

# Chinwag!

**Welcome to all readers – old and new**

As we step into 2025, it's time to embrace new beginnings and explore ways to bring clarity and balance into our lives. Welcome to a year of transformation through the lens of HR journeys and mindfulness moments, where organisation and mental clarity take centre stage.

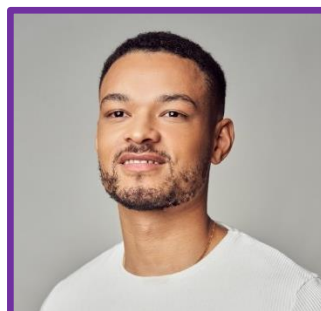
In this issue, we dive into "**In with the New: Steps to Begin Organisation in the New Year.**" This practical guide offers a roadmap to declutter your spaces and simplify your routines, setting the tone for a stress-free year. From reflective assessments to celebrating small wins, these steps will empower you to tackle the chaos and make room for peace and productivity.

We are also delighted to feature insights from guest writer Felicity Menzies on **Unconscious Bias Training**, a vital component in creating inclusive workplaces. Her expertise highlights how effective training fosters fairness and equity, paving the way for a more collaborative and innovative work environment.

Through HR insights, mindful practices, and expert perspectives, we'll uncover the secrets to balancing personal growth with professional excellence. Let's make 2025 the year we master organisation and unlock our full potential together!

Regards,

**Team Serious About Solutions**

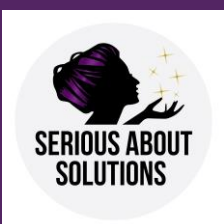


**"The person you'll become in the future is a consequence of how you use your time in the present. Spend your time wisely, gamble it intrinsically and save it diligently."**

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# Focus Point

## In with the New!

### Part 2: Steps to Begin Organisation in the New Year

A new year brings a fresh slate and the perfect opportunity to reset your environment. Following on from your resolution enthusiasm has already started to wane, here are some step-by-step actions to kickstart your organisation journey for 2025:

1. **Start with a Vision:** Imagine how you want your spaces to feel and function. Visualising the outcome will motivate you to take action.
2. **Create a Checklist:** Write down all areas you want to organise, from your bedroom wardrobe to your car's boot.
3. **Dedicate a Weekend to Decluttering:** Allocate specific days to decluttering without distractions. Start small and build momentum.
4. **Sort and Categorise:** Use the "keep, donate, discard" method to evaluate items. Be honest about what adds value to your life.
5. **Introduce Storage Solutions:** Use clear containers, labels, and shelves to keep items tidy and accessible.
6. **Adopt a Daily Reset Routine:** Spend 5-10 minutes each evening tidying up to prevent clutter from building up.
7. **Set Reminders for Maintenance:** Schedule monthly or quarterly check-ins to reassess and fine-tune your organisational systems.
8. **Celebrate Progress:** Acknowledge your efforts and reward yourself for achieving milestones, no matter how small.



By implementing these steps, you can turn the page on disorganisation and create a harmonious environment that supports your personal and professional success in 2025.

If you any have queries about this or any other workplace matter – email us at: [info@seriousaboutsolutions.com](mailto:info@seriousaboutsolutions.com)

## For Facts' Sake

# From Tea Breaks to Talent: The Remarkable Journey of HR in Britain

*Let's have a chat about human resources, shall we? Oh, don't roll your eyes! HR is the unsung hero of British working life—always there, quietly transforming the workplace while making sure there's time for a proper cuppa.*

From its humble beginnings to the slick, tech-savvy operations of today, HR has been at the heart of how we work, live, and occasionally grumble about office life.

## Tea and Sympathy: HR's Humble Beginnings

The British love affair with tea isn't just about biscuits and small talk—it's also one of HR's earliest success stories. Back in the industrial heyday, when workers toiled long hours on noisy, grimy factory floors, someone had the bright idea of introducing tea breaks. Not for love of Earl Grey, mind you, but to keep productivity humming along and reduce costly accidents.

The personnel managers of the time weren't talking about "work-life balance" or "employee engagement" yet, but they knew one thing: a tired worker isn't a productive worker. So, tea it was. And thus, a cornerstone of British workplace culture was born.

## When the World Went to War

During the World Wars, personnel management became vital. With men off fighting, women stepped into roles they'd never been allowed near before. Factories and offices suddenly needed someone to figure out shift patterns, training, and policies for this new workforce. Personnel officers became wartime superheroes, balancing schedules, morale, and the occasional factory dance.



