' with alcohol.
- Outdoor leisure facilities such as zoos and theme parks
- Indoor leisure such as pools and gyms
- Self-contained holiday accommodation such as self-catering holiday accommodation and camp sites.

However, there will be no indoor mixing of households at this stage in any setting.

Monday 12 April is also the earliest date for a review of international leisure travel restrictions.

Non-essential retail to reopen in April

■ www.drapersonline.com/news/non-essential-retail-to-open-in-april

When will hairdressers and barbers reopen after lockdown?

■ www.independent.co.uk/life-style/when-will-hairdressers-reopen-lockdown-b1806077.html

When will gyms reopen?

■ metro.co.uk/2021/02/10/when-will-gyms-reopen-14052061/

Stage 3: Not before Monday 17 May

The third stage would see the majority of social contact rules lifted for outdoor activities.

- The 'rule of six' abolished for outdoor gatherings and up to 30 people able to meet outside
- Two households can meet indoors
- Up to six people can meet in a hospitality setting such as a pub or restaurant
- Indoor hospitality can reopen
- Cinemas, museums, galleries, hotels, theatres and sports venues can reopen
- Up to 10,000 spectators can attend the largest outdoor seated venues such as sports stadiums
- Up to 30 people can attend weddings, funerals and other life events.

Families to reunite indoors from May as two households can mix

■ metro.co.uk/2021/02/22/lockdown-uk-families-to-reunite-indoors-from-may-as-two-households-can-mix-14122969/

Pubs and restaurants will be reopened for indoor trading no earlier than 17 May, with Rule of Six in place

■ news.co.uk/inews-lifestyle/food-and-drink/pubs-restaurants-reopened-indoor-trading-17-may-882710

England to begin easing lockdown from March 8, cinemas to reopen in May

<https://variety.com/2021/politics/global/england-lockdown-easing-march-8-1234912085/>

Stage 4: Not before Monday 21 June

By this stage, it is intended that all legal limits of social contact will be scrapped and the remaining closed sectors of the economy, such as nightclubs, will be reopened.

As yet, there is no suggestion as to when employees will be encouraged to return to their offices. At time of writing, the law remains to work from home if you can.

When will nightclubs reopen?

■ www.independent.co.uk/life-style/nightclubs-open-when-lockdown-uk-b1805686.html

What has been the reaction to the roadmap?

There has been a mixed reaction from business leaders and others to the Prime Minister's proposed roadmap out of lockdown. Some hospitality businesses are concerned that they cannot provide indoor service until 17 May at the earliest; outdoor hospitality is dependent on good weather which never be guaranteed. They also want the government to extend and improve the financial help available for hospitality businesses that have been unable to trade for so many months. Some smaller independent businesses, such as non-essential retail, are also disappointed that they will have to wait until at least 12 April to reopen and are calling for greater financial help.

Some backbench Conservative MPs are also frustrated with the proposed rate of reopening the economy. Some MPs considered the plan to be inflexible, with no easing of restrictions before certain dates.

As-it-happened: FTSE and City react to Boris Johnson's roadmap out of lockdown

■ www.standard.co.uk/business/markets/business-live-ftse-markets-boris-johnson-roadmap-lockdown-b920764.html

'We need more': businesses on plans to lift England lockdown

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/feb/23/we-need-more-businesses-plans-lift-england-lockdown-covid>

COVID-19: Business welcomes roadmap but warns that, for some, it will be too late

<https://news.sky.com/story/retailers-could-be-able-to-reopen-for-business-as-early-as-12-april-12225841>

Will furlough be extended?

At time of writing, it is expected that Rishi Sunak, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, will extend the government's furlough scheme into the summer. The financial support packages for employees who have been unable to work because of lockdown is due to end on 31 March. If the scheme is extended, the government will continue to pay 80 per cent of wages, up to £2,500 a month, for furloughed workers until autumn, when the scheme will be phased out.

The Chancellor is also likely to continue with the existing business rates relief package for the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors in England. The news will be announced in the Chancellor's Spring Budget on Wednesday 3 March.

Budget 2021: 'Furlough is a lifeline, I hope they extend it'

<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-56104411>

Rishi Sunak 'to extend furlough scheme and business rates relief until summer'

■ metro.co.uk/2021/02/19/furlough-scheme-to-be-extended-until-summer-by-rishi-sunak-14111224/

How is the national vaccination programme progressing?

At time of writing, almost 18 million people have received their first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine. The government has pledged that all adults will have received their first vaccination by 31 July. It is also aiming for everybody aged 50 and over and those with an underlying health condition to have their first of two vaccine doses by 15 April.

Covid-19: UK reports another 548 coronavirus deaths and 8,489 cases - as vaccine count nears 18m

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-uk-reports-another-548-coronavirus-deaths-and-8-489-cases-as-vaccine-count-nears-18m-12226768>

UK speeds up vaccinations. All adults get 1st jab by July 31

<https://apnews.com/article/europe-europe-coronavirus-pandemic-bd6d355e8c5f3c1b2d007c1ceb5a7453>

Will there be a national Covid-19 vaccine passport?



On 23 February, the Prime Minister announced that the government would review the proposal for a national Covid-19 vaccine passport that could be used to prove an individual's Covid-19 status for domestic use. This might access to hospitality, entertainment or sporting venues or even employment. Previously Ministers had denied they were looking at domestic Covid-19 passports.

The Prime Minister stated that there were "deep and complex issues" with using vaccine passports or certificates to determine whether somebody was free of Covid-19. He added that the government cannot discriminate against people who cannot take the vaccine or genuinely choose not to have one.

Several countries, including Greece and Spain, have mooted the idea of a vaccine passport that could be used to allow people take holidays in those countries without the need to quarantine. The government said that they "would facilitate" their use. However, domestic use is an entirely separate issue.

Covid-19: PM promises review on issues of vaccine passports

■ www.bbc.com/news/uk-56169616

Covid-19 Q&A is written and researched by Alexa Michael, member research executive at LCCI



Water is the most valuable asset in today's world



by Karina Jones

Our world may look like it has an abundance of water but the facts tell a different story



The Environmental Audit Committee have highlighted concerns raised in a National Audit Office (NAO) report looking at the additional pressures that climate change and population growth are likely to place on our public water supply. In the spring of last year, the NAO report outlined how, if we do not take swift action to reduce water demand and to improve our water infrastructure, some areas of England such as the South East could face water shortages in the future.

It is a fact that we only have 2.5 per cent of freshwater to drink, yet, on a daily basis, we use 10 billion tons of freshwater worldwide.

Vital

Water is a vital natural resource which is essential to all of us in all sectors of life.

- Consumption and sanitation
- Industry
- Energy
- Food production
- Environment and landscape.

The production of wholesome water which is essential for our daily use is immensely energy demanding and comes at a huge cost. We reprocess the water that is available to us from natural resources by using filtration systems, the process under which water must go through is often overlooked by all of us in our daily routine. After all, we turn the tap and water appears, we do not stop to think about the journey the water takes prior to being available and safe for our consumption.

Challenge

The world is faced with a considerable

challenge – 2.2 billion people currently do not have access to safely-managed drinking water, and 4.2 billion, or 55 per cent of the world's population, are without safely-managed sanitation. Water use has increased sixfold over the past century and is rising by about one per cent a year.

The latest predictions estimate that if further action is not taken, between 2025 and 2050 we will need more than 3.4 billion additional litres of water per day to meet future demand for public water supply.

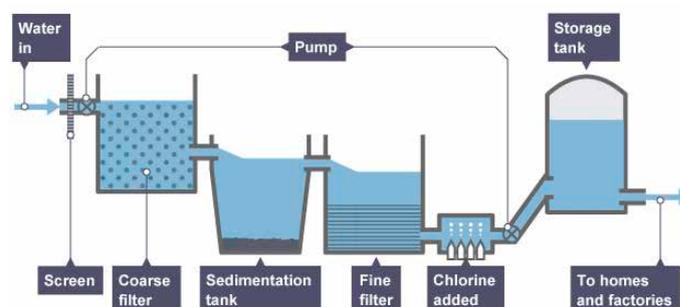
The framework looks to ease the pressure on our future water supplies by:

- Reducing demand to an average of 110 litres per person per day by 2050
- Improving water efficiency across all sectors
- Working with water companies to halve leakage rates by 2050.
- Developing new supplies such as reservoirs, water re-use schemes and desalination plants
- Making it easier to move water to where it is needed through regional water transfers
- Reducing the use of drought measures that can impact the environment.

The framework introduces an ambitious aim for water companies to help consumers cut wastage and to use water more wisely to reduce our average water use from 143 to 110 litres per day. Public water supply needs can be met by a combination of reducing consumption, reducing leakage, increasing supply, and moving water from areas of surplus to areas of need. If investment in additional capacity does not come forward, we would see shortfalls in water supply across England. This would see households and businesses experiencing more frequent interruptions to supply, each region faces challenges, however, these are not spread evenly across England. Around half of the national need is in the south east of England.

