

An Update From Rhys

I have been at Apex for six months now and I have to say, it's nothing like anything I've ever experienced before! It's great to be in an environment where the whole team supports you and gives you the tools to really help you become the best version of yourself. The Apex vision is something everyone can get behind, and the idea that you can really have a positive impact on workplaces and the people in them gives you such a massive boost to produce your best work. When you feel like you are part of something bigger than yourself, and you have a purpose behind your work, it doesn't feel as if you're working. It's so important to care about your work, and if you do, you'll certainly see the benefits. I'm now looking forward to continuing my development and supporting our diverse range of amazing clients in any way that I can.



Bitesize HR

As we reopen the economy, we need to support people to get back to work. From the start of August, furloughed workers are able to return to work part-time with employers being asked to pay a percentage towards the salaries of their furloughed staff. Those people who are brought back from being furloughed and are unable to work from home will have mixed feelings about returning to the workplace. Some businesses are also choosing to reintroduce those who have been working from home back into the office and again, this may be met with some resistance. The most important thing is to start with a conversation. Talk to the team member that you intend to bring back from furlough leave or bring back into the office after a period of working from home. Gauge their feelings and emotions towards this change. Many may feel fearful of their health; offer reassurance that a number of safety measures have been implemented to ensure their safety. Talk them through the changes that have been made to their working environment – better yet, send them a video of a familiar face talking and walking them through the building so their anxiety of the unknown is kept to a minimum. Some people may enjoy working from home and don't want to come back into the office. Actively listen to their reasons for wanting to continue working remotely. Is this something you can accommodate? Do they need to be on site to do their job most effectively? If you feel there are legitimate reasons why they should be working back in the building, share these reasons with the employee so they understand why they are being asked to do so. A phased return may be a suitable compromise as the person readjusts to returning to the office environment. Some people may not have suitable childcare and that will need to be acknowledged and discussed and again, a phased or delayed return may be appropriate.

We are still living in a global pandemic. Yes, the economy is beginning to reopen but the health concern is still present and people are still dealing with the reality of the world we are now living in and have been for the past 5 months. Members of your team may be experiencing a multitude of feelings: fear, anxiety, stress, overwhelm, burn out, depression, frustration to name just a few. It has been and continues to be a real emotional rollercoaster for many and this is important to keep in mind when you are having these conversations with your team members. It is essential to open up a two-way conversation with your people and see them for the individuals that they are. Actively listen to their thoughts, opinions and concerns and respond with compassion and understanding. This will go a long way in building trust which is fundamental for positive relationships. Doing this the human way can only be a good thing and is much more likely to result in a happy team that feel listened to and heard coming back into the business. People will always remember how they were made to feel.

How do the quarantine measures affect your team members and work?

Organisations throughout the UK are doing an amazing job supporting their teams and looking after people throughout this global pandemic. This has been achieved by putting people first, and ensuring good, open and regular dialogue to keep everyone informed. We have all needed to be flexible and adapt quickly to ensure our workplaces are COVID-secure and apply the latest Government guidance. You will be aware that recently the Government amended its advice regarding quarantine measures for UK citizens returning from overseas. The guidance is very fluid and updated regularly by Government – here are a couple of links so you can access the latest information:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk/coronavirus-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate-when-you-travel-to-the-uk#contents>
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/self-isolating-after-returning-to-the-uk-your-employment-rights>

Speak to your team openly about the effect quarantine will have on both the business and their other team members. Encourage discussion, talk about the ongoing uncertainty and how sudden government changes might impact on your business. Hopefully the below helps to clarify some of the basic questions that might come:

Do you have to pay staff who will have to quarantine after returning from travel?

If they can work from home, then that is what they should do and you pay them as normal. If they do not have Coronavirus symptoms they are not entitled to statutory sick pay.

What are the options if they cannot work from home? They are unpaid for the 14 days' quarantine. Should they have symptoms they move to statutory sick pay. You relax your holiday notice period and let them take additional holiday when they get home.

Be fair, be consistent and set clear expectations and call us if you want to talk anything through.

Why Apex Are seizing The Moment.

People working in HR have been the solid foundation across many organisations across these challenging times. At Apex HR, we say it's time for HR to step up and take a lead role in shaping their organisations future. Businesses are realising that returning to "business as usual" is not an option. New, adaptable ways of working are needed. The only certain thing is more uncertainty. HR has too often operated on the margins of businesses and been there to pick up the pieces when there are problems. We believe HR needs to make its mark in a whole new way, being the conscience of the organisation and bringing a new human experience to the world of work. The pandemic has taught us many things. Above all, it's taught us that only people matter. HR must seize this moment. The future of work is human, and HR is uniquely placed to grasp this agenda and make it happen! At Apex HR we believe our work should be focused on the Human, not the Resources. We are proud to work with so many businesses who use our energy and passion to unleash the human potential and spirit that is waiting to be set free.

Diary Date

Apex and Cornish Accounting Solutions Webinar. Kev and Nicola will be joining Paul Miller for the below conversation with coffee on 27th August 10am. We are aiming for an open and conversational webinar that will hopefully have the odd take away gem for those that join us. "You, your people, your business, your money and a No D@ck Head Policy! We've survived the year so far, what's next? Kevin, Nicola and Paul will happily share their knowledge and experience as we ask what is next for us, our teams and our businesses. Kevin will also be sharing the No D@ck Head Policy he wrote recently. As you know Apex is made up of a team who are passionate about all things people and business related."

Did you know you can find us on social media? You can find us on LinkedIn at Apex HR Ltd, Facebook at Apex HR. Also, you can find our website at <https://www.apexhr.co.uk/>

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES OR QUESTIONS, OR NEED ANY SUPPORT WITH HR IN YOUR ORGANISATION, OR ANY DATA PROTECTION NEEDS, DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT US ON 01752 825697 OR RHYS.HACKNEY@APEXHR.CO.UK, WE ARE ALWAYS HAPPY TO HAVE A CONVERSATION! THANK YOU FOR READING, THE APEX TEAM.