



WIG

The Whitehall & Industry Group
connecting the sectors

The Whitehall & Industry Group's

People Series:

Six months in review

April-September 2020





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People Series: Six months in review

The ‘People’ theme encompasses events and content that cater to practitioners in the HR & Talent, and Diversity & Inclusion spaces, as well as a wider audience of attendees who have a general interest in broader leadership challenges.

There is growing momentum behind organisational shifts in HR, L&D and D&I practices alongside a need for new approaches to leadership. Such shifts cannot happen in isolation, and there is a need for the public, private and not for profit sector to work together.

More recently, the impact of COVID-19, the Black Lives Matter movement, intergenerational challenges and the ‘new normal’ of work places has put even more emphasis on the need for a cross-sector approach.

There will be four main areas of discussion, they include:

- **HR & Talent**
- **Diversity and Inclusion**
- **Organisational People Challenges**
- **Learning and Development**

The following reports are insights into webinars from WIG’s People series that took place in April - September 2020. This document will give you an overview of the content covered, unique polling data from our members, and themes that emerged from questions that were raised throughout the presentations.

**Best wishes,
Tom Sapsted**

Head of Content & Events





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People Series

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Expert Insight



- Make it clear to your team that they can rely on you standing up for them and taking responsibility, giving them the confidence to continue their work.
- Manage your team's concerns by putting their work into context and allowing them to see the big picture.
- Although being physically present is difficult in the current circumstances, ensure your team can still see you and talk to you.
- Be open and honest to gain the respect of your colleagues and to build trust within your team.
- Give people a sense of who you are by finding ways to relate your own life to those of the people you work with – talk about your family, hobbies, or even your pets!
- Your team will notice if you are not doing well so look after your own well-being and crucially, always get enough sleep.

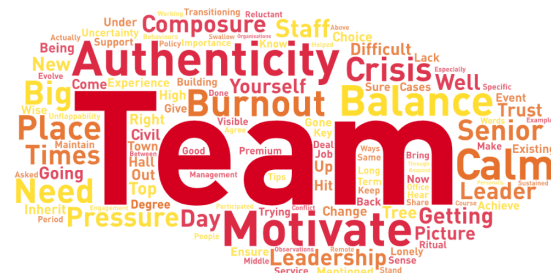
Recommendations

- To translate these tips to the wider organisation, Philip gave the following recommendations:
- Build strength, morale and the right ethos by ensuring you have the right people in your team, even if this involves some difficult decision-making.
- Help your team understand that they are doing special work and celebrate it.
- Give people the sense that even in a difficult environment they have a mutual support network.
- Build the reputation of your team as a great place to be not just for the work that you are doing but also for future career opportunities.

Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered, some of the big issues raised included:

- Maintaining trust in an organisation's leadership when dealing with lack of clarity
- Keeping yourself motivated and looking after yourself as a leader
- Management of a team you have inherited
- Motivating a leadership team to be visible
- The impact of COVID-19 on our ways of working



WIG members can listen to Philip's presentation [here](#)
To see our full programme of webinars, visit www.wig.co.uk



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'People' Series
Enhancing Digital Inclusion
13 May, 2020

Expert Insight

WWe were joined by Michael Vermeersch, Digital Inclusion Lead at Microsoft, to discuss digital inclusion and how we can make remote working more inclusive and accessible. He touched upon points including:

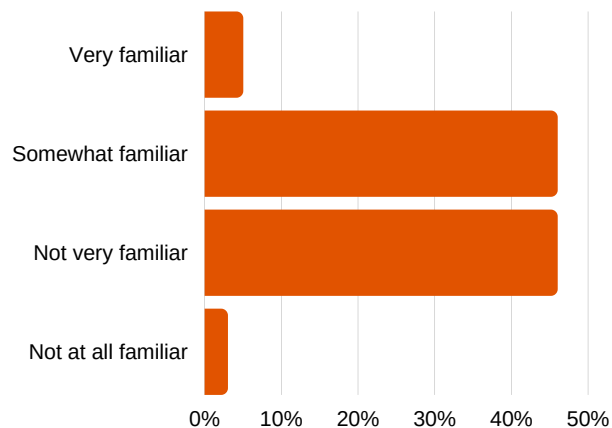
- Digital inclusion is about building inclusivity into digital transformations to harness untapped talent and to engage more with a larger market.
- Since the number of remote workers has surged, many of us are only connected to others through digital means. To maintain inclusivity, employees must be equipped with the physical and technological means to work from home and the right adjustments to do so comfortably.
- Remote working can be made more inclusive and accessible by: making available the necessary tools such as an effective workspace and relevant cloud-based applications, staying connected not just for work but also for fun, and managing our time and well-being by setting boundaries and taking breaks.
- You should utilise the technologies available to you to enhance digital inclusion, for example by using blurred backgrounds or captions during meetings, using accessibility checkers, and making use of built-in artificial intelligence analytics to safeguard the time you have to focus on work.