Water usage in healthcare.

We all must adopt realistic and feasible approach in our water usage across the individual sectors. The healthcare sector is very important to all of us and maintaining continuous supply of water to hospitals is a must, therefore, taking steps towards im-



Simplified process of water filtration (credit: www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zwhfw6f/revision/5)

proving water volume usage and its management should be considered across all hospitals.

One of the areas of concern is the growing requirements for hospitals to providing suitable environment for patients, which has resulted for hospital design to include vast numbers of on-suite bathrooms significantly increasing number of additional showers and wash hand basin. This additional application of facilities creates low used outlets scenario adding to the concerns for water microbial control making water quality management difficult. To ensure water quality and control of microbial contamination is maintained hygiene flushing regimes are often recommended across infrequent used outlets.

Implementation of water hygiene flushing to prevent microbial contamination across large hospitals puts a huge drain on healthcare resources that could be used in other areas of need. To aid this pressure, automatic flushing systems are proposed to maintain water hygiene which normally is activated when cold water below 20°C is not reached, at which point the tap is activated to flush away water until the temperature stabilises below 20 °C. The frequency of flushing in guidelines documents for infrequently used outlets also differ according to the clinical risk assessment of the area where patients occupy, for instance all taps that are used infrequently on Augmented Care units should be flushed at least daily in the morning for one minute, where in general wards infrequently used outlets or equipment within a water system (i.e. not used for a period of equal to or greater than seven days).

The volume of water used during hygiene flushing in hospitals is depended on the water flow rate, pipe size, temperature required at outlets, cold below 20°C (difficult to maintain

during hot summers with high ambient temperature) and hot at 55°C. There is often confusion and difficulty in establishing infrequently low used outlet from used outlets, which results in unnecessary flushing regimes adding to water waste.

It is predicted on average a running tap uses six litres of water per minute, if we multiple this by the number of infrequently used and the duration of flush required by the frequency of days, we can assume a significant number of litres of water used and flushed down the drain.

Water quality and maintaining water hygiene in the healthcare environment is vital, and where flushing regimes are necessary to control risk of microbial contamination in water, flushing regimes must be maintained but these actions should be risk assessed and correctly implemented to work effectively.

To ensure the volume of water is not wasted unnecessarily down the drains, there must be implementation of correct maintenance of the hospital plant and careful hospital design of wards, which should be approved by the clinical staff (infection prevention and control) team and the water safety group at each stage of development, to ensure we do not swamp hospitals with unnecessary outlets but rather ensure they are placed in the appropriated areas of clinical and patient needs.

Water is a vital commodity to maintain life and it must be carefully managed and preserved where possible, it is the responsibility of all large institute and industries to put water use and management upfront of their agenda.

Karina Jones AMIHEEM MWMSoc is a water management consultant at Eta Projects
www.etaprojects.co.uk

High achievements

Paulette Watson is managing director and founder of Academy Achievers, set up to work with children and young people from marginalized communities who are disaffected, vulnerable, disadvantaged and who have experienced real trauma



“Academy Achievers plays an important role within the community.”

The company is not-for-profit with an aim to improve the quality of life for local young people through the offer of services which provide a range of STEM – science, technology, engineering and maths – educational, social, emotional, cultural, health and wellbeing and recreational opportunities. In addition, it provides training, consulting and informal advice to users as well as signposting them to the appropriate services for further information. Academy Achievers is a place where young people from diverse backgrounds come to socialise, learn, have fun and make friends. The organisation’s approach is rooted in good multi agency working and close working with grassroots and faith group communities, in developing and enhancing its programme and adapting to emerging needs.

Digital future

Academy Achievers has adapted to

enable children and young people to be prepared for a digital future, embracing new and emerging technologies, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and augmented reality.

Paulette Watson takes up the story: “I will share our journey and explain the changes we have developed over the last 18 months where we have built a solid foundation for economic development around upskilling our children and young people (CYP) digitally and preparing them to be readily available for the world of work, and share our plans

for transitioning to the next level. We are still at the early stages of this digital transformation. The underlying factors to this change are clear: importance of data, cloud technology, up-scaling of automation and artificial intelligence (AI).

“The impact of this is unprecedented at the grassroots levels and the most challenging and complex work equipping these youths still lies ahead. This journey is called the youth enterprise – an agile not-for-profit organisation fuelled by CYP data, led by AI insight and created for change on a Google cloud.

Mindset

“Since Covid-19 Academy Achievers has been transformed to enable our CYP to access opportunities digitally and having a change mindset. It is important to make reference to the recent killings of black people around the world 4th June 2020. I was truly saddened about all the events that were unfolding around the globe towards the black community. From the Black Lives Matter protests due to the unlawful and inhuman killing of black women and men including George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery and so many more. There has been a disproportionate number of deaths of Covid-19 in the black



community in the UK and beyond. “Academy Achievers plays an important role within the community. To help counter such issues as the high rates of knife crime, the lack of black women in leadership positions let alone senior positions and an inability to find positive role models in STEM industries, our #BeMe programme aims to raise the aspirations of one million BME girls in STEM subjects to eliminate the negative perceptions around the lack of access to these opportunities. Through the creation of our mentoring online platform, and #BeME podcast and employability skills programme: teamwork, adaptability, problem-solving, computational thinking, communication and continuous learning skills where we will connect young black girls to black women in STEM professionals around the world.”

www.academyachievers.co.uk

Academy Achievers is a member of the LCCI’s Black Business Association. Contact Menelik Shillingford to learn how to get involved mshillingford@londonchamber.co.uk

LCCI’s Black Business Association

In the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement LCCI has collaborated with Lord Hastings of Scarsbrick to launch a new LCCI Black Business Association (BBA). The ambition is to make a step change in the prosperity of black owned businesses and black employees through an impactful forum working together to break down barriers, address inequalities, enable connections and empower black businesses through access to vital tools.

Common purpose

Founding BBA Chairman Lord Hastings commented: “The London Chamber of Commerce and Industry is London’s premier network

for business collaboration securing confidence from investors and innovators to keep the energy of this great city producing jobs and supporting livelihoods. That’s why now, it’s time for a City that benefits from black lives and once historically sadly too, black deaths, to build bonds of common purpose bringing in the wealth of talented black entrepreneurs and employers and workers to focus our vision on a city where all can thrive, with justice and equity and where work can be dignified for all. So I’m honoured to work with LCCI in establishing the Chamber Black Business Association and to call in all who have felt left aside, to build better together.”

Who’s who on the Black Business Association committee

6 Your business December 2020/January 2021

Who’s who on the Black Business Association committee LONDON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

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Lord Dr Hastings of Scarsbrick
Chair, LCCI Black Business Association

Lord Michael Hastings CBE is Chancellor of Regent’s University London and Professor of Leadership at the Hussman Business School in the USA, a former Commissioner for Racial Equality and after a career starting as a teacher and working director for the UK Government on post-war urban development in the 1960s, he moved to commercial television as a general reporter and then to the Home Office as a senior adviser for 12 years and later as a member of the House of Lords. He is a trustee of the Africa Trust, a former trustee of the National Endowment for Democracy and a member of the Board of Trustees of the National Endowment for Democracy.

Shevone Daniels, founder and managing director, HR Boarded Vice Chair, LCCI Black Business Association
“Shevone Daniels’ corporate career spans over 17 years. She gained her HR leadership experience working with organisations such as Caffe Nero, Greene King, Hobbs and Caroline Washburne. She is an advocate for anti-racism in business and is one of the UK’s Top 20 LinkedIn Voices for 2020.”

Rodney Appiah, chairman & co-founder, Cornerstone Partners
BAME youth community to create industries. Kigo Martin has worked with over 1000 young people worldwide highlighting youth excellence and community issues using creative initiatives including theatre productions, digital engagement programmes and employability campaigns.

Corneuse Partee is a leading UK angel network focused on investing in black and diverse founders. Rodney Appiah has worked to venture capital for nearly a decade, leading over 15 investments and delivering successful exits including the sale of Usualy Media to News Corp (E11M).

Andy Aiyin MBE, board advisor and entrepreneur, The Angel Investing School.
Andy Aiyin MBE is the creator of The Angel Investing School that trains professionals on how to invest in the next generation of diverse startups.

Yvonne Bagla, founding member and principal, Impact X Capital
Yvonne Bagla is an experienced VC investor, founder and board member having previously been the youngest senior investment manager at M&A & Co. where she managed over \$200m in investments.

Jojo Marfo, founder and director, My Runway Group
Jojo Marfo is a social entrepreneur and founder of My Runway Group.