The war years were the start of seeing workers as Individuals with skills and rights, not just numbers in a ledger. It was a small step for HR, but a giant leap for workplace equality.

## The Swinging Sixties: Workers Get Groovy

Ah, the 1960s. Everything was changing: music, fashion, and even the way we worked. Suddenly, workers weren't content to clock in, clock out, and go home. They wanted training, development, and—dare we say it—job satisfaction. Cue the personnel department, stepping in with workshops, appraisals, and team-building activities.

Meanwhile, unions were flexing their muscles, and strikes were as common as Twiggy-inspired eyeliner. Personnel officers had to mediate between workers and management, a role that often required the patience of a saint and the diplomacy of a seasoned UN negotiator.

### **The Eighties: Enter the Yuppies**

By the 1980s, Britain had swapped bell-bottoms for power suits, and HR (as it was now called) had swapped paper files for strategies and spreadsheets. With Margaret Thatcher steering the ship, businesses had to get lean, mean, and competitive. HR became less about mediating tea breaks and more about talent acquisition and performance management.

If you've ever sat through a corporate buzzword-laden meeting, you can thank the 1980s for kicking off that particular trend.

### **Modern HR: Wellness, Inclusion, and WFH**

Today's HR is all about flexibility, wellness, and inclusivity. From mental health support to diversity training, HR departments have evolved into champions of the modern workforce. Remote working? HR made that happen. Striking the right balance between tech and humanity? That's HR too.

### **Cheers to HR**

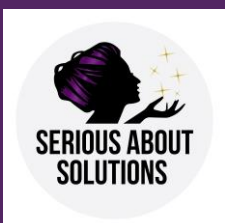
So, next time you're enjoying your tea break or logging into your hybrid workspace, give a nod to the personnel pioneers who made it all possible. HR isn't just about policies and performance reviews—it's the heart and soul of the British workplace. And if you've ever worked somewhere that stocks the good biscuits, well, that's HR's doing too. Cheers to that!

Let us have any historical workplace information you are aware of at [info@seriousaboutsolutions.com](mailto:info@seriousaboutsolutions.com) and we'll have a *Chinwag!* About it.

We thought we'd start the year with some recognition for the HR professionals who have really made a positive impact for us and our readers in the past. Let us know if you'd like us to celebrate anyone on your behalf. Let us have their name and current organisation; the organisation they were at when they made a difference to you and a brief description of what they did to impress you. You can remain anonymous if you wish. We will get in touch to let them know that they've left a lasting impression on someone and publish their name here in *Chinwag!*

#### **Today Let's Celebrate:**

- Paula Moriarty; Caroline Brocklehurst and Dee Mullner – Barts Health NHS Trust
- Tristan Thompson – Community Trade Union



## Sound Advice

### Speaking Up Against Injustice:

#### How to Address Racism in the NHS

In this week's edition of our community advice section, we assist Alex with an equalities dilemma.

##### **Dear SAS**

*I work for the NHS, and recently I overheard a conversation between managers that deeply troubled me. They were openly discussing ways to undermine the career of a non-white nurse in our organisation. Their tone was casual, almost smug, and it was clear this wasn't a one-off incident. I'm horrified, but I don't know what to do. I feel powerless and scared of retaliation if I report it. How should I handle this situation?*

##### **Serious About Solutions say:**

##### **Dear Alex**

*First, let us acknowledge how difficult and distressing this situation must be for you. It takes courage to confront racism, especially when it's coming from those in positions of power. What you've overheard is not only morally reprehensible but could also constitute serious professional misconduct under the NHS's commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.*

##### **The Bigger Picture: The Snowy White Peaks**

*Your experience isn't happening in isolation. It reflects broader systemic issues highlighted by Roger Kline in his influential report, "The Snowy White Peaks of the NHS". Kline's research exposed how discrimination in the NHS often manifests subtly yet powerfully, with white staff occupying most leadership roles and career progression disproportionately favouring them. This structural inequality reinforces barriers for ethnic minority staff, like the nurse in question, and perpetuates a culture of exclusion and inequality.*

##### **What You Can Do**

*While it's understandable to feel apprehensive, there are steps you can take to address this situation:*

##### **1. Document Everything:**

- *Write down exactly what you heard, including dates, times, and the names of those involved.*
- *Stick to factual details without adding interpretation, as this can strengthen any future report.*

##### **2. Familiarise Yourself with Policies:**

- *Review your organisation's whistleblowing policy and equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) framework.*
- *NHS employers are legally required to uphold standards under the Equality Act 2010, which prohibits discrimination.*