Seun Akinwale, founder, The Gym Kitchen
Seun Akinwale has over ten years’ experience in commercial and branding roles at multinational FMCG companies. This and his passion around diversity propelled him to launch his own brand, The Gym Kitchen, a range of healthy food products available.

Emmanuel Ofose-Appiah, UK PR manager, Merce
He sits on a diversity steering committee which promotes financial inclusion and access to finance for BAME businesses and entrepreneurs.

Isaac Kikabi, senior trade analyst, Lloyds Banking Group
Isaac Kikabi has seven years retail bank commercial bank experience and extensive knowledge of financial markets and liquidity management. He sits on a diversity steering committee which promotes financial inclusion and access to finance for BAME businesses and entrepreneurs.

Ayo Jenno, managing director, The Cooperative Property Group
Ayo Jenno is a property entrepreneur with a keen interest in impacting

Isaiah, specifically in the UK social housing sector, working collaboratively with local authorities, housing associations and institutional investors to provide housing for some of the most vulnerable individuals in society.

Bola Abiodun OBE, founder and chief executive, URBAN
Bola Abiodun has delivered in excess of £1 billion in real estate projects across a range of sectors. He is a Fellow of the RICS and committed to nurturing aspiring chartered surveyors.

Lorraine Martins MBE FRSA, director of diversity and inclusion, Network Rail
Lorraine Martins leads a centre of expertise which supports Network Rail’s ambition to be a more open, diverse and inclusive business. Net Rail maintains and develops Britain’s rail infrastructure, with some 42,000 employees.

Riki Bleaney, founder, Since ’93 Records, Sony UK
Riki Bleaney is a driving force in British music. Since ’93 label releases a catalogue of releases featuring artists like Adele, Frodo and Lo and is testament to the key role he has played in shaping the current golden age of black music in Britain.

Demi Ayofo, founder, Lendoo
Lendoo is a social lender and distributed closer to £1million in loans to small and micro businesses in the UK’s most urban cities. Demi Ayofo is on a mission to solve access to finance problem through

How LBM reported the launch of the new association

Do business not disputes



by Tim Hardy

Last November, the London Chamber of Arbitration and Mediation (LCAM) launched a new solution for businesses with relationships that are going wrong. It was very timely as the pandemic was putting, and continues to put, many commercial relationships under dreadful strain. The new solution is designed to help identify the most effective way of addressing the issues business to business, (not lawyer to lawyer). It is fast, efficient and a fraction of the cost of more traditional forms of dispute resolution. It actually works best if used when the problems first surface and before lawyers start drawing up battle lines.

Relationship

What is it; and how does it work? It is called Facilitated Contract Renegotiation, FCR for short. Note the reference to 'renegotiation' and 'fa-

LONDON CHAMBER ARBITRATION AND MEDIATION

cilitation'. It is designed to get the businesses to identify where things are going wrong, to speak openly about the problems and only then to renegotiate the terms of their relationship. You would have thought that was common sense and is what should happen anyway. And so it is in many relationships where business has been good for many years and trust is high. Relying on that trust to be fair to one another, the parties are able to sort it out themselves.

But contrary to that paradigm most business is conducted against a contractual framework which reflects the fact that neither party entirely trusts the other. Suspicion that the other party is out to do you is enshrined in lengthy contracts full of terms, conditions, warranties, indemnities ... So when things go

wrong, the parties need lawyers to protect their rights and those lawyers by training, professional duty and expectation, operate in an adversarial legal environment which often rewards the party that takes the most aggressive approach. The emotional cost, let alone the pecuniary cost, is enormously damaging to the relationship and once enjoined in litigation few businesses return to continue what had previously been a mutually beneficial relationship.

Independent

Most managers would jump at the opportunity to avoid this. Until now the most obvious alternative was mediation but it is run by litigators who, however well intentioned, will inevitably have one eye on the litigation that will follow if settle-

ment is not achieved. Now, there is a new alternative. Like mediation it involves an independent third party to help facilitate the parties' negotiation but there the similarities end. The Facilitator with a Capital 'F' is empowered to investigate the root cause of the problem from the perspective of the parties by talking directly to the businesspeople. They do so, not to propose a solution or even to guide the parties to a solution, but to design a process for open, non-judgemental, conversations to share information, ideas and possible solutions.

This is a truly innovative approach. It empowers the business to sort its problems early without the costs of litigation, emotional and fiscal, without damaging relationships and on the contrary is designed to build and restore trust, to maintain the relationship and make it a success.

Tim Hardy is an LCAM mediator and arbitrator
www.lcam.org.uk

'Power dressing' womenswear brand that pivoted in lockdown wins Lloyds Bank Business Award

A London-based fashion brand founded shortly before the start of the pandemic specialising in luxury womenswear has been named a Small Business of 2020 by Lloyds Bank, after pivoting during lockdown to great effect.



Chierika Onyuku-Opukiri followed her lifelong passion by launching LYL, which stands for Love Your Look and is focused on modern power dressing, in October 2019. After 10 years working in finance as a strategy consultant for corporate companies, Onyuku-Opukiri had always had an idea to start her own fashion business. When her contract came up for renewal, she decided to take a risk and left her role to pursue her dream.

She recalls: "When I started working on the idea full time, I quickly realised that I needed to find the right people to get the business off the ground. I found manufacturers of fabrics, zips and buttons, and began working in a sample studio in London and with a factory in Lithuania.

"My goal for 2020 was to say yes to everything. I did a talk at a business event on the importance of power dressing and how to create a strong impression, which led to LYL being part of a show at *London Fashion Week*. We set up our first pop-up shop in March, but then lockdown happened and it was tough trying to build a business when nobody knew what was happening."

At the start of the first lockdown, Onyuku-Opukiri was featured in *Elle* magazine's round-up of new, small businesses its readers should support through the pandemic. This, combined with the Black Lives Matter movement shining a light

on Black-owned businesses, meant orders soared as LYL expanded its range beyond formal office attire to reflect the shift to working from home. She was then contacted by independent brand retailer Wolf & Badger about stocking LYL on its website, which led to a 400% increase in orders between September and December.

Now LYL has been named a winner in the Lloyds Bank Small Business of 2020 awards, in recognition of her ambition and resilience during such a challenging year. The prize is a mentoring session with businesswoman, Sharmadean Reid MBE, the founder of Beautystack, a networked marketplace app for influential beauty professionals. In the session, She will get insight and support to help her navigate opportunities and grow her business in the year ahead.

The Lloyds Bank Small Business of 2020 competition celebrates the small and local businesses across the UK and their inspiring energy and resilience in meeting the challenges of 2020. Almost 900 businesses up and down the country were nom-

inated by their local communities and 24 winners were picked based on how creatively and quickly they adapted to events since March, and how they went over and above expectations.

She continued: "LYL is all about empowering unapologetic women who are pursuing whatever it is that makes them happy. What lockdown gave us is the time and opportunity to get our branding right. Our profile is still growing, but we're now a team of six and we're excited for whatever 2021 brings. Hopefully this award is just the start!"

Gareth Oakley, managing director of Business Banking at Lloyds Banking Group, added: "While 2020 was tough for so many, inspiring stories have emerged from the shadow of the pandemic of businesses up and down the country showing resilience, innovation, and a fighting spirit. Chierika is a perfect example of what can be achieved when talent meets perseverance, reflected in her nomination for this award."

www.lylofficial.com
www.lloydsbankinggroup.com

Changes to IR35 – eight tips to help you prepare

by Jo Moseley

From Tuesday 6 April 2021, organisations in the private sector that engage 'off-payroll' workers will become responsible for determining their employment status and paying Income Tax and NICs for those who are deemed to be employees.

This may sound familiar – the change had been due to take place last April but because of Covid-19, it was pushed back a year.

The off-work payroll working rules, commonly known as IR35 have been around since 2000. They were introduced to ensure that individuals who work like employees pay broadly the same employment taxes as employees, regardless of the structure they work through. The rules apply to anyone who provides their services to another person or organisation through an intermediary, such as a personal service company (PSC).

HMRC have found it difficult and time consuming to enforce the rules and has started to shift the burden onto those engaging them. In 2017, the government addressed non-compliance in the public sector and has now set its sights on the private sector.

What is changing?

Currently, the PSC has to decide if the relationship between the individual it supplies to a client would, in reality, be one of employment if the contract was directly between the PSC and the end client. This is done by looking at factors such as who controls the work being carried out, whether the PSC can send a substitute to do the work (with or without the agreement of the client), who supplies the equipment used and the extent to which the client is obliged to offer work and the contractor to accept it.

HMRC believe that 90 per cent of PSCs who should apply IR35 don't do so – at a cost of £700 million and increasing. Despite that, it doesn't have a great track record on enforcement and has lost more cases than it has won.



Credit: Patrick Cannon/Flickr.com (CC BY 2.0)

From April, the onus of deciding if an individual falls under IR35 has to be decided by the client engaging them. If it decides they are within IR35 it must pay Income Tax and NICs. This will result in clients paying higher fees or (most likely) negotiating lower fees with the contractor.

Will these new rules apply to all clients?

No. The government has said that the rules won't apply to small organisations. It defines these as organisations that don't meet at least two of the following criteria:

- Annual turnover of more than £10.2 million
- Balance sheet total of more than £5.1 million
- More than 50 (F/T equivalent) employees

If your organisation is small but is within a corporate group, the parent company of that group must also be small in order to avoid the new rules.

If the new rules apply:

The end user client will be responsible for determining if the work is caught by IR35 and will be responsible for notifying the person making the payment to the worker. They also have to tell the worker and explain the reasons why they believe IR35 applies.

The end user client must have some form of appeals procedure allowing the worker and/or agency to challenge their decision.

The person (or closest person based in the UK) who pays the PSC will be responsible for withholding

any PAYE/NIC on the payments and accounting for these to HMRC under the usual PAYE real time information arrangements.

The responsibilities may vary if the contracting chain is more complex (for example, if there is also an agency involved).

How can we prepare?

This will depend on whether you are the end-user client of the services, an intermediary in the payment chain or the person making the payment to the worker. You'll need to start preparing because introducing appropriate policies and procedures will be extremely time consuming. The legislation applies to payments made after 6 April 2021, so will apply to any invoices that are paid after date even if the work is done much earlier. You therefore need to be up and running by 6 April 2021.

You will need to consider:

1. If you fall within the definition of 'small'? If so, you won't need to make any changes provided you remain small in each subsequent tax year.
2. If you are caught by the rules, you need to identify any service provider that you need to provide a status determination on. This can be time consuming as many organisations don't already hold information about those providing services to them through limited companies or partnerships.
3. Decide who will be responsible for determining the correct status of your service providers. Do they need additional training? HMRC have, for a number of years, pro-

vided an online tool to assist with these determinations – CEST – but it has been heavily criticised by professionals because it doesn't always come up with the correct answer.

4. Decide how you will deal with appeals. Will they be heard by the same person who made the initial determination and how will you ensure that you comply with the strict time limits set out in the legislation?
5. Do your existing contracts allow you to withhold tax? Will the tax and NICs be an additional cost you have to meet or can you renegotiate terms so that the cost is factored into the rates charged by the worker?
6. Review how the payment processes within your business will work. Many businesses use straightforward purchase ledger payments. However, under the new arrangements the invoice will need to be split between fee and VAT, PAYE and NIC deductions calculated on the fee element with a net payment made to the PSC plus PAYE/NIC to HMRC.
7. Do you need to set up a separate PAYE scheme to handle these payments? Organisations will have to process these payments through the PAYE scheme under the real-time information arrangements which means they must be on an RTI submission to HMRC on or before the payment is made. Many organisations operate payments to suppliers on a different timeframe to employee wages and therefore using the same payroll scheme could become very complicated.
8. Do you need to advise those suppliers potentially caught by these rules to let them know you'll be reviewing your internal processes? There's been a lot of publicity around these changes and workers will be concerned about how they will be affected. In some cases, you may want to ask them to become an employee if they are critical to your business.

Jo Moseley is an employment lawyer at Irwin Mitchell LLP www.irwinmitchell.com

TW.WORKS

In Tunbridge Wells, corporates are in good company

Royal Tunbridge Wells has long been home to large corporates, but in recent times more than ever are committing to more space in the town, for the long-term.

The strong and diverse business

community is supported by a vibrant restaurant, retail and hotel offer, quick links to London and a pipeline of talent from the stellar local grammar schools.

With many Global and local

businesses now considering new, flexible space in the area to help their employees who live here commute less, we are seeing a post-Covid change towards greater flexibility and wellbeing.



Ross Feeney, CEO of Tunbridge Wells Together said:

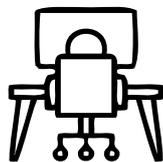
“As a group, we believe the time is right to attract more corporates to Tunbridge Wells, whether this is for a large regional office ‘spokes’ or to sponsor and support employees’ flexible working requirements post-Covid by paying for local office space for them. Either way, Tunbridge Wells has all the elements to support businesses growing in the town. We believe

strongly that there is ample opportunity for investors to develop new grade A office space in the area, due to the growing demand for both small office operations and for larger corporates looking to escape London-priced floorplates. Given the year we have all experienced, it has also never been more important to consider better wellbeing and ways to better ‘support local’.”



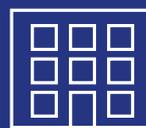
£496,619

Average house price in TW compared to £256,000 UK

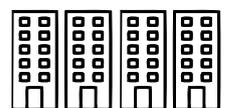


3,000

More commuters now working from home



London corporates shedding 1/3 to 50% of space should open a TW office



17%

Of retail space is empty & could be made into offices



5,000

New companies set up in the last 5 years in TW



10,000

jobs in 10 years

Predicted pre-Covid for TW



24

Days annually saved by not commuting



LEGAL & CREATIVE

Fastest growing sectors in TW

DEVELOPERS:

Why now is the time to Make Space in TW

There is a rapidly growing demand for office space in and around Tunbridge Wells as the business heart of Kent.

In the last two years, 200,000 sq ft of commercial space has been altered to residential under Permitted Development Rights.

We are hoping that now corporates, developers and investors alike see that now is the opportunity for commercial space to be retained or created, responding to the current real demand here.

The Local Plan is being drafted at the moment and there will be a bias towards the conversion of empty retail space (currently 15.9% of all retail units in the Borough) to office space or business centres. This is not without its challenges and we would like to see developers and landlords coming together to provide expertise to help us achieve this most effectively. We want the Government to consider business rates relief for retail premises that will be converted to offices to attract

more investment and to make lettings of empty retail space easier.

There are also many new housing developments under construction or planned over the next 5-10 years in and around the Borough. We would like to see some of these giving provision to flexible offices, which will attract buyers who need home office space in this new world.

Get in touch to find out more.
Follow us for more information and announcements via the hashtag #TWWorks on social channels.

GET IN TOUCH WITH US VIA OUR DEDICATED WEBSITE

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TOGETHER

Are vaccine policies discriminatory?



by Kathryn Burke

The UK has given the first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine to over 16 million people. Despite the vaccine saving lives and offering a route back to some normality, it has been reported that only around 76 per cent of people would accept the offer of a vaccine.

Employers have a duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees and others, so implementing a 'Vaccine Policy' requiring staff to be vaccinated to protect the wider workforce seems logical – but it is not as simple as that.

ACAS

ACAS (the body which initially deals with employer/employee disputes) guidance states that employers cannot require employees to be vaccinated and should listen to concerns if staff refuse to take it. However, if the reason/s for refusing to take the vaccine are 'unreasonable', employers could potentially take disciplinary action.

The relevant considerations when determining whether disciplinary action is appropriate are whether:

- there is a vaccine policy
- the vaccine is necessary for the worker to do their job
- a worker's reason for not wanting the vaccine is protected under the Equality Act 2010.

We consider the third factor.

Discrimination

Section 4 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Act) lists the 'protected characteristics' for which a worker should not be subjected to detriment. If a worker's reason for not wanting the vaccine relates to a protected characteristic (such as disability, maternity status and belief), then subjecting that worker to detriment (such as disciplinary action) for not being vaccinated could constitute a discriminatory act and give rise to an Employment Tribunal claim.

1. Disability discrimination

'Disability' is defined by section 6(1) of the Act as having a long term physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on an individual's ability to undertake normal daily activities.

An individual may be unable to have the vaccine due to a disability.

Subjecting a disabled worker to detriment because they cannot comply with a vaccine policy due to a disability is likely to be discriminatory. Employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for workers with disabilities and making exceptions for these workers in a vaccine policy could discharge this duty, helping to reduce the risk of a claim.

2. Maternity discrimination

Workers must not be discriminated against because of their maternity status. PHE has advised that pregnant women or those who plan a pregnancy within three months of the first dose should not take the vaccine. Allowances in any vaccine policy could help employers navigate this issue, but they should be mindful that workers may not wish to divulge this information.

3. Religion or belief discrimination

Workers must not be discriminated against due to their 'beliefs'. As anti-vaxxer movements gain momentum, what constitutes a 'belief' for the purposes of discrimination law must be closely examined. A belief must:

- be genuinely held
- be a belief, not an opinion or viewpoint based on the present

state of information available

- be a belief as to a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviours
- attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance
- be worthy of respect in a democratic society, not be incompatible with human dignity and not conflict with the fundamental rights of others.

Anti-vaxxers may have a 'viewpoint based on the present state of information available'. If so, the opinion that vaccines should not be taken would not be a 'belief' for the purposes of discrimination law.