##### **3. Report the Incident:**

- *Consider reporting the incident to your organisation's HR department, EDI lead, or Freedom to Speak Up Guardian.*

*These channels are designed to protect whistleblowers and address such issues.*

- *If you fear retaliation, you can make an anonymous report, though this may limit the organisation's ability to act.*

#### **4. Seek External Support:**

- *Contact organisations like NHS England's Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) Team or Race Equality Matters, which work to tackle inequality in the NHS.*
- *If the internal response is inadequate, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) or Acas can provide further guidance.*

#### **5. Find Allies:**

- *Speak confidentially with trusted colleagues who may have witnessed similar behaviour.*
- *A collective voice can be more powerful and harder to dismiss.*

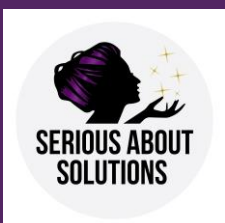
### **Taking a Stand**

*By speaking up, you are not just protecting this nurse but contributing to a culture that refuses to tolerate racism. Change in institutions like the NHS starts with individuals like you who have the courage to challenge the status quo.*

*Remember, addressing systemic issues requires sustained effort, but every action counts. By acting now, you're helping ensure that the NHS lives up to its core values of fairness, respect, and care for all.*

### **Useful resources for this case study:**

- **Legislation**
  - Equality Act 2010
  - Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
  - Employment Rights Act 1996
- **Organisation Policies**
  - Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy  
Outlines the organisation's commitment to promoting fairness, respect, and inclusion within the workforce.
  - Whistleblowing Policy  
Provides a clear framework for reporting unethical or unlawful behaviour within the organisation.
  - Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy  
Details the organisation's approach to addressing and preventing workplace harassment and discrimination.
- **Other Resources**
  - Line Manager
  - HR Department



- Freedom to Speak Up Guardian  
A designated individual within NHS organisations who provides independent, confidential support to staff raising concerns. [Freedom to Speak Up Guardians](#)
- Roger Kline’s “The Snowy White Peaks of the NHS”  
Explores systemic racism within NHS leadership and provides evidence-based recommendations for change. [Roger Kline Report Summary](#)
- Trade Union  
Any of the representatives from the 13 health unions
- Acas (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)  
Offers advice on resolving workplace disputes and handling discrimination cases. [Acas Guidance](#)
- Race Equality Foundation  
Aims to eliminate racial discrimination in public services, including health and social care. [Race Equality Foundation](#)
- Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS)  
Assists individuals experiencing discrimination under the Equality Act. [EASS Website](#)

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## Unconscious Bias Training That Works

Our guest writer this week is Felicity Menzies of [Culture Plus Consulting](#) – who specialise in the global provision of bespoke EDI initiatives to meet cultural needs. Here Felicity discusses Unconscious Bias training.



Unconscious bias can subtly but significantly impact decision-making, workplace interactions, and overall organisational outcomes. To address these challenges effectively, organisations must combine awareness-building activities, skills development programs, and... [click here to read more](#)

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# In the Know

## Talking Points in the World of Work

### This week:

#### Employment Rights Bill

Introduced to Parliament on 10 October 2024, the Employment Rights Bill represents a comprehensive reform aimed at enhancing workers' rights and modernising employment practices. Notable provisions include:

- **Flexible Working:** Establishing flexible working as the default from the first day of employment, requiring employers to reasonably accommodate such requests. [The Times](#)
- **Parental Leave and Sick Pay:** Granting rights to parental leave, sick pay, and protection from unfair dismissal from day one of employment. [AP News](#)
- **Zero-Hour Contracts:** Implementing measures to end exploitative zero-hour contracts, ensuring more predictable and secure working hours for employees. [Le Monde](#)
- **Fire and Rehire Practices:** Banning unscrupulous fire-and-rehire tactics, protecting workers from unfair dismissal and re-engagement on less favourable terms. [AP News](#)

These reforms are part of the government's commitment to improving job security and raising living standards across the country. [GOV.UK](#)

#### National Living Wage Increase

Effective from April 2025, the National Living Wage for employees aged 21 and over will rise by 6.7%, increasing from £11.44 to £12.21 per hour. This adjustment reflects the government's commitment to maintaining the wage floor at two-thirds of median income, benefiting over 3 million workers.