Even if it were to constitute a 'belief', it still needs not to 'conflict with the fundamental rights of others'. Some people cannot have the vaccine and must rely on others getting it to protect their health (and their human right to life) which is likely to amount to a 'fundamental right'.

Anti-vaxxers may therefore struggle to show that disciplinary action against them for breaching a vaccine policy is discriminatory.

4. Proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim?

If an act is discriminatory, it could be excused if it is a 'proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'. A Vaccine Policy aims to protect workers' health which is likely to be a legitimate aim. However, there are other ways of furthering that aim which could be more proportionate than insisting that workers with protected characteristics get vaccinated (e.g. a face mask policy).

We think requiring someone to be vaccinated when it is against that worker's protected characteristic is unlikely amount to be proportionate, so any detriment suffered by that worker for breaching the Vaccine Policy is unlikely to be excused in an Employment Tribunal claim.

Conclusion

Employers should consider having a vaccine policy in place, but when implementing that policy and initiating disciplinary procedures against those who do not comply employers need to be careful not to discriminate against their staff or they risk facing Employment Tribunal claims.

Kathryn Burke is an associate in the employment team at Collyer Bristow LLP
www.collyerbristow.com

"Implementing a 'Vaccine Policy' requiring staff to be vaccinated to protect the wider workforce seems logical – but it is not as simple as that."



Uneven balance of Men and Women within the Energy Industry... is this a Myth?



By Paul Webb, MEI Chartered Energy Manager and the author of *'Becoming an Energy Expert'*

Are we witnessing more 'women in energy' coming into to this industry? Is there a tipping point of change happening?

This week I caught up with Hayley Monks, the co-founder of 'Women's Utilities Network at WUN', and we shared our views regarding women in our industry. I have been researching this in more depth since our conversation and I believe that although there is a high percentage of women within the industry, they are not necessarily within the senior roles. I believe that this is where the myth comes from, as although there has been, and there is, a far spread of women across the sector, they just do not hold senior positions.

Times are changing though and in Hayley's own words, "You don't ask, you don't get".



Hayley Monks founder of WUN ... "You don't ask, you don't get" Inspiring women across the world in 'utilities'

The utilities sector is lacking in diversity with many women being generally under-represented, particularly in senior roles. The EU Skills strategy, published in October 2019 highlights this with only 17% of roles being occupied by women. www.euskills.co.uk/the-sectors-inclusion-commitment

This won't change, if we don't do something about it and at WUN we are passionate about building a community of women who can connect, support, develop and encourage one another .

I personally have been networking across the world lately utilising 'BNI' and LinkedIn and I have networked with some amazing energy, sustainability and compassionate individuals.

I can confirm that the percentage of men to women is balanced, but what is even more interesting is that I'm seeing a greater percentage of women that appear to be more academically qualified.

PHD level of individuals across the world, both men and women in the industry of sustainability and energy, has raised significantly. We need to enrol individuals with these skills into our industries whether they are men or women. If we don't, the industries won't grow and there will be no impact as to what we are trying to achieve. Recruitment is important but equality and zero discrimination rules need to be followed.

I have mentioned this before that academia alone does not necessarily make good experts in our industry and I will always fall back to my mentoring program of supporting young professionals and developing their knowledge. I'm witnessing this change of young professionals coming into our industry having mentored young professionals in both India and Africa.

The Energy and Sustainability industries in my opinion have no discrimination. Within the groups I have had the honour to participate in, I have seen a percentage of change and a balance of both men and women. What we need to do now though, is to take this to the next level. Please forgive me as I start playing the old record again, but I think we need to simply ensure that our knowledge is shared and to make sure that it is made available for everyone to learn from.

This is one of the reasons that I post daily onto my office 'LinkedIn' as it is a great platform from which to share knowledge, views and to seek global engagement. My knowledge has no discrimination and it is available for everyone to learn from. The more people and engagement in the knowledge, the more we

will see an impact to the changes that need to happen.

There are many woman coming into this industry and I know that there are leaders developing from those that I have worked alongside, having even reported to many. I have even been pipped to the post for promotions which personally was tough but I knew was the right decision.

I'm hoping that I will continue to network with Hayley and the WUN and become a 'Mentor' for them voluntarily, enabling me to continue supporting young professionals in taking big steps within this exciting industry.

If you are a women in this industry, please look-up Hayley Monks thewun.co.uk. Find out how you can join this group and if you're an experienced expert who wants to share your knowledge, please contact me. I'm going to volunteer my time to this group to make a difference to our industry. Hayley is doing an amazing job bringing this group together and she is part of a strong team.

I'm going to predict that in the coming years more and more women are going to be coming into our industry (I'm witnessing this now) and more and more women are going to be taking the lead which is not a bad thing as we all have the right to make a difference on our environment and the future for our children and our children's children.

More energy insights www.b2benergy.co.uk and Podcast "Energy Speaks Back"



**B2B
ENERGY**

Roots v risk: how companies can create a new culture and customer-base



It's common for brands to become stagnant, rooted in their ways and too

set on a specific course which restricts their ability to adapt to change. It is the classic example of the 'That's how we do things around here' mentality. But over time, competition increases, markets develop and consumer needs shift. Consequently, very few industries have remained static over the past year let alone the last decade, which has created an urgent need for businesses to evolve. *Matthew Hayes explains how digging up the roots of a business can actually help sow the seeds for a successful future.*

Letting go of your roots

Resistance to change is one of the greatest barriers to a business's long-term success. This resistance is often the result of a company becoming too attached to its roots, which can sometimes be so deep that they begin to act as an anchor, weighing the business down rather than enabling its growth.

These roots can be categorised as values, goals and characteristics of a business that define how it operates, the messages it communicates, the way in which it conveys them, as well as how consumers perceive the brand.

But as times change, it is common for business roots to become outdated and unsuitable for the current commercial climate. And as a result, businesses begin to face difficulties in keeping customers engaged and in turn, achieving a profitable financial return. To see this in practice, we only need to look at the demise of some of the biggest named brands in recent times.

For example, the Arcadia Group is one of the latest victims of digital transformation, a trend that has



been gradually impacting the retail space in recent years, and that has only accelerated during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The digital shift has been led due to the need to meet changing consumer expectations and behaviours, with online sales increasing year on year, and even more customers are expected to be shopping with a digital-first perspective following the pandemic and its related disruption.

Instead of responding to the change in the market and embracing online opportunities, businesses operating as part of Arcadia Group continued to do things as they had always done. And it was this lack of focus on their digital offering, particularly when compared to competitors such as PrettyLittleThing, boohoo and Asos, that ultimately resulted in their commercial downturn.

Although not so great for the individuals effected in the process, the case offers other businesses a vital lesson in the importance of letting go of outdated roots and adapting to change.

Taking a risk

But due to the deep-rooted nature of such characteristics, there is a perceived risk involved with letting them go. It's understandable as it will no doubt involve a significant change to business as usual. But, any risks can be mitigated if businesses take a strategic approach in their decision to make change.

For instance, by undertaking branding exercises, such as a brand audit and the formalisation of a value proposition, stakeholders can

gain an in-depth understanding of the business's current position, its offering and their consumers' expectations, through the creation of audience personas and its market via detailed industry insights and competitor analysis. From here, there will be a clear view of which aspects are not appropriate for the current commercial landscape, and where there will be opportunity to enjoy the fruits of your labour once change has been implemented.

Once a new proposition has been established in theory, it then needs a detailed project plan to role it out in a practice, combined with an effective communications strategy. Taking a look at an example from my own experience my company re-branded Delta Global, a packaging provider for luxury retailers that, at the time, was doing great things with regard to innovation, technology and sustainability but was failing from a branding perspective to communicate its capabilities in those areas.

Our branding exercises helped to redefine the business's values, creating a four pillar model that communicates them much more clearly. Formed of innovation, sustainability, luxury and ecommerce, clients and stakeholders can now, at a glance, understand exactly what the business does and how it does it.

And to ensure the business and its position only benefited from the activity, it was complemented with a robust communications strategy. This gained the brand exposure in industry-leading titles, including Forbes, WWD and The Sunday Times, as well as a greater presence across social media channels.

This helped mitigate the risk of unsuccessful change through use of effective communication targeted at new audiences, existing customers and internal stakeholders, who now understand the new direction but also be on board with it.

Is change always necessary?

In short, no. Change for the sake of change can actually be just as damaging to a brand as staying consistent. This is because sometimes, the deep-rooted characteristics of the business form a vital part of the audience's understanding of the brand and its offering.

This might include family-run business values or branding elements that are connected to the location a business was founded in, for example. Often, it's unlikely that these elements will be hindering the business's growth potential, but are instead, adding value to it by acting as a USP and differentiating it from the competition.

However, in these cases, while the message does not need to change, the way in which it is communicated might, as often, it is the methods of message delivery that become outdated. For example, this might mean making better use of online marketing channels such as social media, content creation, search engine optimisation and email promotions to support both online and offline activities.

It's all about making well thought out changes in order to remain relevant, rather than constantly altering your messages and offerings, which could actually cause confusion and disconnect between the brand and its consumers.

Ultimately, businesses need a solid footing upon which they can build on. But while these foundations are important for business growth, like a tree's roots, some often go off at a tangent and become stuck in the past, anchoring the brand to where it used to be rather than allowing it to move forward into the future.

Put simply, if you don't evolve, you die.

Matthew Hayes is managing director of Champions (UK) plc, a strategy-led growth agency in the brand, digital and communications space
www.championsukplc.com

Why trust and transparency are key ingredients for strong leadership

Jonny Combe gives his top tips on leading a remote team in 2021

1. Build a foundation of trust

Leadership is about empowering your people and one of the main ways to do this is to trust your team to make responsible decisions – just as they did in an office-based set-up. In a remote office model, it's important to trust them to make good judgements about time and personal commitments. And whatever your leadership style, trust engenders an adult-to-adult model of interaction. This has always been the case but is even more crucial now with so many of us working from home. Leaders can also build trust by demonstrating authenticity. We're all human and acknowledging the challenges we encounter in these strange times helps to build trust and also encourages people to speak up about any struggles they are facing.

2. Work out what really matters

Being suddenly plunged into remote working patterns in 2020 was a shock for leaders and employees alike – it's easy to talk about being more productive but suddenly you had to deliver it. The situation forced leadership to work out what the truly key tasks were and to ensure their team delivered them. This focus continues to be a benefit of remote working and helps leaders direct their people towards a more outcome-based model of working.

3. Intentional communication with staff

Frequent communication and contact with staff have always been important and being remote shouldn't have changed that. What has changed is that as a leader, you now have to be more intuitive and tap into your EQ. Whereas in the office you might pick up on someone's mood changes and check in, now you have to check in on people intentionally. After nearly a year of working remotely, this has become almost second nature for many leaders and managers. However, there is a danger that as lockdown conditions drag on, some of these good habits can fall by the wayside. Leaders must not underestimate the



importance of connecting – both on a personal and a professional level. These regular connection points help people feel valued and significant – which encourages them to feel good about themselves, what they do and the value they bring. As well as being the right thing to do on a human level, on a business level, it also means people will want to do their best work.

4. Empower your leaders to lead

Businesses have to adapt to changing circumstances – as a leader you have to work out the most effective way to recalibrate and to communicate with your leadership team and your staff. You've got to keep your leaders and all your people in the loop. Leaders should also look to capitalise on opportunities and the pandemic is certainly an ideal time to embrace great internal comms.

At my company we walk the talk – we have introduced a senior management team call three times a week, which are good connection points for us. We also have a more formal leadership meeting once a month, and we have an all-staff virtual meeting every Monday morning.

5. Follow up on your promises to your staff

Many leaders tell their people how important they are, but you have to follow this through with action. There are some great examples of intentional actions and at my com-

pany we have opted to pay for Disney+ subscriptions for those employees with children as a way to support them during lockdown. For employees who don't have children or who already have a Disney+ subscription, we pay for them to have the new Joe Wicks app to help them get active and to maintain a positive mental attitude. These are small gestures in themselves, but they are important because they help people feel valued and remind them that out-of-sight isn't out-of-mind.

6. Adjust your expectations

Paying tribute to flexible working and actually demonstrating flexibility are vastly different things. My company were already advocates of flexible working when we were office-based so it hasn't felt like a huge leap. For us, it has never been about 'face time' at your desk, or 'presentee-ism', it's about getting your job done.

Right now, however, the game changer is having multiple employees with children who need home schooling, so it's crucial that as a leader, I adjust my expectations. A single parent trying to juggle home working and home schooling will inevitably have their work impacted, despite their best efforts. Frankly any working parent right now probably deserves a superhero cape! Accepting that some employees may be unable to give 100 per cent focus and being aware of the pressures is vitally important as a leader. And it's also essential to set clear boundaries

and goals about the achievements and outcomes you expect. Just make sure they are realistic.

7. Recruit from a wider talent pool and consider a hybrid remote office

Part of good leadership is seizing opportunities and since the pandemic has accelerated the working-from-home revolution, it's now possible to source employees from a wider area. Leaders should cast their recruitment net wide and carefully consider the kind of skills, experiences and diverse ways of thinking that would help take their organisation to a new level. By securing the very best employees, leaders can add more value to their organisation. We used to restrict our hiring pool to people within a relatively small radius of the office. Now, we're looking within a 100-mile radius of the office, which will enable us to operate a hybrid-remote office with people in the office once a week even when we are clear of the pandemic crisis. The flexible nature of remote working has the added benefit that it attracts Millennials and Gen Z who like a portfolio approach to work. Having these digital natives on board and harnessing the mindset of different generations is all part of creating a vibrant and diverse workforce. At my company this helps us consolidate our position as a leader within our industry.

Jonny Combe is chief executive of PayByPhone
www.paybyphone.com

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Because of BREXIT and issues to cross the border with the exports, from our office in Madrid, we offer collaboration to UK companies and can export to EU. We are thinking of a partnership so the UK company do not have to set up in the EU and are able to operate in EU with no problems.



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■ Mindteck UK Ltd

Some things seem like they were meant to go together - like fish and chips, bangers and mash, tea and toast. So, when it comes to the current business environment, more than ever consider the pairing of tech talent from a tech company with engineering at its core. Together, Mindteck (UK) Ltd. and its global parent company, have a strong track record of supporting its roster of top-tier clientele with niche expertise and knowledge that matters to:

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thomas.sanil@mindteck.com
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As well as live prices online for fast and easy purchases, Bullion House offers a fully personalised buying service to assist customers in building a precious metal portfolio that meets their needs. All the staff are experienced in-house industry specialists available over the phone or in person via appointment at their London office.

For further information, please email info@bullionhouse.co.uk or visit www.bullionhouse.co.uk.



■ Joule Group has offices in UK, Ireland, UAE, Qatar. The company was founded and is run by fire and life safety engineers. Globally Joule Group are providing Fire Engineering Consultation Services during the design & build phase and over the years we have amassed experience and knowledge through risk-based assessments and have identified a gap in the industry for IT based solutions.

As a result, we have developed a new product called TFS-COMPLIANCE, an innovative digital solution for fire and life safety regulatory inspections. We recognise that for building owners and operators, management of the buildings and adhering to necessary regulatory checks, inspection, maintenance, house-keeping, and also the process of recording (and keeping records) for auditing purposes can be a real challenge even with the very best intentions.

UK Tel: 0203 325571
info@joule-group.com
<https://joule-group.com/>
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■ ACE Travel Management

ACE Travel Management appointed as ATG's official UK partner

ATG, one of the world's fastest-growing travel management networks, has announced the appointment of ACE Travel Management (ACE) as its official U.K. partner.

ACE Travel was formed in 1992 and specializes in providing a comprehensive Business Travel Management service to the corporate sector.

ATG's CEO Tammy Krings stated, "ACE has been recognized as a stellar brand in the travel industry for nearly 30 years. They have built a large presence in the UK by reputation and engagement with strategic partnerships, while still maintaining their independent spirit."

Sarah Wilson ACE's CEO added, "We joined the ATG family to establish ourselves as part of a truly global company but still provide the local expertise for which we are well known".

For further information please visit www.acetravel.co.uk.



■ Present Communications Ltd

A London-based events support company has been named a Small Business of 2020 by Lloyds Bank after pivoting its business model during lockdown.

Present Communications started out offering an audio and visual equipment hire service for conferences and other events but, by the beginning of last year, around half of the business was focused on video conferencing and webcasting. The 10-strong team, led by managing director Kieron Garlic, looked set for a busy 2020 after building its own webcasting platform.

Almost 900 businesses up and down the country were nominated by their local communities and 24 winners were picked based on how creatively and quickly they adapted to events since March, and how they went over and above expectations.

Their prize is £10,000 worth of social media support and advertising as well as a business mentoring session to help develop their growth plans.

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Offer Date: 1-31 March 2021

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■ The DoubleTree by Hilton London Chelsea is open and operating safely within the current government guidelines. We are located in Imperial Wharf, near Chelsea Harbour Design Centre, and within half a mile of the cafés and boutiques of the Kings Road. Imperial Wharf railway station and Chelsea Harbour Pier are both just a two-minute walk, providing direct transport links across London. Perfectly located for Chelsea Flower Show and Stamford Bridge, home of Chelsea Football Club.