[Financial Times](#)

#### Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023

The Worker Protection Act, which received Royal Assent on 26 October 2023, introduces enhanced obligations for employers to prevent workplace harassment. Key aspects include:

- **Preventative Measures:** Mandating employers to take proactive steps to prevent sexual harassment and protect employees from third-party harassment.
- **Liability:** Holding employers liable for failing to take reasonable steps to prevent harassment, thereby promoting safer and more inclusive workplaces.

Employers are advised to review and update their policies and training programs to ensure compliance with these new requirements. [Wikipedia](#)

#### Anticipated Reforms

Looking ahead, several additional reforms are expected to shape the employment landscape:



- **Neonatal Care Leave and Pay:** Anticipated to come into force in April 2025, providing employees with the right to time off when a baby they are responsible for is in hospital receiving neonatal care.

#### [HR Inform](#)

- **Carer's Leave:** Introduction of unpaid leave for employees with caring responsibilities, allowing greater flexibility to balance work and care duties.
- **Right to Disconnect:** Exploration of policies granting employees the right to disconnect from work communications outside of standard working hours, promoting work-life balance. [Tann Law Solicitors](#)

Employers and employees should stay informed about these developments to ensure compliance and to take advantage of the enhanced rights and protections afforded by these legislative changes.

#### **Other Recent Developments in UK Employment Law:**

**FT**

[Financial Times](#)

[UK minimum wage to rise to £12.21](#)

[73 days ago](#)

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[The Times](#)

[Workers' rights bill: 11 things to expect from Labour's plan](#)

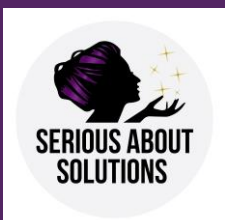
[125 days ago](#)



**AP**

[AP News](#)

[UK's new Labour government unveils overhaul of workers' rights](#)

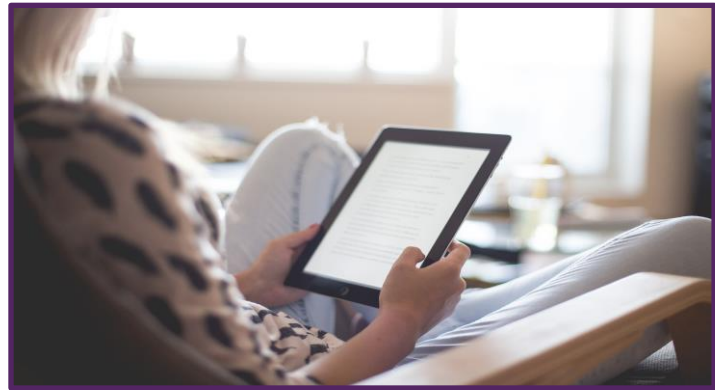


## Readers Corner

These developments reflect a broader trend towards enhancing worker rights and addressing long-standing issues within the labour market, signalling a pivotal shift in the UK's approach to work.

Employers are advised to review their policies and processes to ensure compliance with these changes.

For more details, you can check out additional resources on the changes to employment laws and economic initiatives or contact [Serious About Solutions](#).



In our Readers' Corner you get a chance to let us have your questions, feedback, diary dates and Community Spotlights.

- **Questions**  
Let us have your questions about the world of work and we will publish our expert advice in our *Chinwag!* Newsletter
- **Feedback**  
Tell us what you think about our website, publications and services
- **January is:**
  - World Religion Day – 19<sup>th</sup>
  - Martin Luther King Jr Day – 20<sup>th</sup>
  - Holocaust Memorial Day – 27<sup>th</sup>
  - Lunar New Year – 29<sup>th</sup>

(Source – <https://www.ocasa.org.uk/post/equity-diversity-and-inclusion-edi-calendar-2025>)

### **Take 2 Minutes for Yourself Today**

In the hustle of daily life, it's easy to overlook moments of calm. That's why we're sharing a quick **2-minute mindfulness session** to help you reset and recharge. Whether you're at your desk, in your car, or taking a quick break at home, this session is your reminder to breathe, refocus, and ground yourself in the present.

Mindfulness isn't just about relaxation; it's a powerful tool to boost clarity, improve focus, and tackle the challenges ahead with a refreshed mind.

Click here to start your journey to balance and mental clarity—because even two minutes can make all the difference.



## Contact Us

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Thanks for taking the time to read this edition of *Chinwag!*

We really need your feedback so that we can continue to make improvements to our publications and services.

Share this newsletter with anyone you think might be interested in what we do here at *Serious About Solutions*.

Don't forget to [join our mailing list](#). See you in the next edition.

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