Offer to members

Special offer only available to LCCI members. Book directly, quoting 'LCCI' to receive a 20% discount on bed & breakfast rates in 2021 and a warm DoubleTree cookie on arrival. T&C's apply.

Contact

Beth Ardron
Beth.Ardron@dtchelsea.com
0207 411 2203



■ Now, more than ever, business leaders need their insurance policies to pay out and help them survive the consequences of Covid-19. If your business has suffered a financial loss because of the pandemic, and you have an insurance policy, now is the time to seek help. Our dispute resolution team will help you establish whether you can successfully make a claim on your insurance to cover your business interruption losses.

Offer to members

We offer a fixed price comprehensive insurance policy legal review service to work with you and your accountants to quantify the value of your claim, negotiate for you and help you to achieve the best settlement for your business.

Contact

Jenny Raymond, Dispute Resolution partner **0330 107 5957 / 07725 241 081**
jraymond@hcrlaw.com
www.hcrlaw.com



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Contact

Ed Thompson, Corporate Sales Manager
0203 411 3717
ed.thompson@spartan.com

SCORPION AUTOMOTIVE – DRIVING INNOVATION AND GROWTH

Scorpion Automotive is The UK's leading designer and manufacture of Vehicle Tracking and security products. Based in Chorley, Lancashire where the R&D and manufacturing team are situated. The company has offices in India, Canada and Dubai and is a Tier 1 supplier to the Automotive Industry including customers such as Toyota, Subaru, Isuzu, Honda, BMW and DAF Trucks.



Mark Downing (pictured), the company's founder and Managing Director has steered the company through some challenging times but is rightly very proud of the company's achievements. Mark has always enjoyed being a manufacturer however, after the 2008 credit crunch Mark made the de-

cision to manufacture as much as possible in house giving the company much more control over the design and, quality and availability of its products. Today the company boasts a world class electronics manufacturing facility and has won the Prestigious BIBA's awards 4 times being the recipient of the Company of the Year, Manufacturer of the Year (twice) and the International trade award. Scorpion has also been awarded the Norther Automotive Alliance award 3 times.

Mark explains; "There are some big events driving changes in the market and my job is to make sure we take full advantage.

• **Coronavirus**; this has accelerated the shift to online sales and in turn the parcel delivery service providers. These companies require accurate and up to date information about the movement and location of their fleets. Also, there is a big focus on security, vehicle & contents theft. Scorpion's Fleet Management telematics system is a market leader in this field.

• **Crime**; Unfortunately, we are seeing an ever upward trend in vehicle crime and a reduction in available resources for the Police, so Scorpion is seen as a valuable partner to the police with its stolen vehicle prevention and recovery products. If you wake up one morning and find you car has gone off the drive, you will have a 95% better chance of recovering that vehicle and a much better response from the police if you have Scorpion with its 24/7/365 monitoring team in your corner.

So as we enter a new year when hopefully we will see the world retuning to normal with the roll out of the vaccine, the distribution of which is monitored by Scorpion Tracking products, and the dust settles from the Brexit transition we are certainly looking forward to a very exciting next decade of Innovation and Growth.

Best of luck and good business to all of our valued customers.

Mark Downing



Call our Chorley office on **01257 249928** or visit www.scorpionauto.com for further information on any of the company's products or services.

The BIG Reset



Matt Brooke offers three things we need to know about corporate health and wellbeing in light of Covid-19

We are living in a different world. 2020 has, by all accounts, been blemished by the monumental and far-reaching impacts of Covid-19. But what 2020 and the global pandemic has also provided is the opportunity for so many to stop and take stock of their lives. So, it's no surprise that general health and wellness have risen up the agenda. People want to start afresh, leading healthier, happier lives in the process and all businesses, big and small, need to take stock. Unlike the years that have preceded it, I expect 2021 to witness the revolution of corporate wellness and we all need to be ready to seize the opportunity. Here are three key considerations you should be aware of when planning your organisation's health and wellbeing programmes in 2021.

Shifting mindset

Even before the pandemic, notions of wellness and holistic health were accelerating in popularity as society drove a cultural shift in the pursuit of healthier, fuller lives. 57 per cent of people rated health and wellbeing as important to their daily lives before the pandemic. Covid-19, two national lockdowns and isolation have only fuelled that fire however, highlighting imbalances in our lives and the very real fight against isolation and mental anguish. It's hardly surprising therefore that 69 per cent of people now place importance on daily health and wellbeing.

Think bigger picture

Some of the world's most successful businesses have long recognised the importance of healthy employment and pivoted their practices and processes to support the needs of their employees. Day trips, unlimited holidays, flexi-hours, work perks, Friday socials and team outings are common go-to choices. Whilst the

current prevalence of home working practices may curtail some of the options available to employers, it is unlikely to change employee expectations. Instead, us as employers need to think broadly and should balance short term resolve with long term potential. Mindfulness activities, remote health initiatives and virtual fun can fill the void in the interim, but getting something more substantial in the calendar for our employees to group towards and focus on will be a must in 2021. Meaningful experiences and in-person activities are what our employees are craving. Activities that hybridize a focus on health, connectivity and fun will be sure-fire winners.

Be prepared to invest

Your people are your assets and now is the time to invest in them. As we map our organisations' paths out of the Coronavirus pandemic, don't lose sight of the importance your employees will play in getting you on that path. Whilst budgets top to bottom will be scrutinised, remem-

ber that investment in a healthy and well workforce yields a higher output, fosters loyalty and tangibly provides a competitive edge.

At my companies – Spartan and Tough Mudder – we are seeing the benefits of corporate wellness experiences first hand. We've always known and embodied the natural connectivity between teamwork and overcoming obstacles, but it's been an organic development too. Our events have evolved to meet the novel and nourishing demands placed upon businesses to inspire employee engagement and promote active health. Ultimately for us, it's about making healthier workplaces by encouraging fitness, developing interpersonal relationships, promoting inclusivity, and inspiring confidence. 2021 presents the next frontier of corporate wellness, and we're just scratching the surface.

Matt Brooke is managing director of Spartan Race UK and Tough Mudder

www.toughmudder.co.uk
www.spartanrace.uk

Keeping the City safe

Project Servator, a policing tactic that aims to disrupt a range of criminal activity, including terrorism, while providing a reassuring presence for the public, marked its seven-year anniversary last month since it was pioneered by City of London Police (CoLP). The anniversary coincided with the news that more than 300 people at 21 organisations in the Square Mile have been trained to spot suspicious activity, and report it during Lockdown.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the See Check and Notify (SCaN) training was delivered remotely by Counter Terrorism Security Advisers at CoLP, who work closely with residents, businesses and visitors to build relationships and encourage them to report anything that doesn't feel right. The training



means that there are now another 300 pairs of eyes and ears watching out for the signs of potential criminal activity across the City, in addition to the force's unpredictable policing deployments under Project Servator.

Project Servator aims to disrupt hostile reconnaissance – the information gathering terrorists and other criminals need to do to plan their action. Officers are specially-trained to spot the tell-tale signs that someone may be gathering information to help them plan or prepare to commit a crime. Since it was introduced in the Square

Mile in 2014, 23 other police forces, plus other partner agencies, across the UK and beyond have followed CoLP's lead and adopted the approach, including New South Wales Police Force in Australia and Royal Gibraltar Police.

Impact

Assistant Commissioner Alistair Sutherland, City of London Police and National Policing Lead for Project Servator, said: "At the start of the pandemic, none of us could have imagined how it would impact every aspect of our lives. There may be a different look and feel to the City at the moment, but we all need to remember that the threat of terrorism has not gone away.

"From the many conversations we have had with security staff,

businesses and residents, it's clear that everyone is looking forward to the City getting back to business as usual. For now, it's vital that people follow the rules and stay at home to protect the NHS and save lives. But as we look ahead to a time when restrictions can be safely eased, the training that's been delivered during lockdown will help continue to keep the Square Mile safe and secure. More people will be on the lookout for suspicious activity, and they will play a vital role in making it a difficult place for terrorists and other criminals to operate.

"One of our mantras is 'Communities Defeat Terrorism'. We know we can't do this alone and we are grateful for the support of our partners and the public to keep the City safe."

News from the EU



Compiled by
Angelina Markousi

EU and India launch trade and investment dialogue



■ “Open and constructive” exchanges have begun on a broad range of issues with the aim of enhancing EU-India bilateral trade and investment relations. Their discussion will feed into the preparation of the upcoming EU-India Leaders’ Meeting. Executive Vice-President Dombrovskis and Minister Goyal discussed trade and investment issues with emphasis on the socio-economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic as well as vaccine production and distribution mechanisms, including value chain linkages.

EU trade enforcement rules enter into force



■ Robust new trade enforcement rules have entered into force that will further strengthen the EU’s toolbox in defending its interests. With the update of the EU’s Trade Enforcement Regulation, the EU is able to act in a broader range of circumstances. The new rules upgrade the EU’s enforcement by introducing several changes. These include:

- empowering the EU to act to protect its trade interests in the World Trade Organization and under bilateral agreements when a trade dispute is blocked despite the EU’s good faith effort to follow dispute settlement procedures
- expanding the scope of the regulation and of possible trade policy countermeasures to services and certain trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights.

Joint statement by European Commission Vice-President Šefčovič and UK Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Gove

The co-chairs of the EU-UK Joint Committee on the Withdrawal Agreement – European Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič and the UK Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove – met last month to prepare the upcoming Joint Committee on the implementation of the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland and the outstanding issues.

The two co-chairs agreed to reiterate their full commitment to the Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement, and to the proper implementation of the Protocol. They agreed to intensify the work of the Specialised Committee on the Protocol in order to address all outstanding issues, with the shared objective to find workable solutions on the ground; underpin this work by further joint engagement by the UK and the EU with business groups and civic society in Northern Ireland; and convene the Joint Committee to provide the necessary political steer and approval to this work in the spirit of collaboration, responsibility and pragmatism.

New EU programme to support readiness for vaccination



■ The European Union in partnership with the World Health Organisation launched a new regional programme worth over €40 million to provide critical assistance to ensure local readiness and preparedness for safe and effective vaccination of the population in each of the six Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine.

By strengthening preparedness and readiness of the countries for vaccinations, this programme will prepare the countries for the

effective receipt and administering of vaccines, including those from COVAX and through vaccine sharing mechanisms with EU member states. The programme includes risk communication and community engagement, support to vaccine supply chain management, vaccination data and safety monitoring, training of health managers and medical staff involved in the vaccination campaign, scheduling of the vaccinations, as well as key logistical support for the delivery and handling of the vaccines and supplies.

Economic growth poised to recover as containment measures ease



■ The Winter 2021 Economic Forecast projects that the euro area economy will grow by 3.8 per cent in both 2021 and 2022. The forecast projects that the EU economy will grow by 3.7 per cent in 2021 and 3.9 per cent in 2022.

The euro area and EU economies are expected to reach their pre-crisis levels of output earlier than anticipated in the Autumn 2020 economic forecast, largely because of the stronger than expected growth momentum projected in the second half of 2021 and in 2022.

Economic growth is set to resume in the spring and gather momentum in the summer as vaccination programmes progress and containment measures gradually ease. An improved outlook for the global economy is also set to support the recovery.

Improving cooperation within the EU and with external partners

■ The Commission is presenting its first factual assessment to the Council on cooperation with partner countries on readmission, as required under the revised Visa Code and as part of the comprehensive approach to migration policy outlined in the

New Pact on Migration and Asylum. Effective return and readmission as well as sustainable reintegration are essential elements of comprehensive, balanced, tailor-made and mutually beneficial migration partnerships with countries outside the EU. The New Pact, presented last September, underlines that effective returns also require improved procedures inside the EU that reduce the fragmentation of national approaches and bring closer cooperation and reinforced solidarity between all Member States.

Recovery and Resilience Facility

■ The European Commission welcomes the European Parliament’s vote, confirming the political agreement reached on the Recovery and Resilience Facility Regulation in December 2020. This marks an important step towards making €672.5 billion in loans and grants available to Member States to support reforms and investments.

The facility is the key instrument at the heart of NextGenerationEU, the EU’s plan for emerging stronger from the Covid-19 pandemic. It will play a crucial role in helping Europe recover from the economic and social impact of the pandemic and will help to make the EU’s economies and societies more resilient and secure the green and digital transitions.

EU-Japan trade deal anniversary

■ February 1 marked the second anniversary of the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). The Joint Committee established under the Agreement, co-chaired by Executive Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis and Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Toshimitsu Motegi, celebrates this anniversary by agreeing important improvements to the Agreement. Each side will see 28 additional Geographical Indications (GIs) protected and wine and vehicle trade between the two sides will become even easier than before.



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EVENTS



Registration Deadline: Wednesday 3 March 2021

Location: Online

The DIVA consortium, in cooperation with the Enterprise Europe Network, invites SMEs to a virtual event on 4-5 March 2021. Being held online and free of charge, the event is intended for providers of digital tools and solutions as well as companies from all over Europe working in the agrifood, forestry and environment sectors. The aim is to foster the sharing of knowledge and expertise, to inform about future trends and technologies and to promote R&D, technical and business cooperation.



Registration Deadline: Sunday 7 March 2021

Location: Online

TechTurku Week is being organised entirely online while celebrating its 10th anniversary. This event-filled week takes a deep dive into the latest research, products and services available in the field of technology. The strength of the Turku region is based on the close cooperation between various fields. The week's topics include cyber security, manufacturing, the smart city environment and sustainable environmental technologies. The week also includes the much-anticipated ICT Showroom in which teams of tech students present their fascinating projects and fresh ideas.



Registration Deadline: Monday 8 March 2021

Location: Online

Japanese Food and Beverage Days is an online matchmaking event for European buyers interested in Japanese food and beverages. It provides a convenient online platform with a clear and searchable list of Japanese Food and Beverage Suppliers and European importers and buyers. The platform includes an integrated messaging and video call meeting function and dedicated support for buyers by a bilingual team and personal interpreters for buyers for all their meetings if necessary.



Registration Deadline: Monday 15 March 2021

Location: Online

This 2-day event is the 5th edition of the international B2B conference about production digitalization and smart technologies for industry. The topics that will be discussed during the conference include flexible production and advanced automation, digitization of production management and best practices, as well as data analytics and its use for production optimization. The event will include case studies in small, medium and large companies, 'CyberSecurity 4 Industry', as well as networking in pre-arranged B2B meetings.



Registration Deadline: Sunday 21 March 2021

Location: Online

The mission facilitates companies and knowledge institutions from the Netherlands and the Gulf region (United Arab Emirates, Oman and Qatar) in the following sectors in gaining market information and new business contacts:

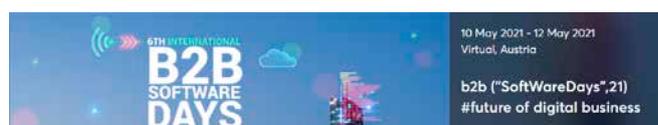
- Food: agriculture, horticulture and propagation materials
- Energy: renewable energy (in particular solar energy and hydrogen), clean energy technologies' offshore energy and the energy transition
- Health: eHealth
- Water: water management, drinking water technology, waste water technology.



Registration Deadline: Monday 22 March 2021

Location: Online

At this Germany-Canada Smart Industry Networking Event, the Enterprise Europe Network partners from Canada and North Rhine-Westphalia will offer an information and networking platform to players from these two countries. The event will brief participants about basic facts of doing business transnationally and about the support services available. This will be followed by a number of company pitches and a networking session, where bilateral meetings between participants from Canada and Germany can be scheduled and co-operations initiated. The event is open to companies and research institutes from all areas of smart industry, as well as companies that are interested in adopting smart solutions.



Registration Deadline: Sunday 9 May 2021

Location: Online

This is the 6th International B2B Software Days, organised by FFG, WKO/Advantage Austria, the Vienna Business Agency and TU Wien in collaboration with the Enterprise Europe Network and the go-international initiative. The event is free of charge and primarily targets companies and R&D institutions looking for technological, research and business co-operations. Consulting companies without technical expertise in digital business are not target group of this event.



Registrations for all events are now open
 For further information contact the Enterprise Europe Network London office at enterprise.europe@londonchamber.co.uk



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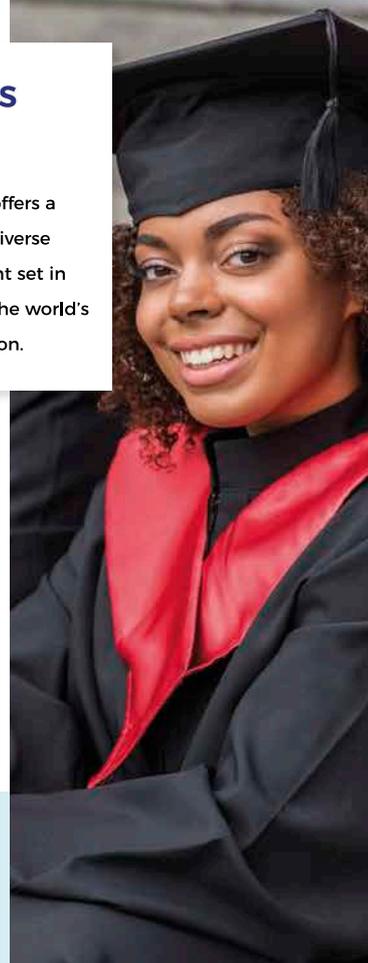
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