Cross-Sector Opinion

Over 100 attendees from the breadth of our cross-sector membership listened in, we asked them:

"How familiar are you with digital inclusion?"



Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered, some of the big issues raised included:

- Addressing the accessibility needs of operational and front-line workers.
- Engaging at scale when people are in different locations and have different accessibility requirements.
- More digital ways of working outside of teleconferencing and how to upskill employees to use them.
- Maintaining inclusivity and collaboration when some colleagues are in the office whilst others are at home.
- Monitoring productivity when working virtually.

WIG members can listen to Michael's presentation [here](#)
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'People' Series

Tackling Structural Inequalities in the UK

18 May, 2020

Expert Insight

We were joined by Siobhan Morris, Coordinator of the UCL Grand Challenge of Justice and Equality and Matthew Whittaker, CEO at Pro Bono Economics to discuss how to tackle structural inequalities in the UK. They touched upon points including:

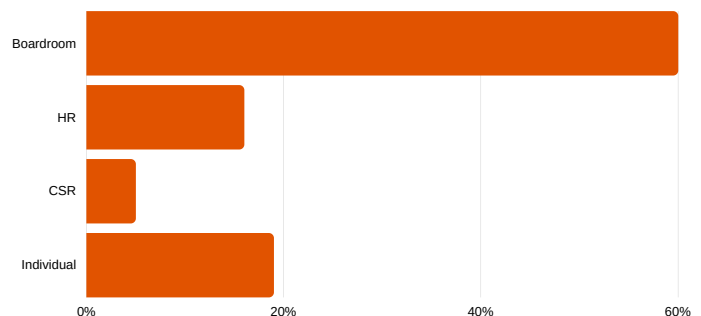
- Psychological safety is a workplace culture without fear, where people aren't trying to cover their tracks to avoid being punished or embarrassed.
- Workplaces with psychological safety allow people to be more curious, open-minded, self-motivated, innovative and resilient. It allows for greater trust and collaboration, increased learning behaviour, higher performance and a greater likelihood of partaking in knowledge-sharing activities.
- Building psychological safety on an organisational level can be achieved through: behavioural expectations, channels for speaking up, and culture measurement.
- On an individual level, psychological safety can be created by re-framing conversations to encourage seeing failure as a way to learn, inviting participation, and responding productively when people do speak up.
- The 2019 UCL and Resolution Foundation report 'Structurally unsound' found five key principles for how to approach equity: recognise that language matters, shift the focus onto equity, ensure diversity of evidence in decision-making, alter the structure of society by changing who designs it, and adopt a place-based approach.



Cross-sector Opinion

Over 100 attendees from the breadth of our cross-sector membership listened in, we asked them:

**"Where do you feel
responsibility
for tackling inequalities
lies in a business?"**



Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered, some of the big issues raised included:

- The risk of equalities legislation hindering organisations' ability to shift the focus to equity due to accusations of positive discrimination.
- Finding and making use of robust data, particularly on intersectionality.
- The role of the capitalist system driving structural inequalities when we continue to use GDP as a measure for growth.
- The impact of the legacy 'class' system in the UK and approaches to lessening its effects.
- How to overcome the regional divide between London and the rest of the country and devolving decision-making to outside of London.

WIG members can listen to Siobhan's and Matthew's presentation [here](#)
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'People' Series

Creating a culture of psychological safety

3 June, 2020

Expert Insight

We were joined by Alexandra Chesterfield, Head of Behavioural Risk at RBS and Anna Koczwara, Head of Behavioural Science at NatWest Group, to discuss the development of a culture of psychological safety. They touched upon points including:

- Psychological safety is a workplace culture without fear, where people aren't trying to cover their tracks to avoid being punished or embarrassed.
- Workplaces with psychological safety allow people to be more curious, open-minded, self-motivated, innovative and resilient. It allows for greater trust and collaboration, increased learning behaviour, higher performance and a greater likelihood of partaking in knowledge-sharing activities.
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Cross-sector Opinion

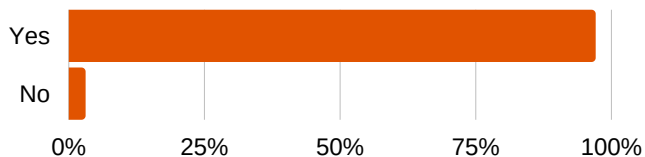
Over 100 attendees from the breadth of our cross-sector membership listened in, we asked them:

Have you ever experienced any of the scenarios described in these statements?

Have you ever...

- Wanted to speak up in a meeting but didn't because you were worried about the consequences?
- Voiced a concern or idea and was made to feel stupid or embarrassed for doing so?
- Been part of a team where it's not acceptable to make mistakes?

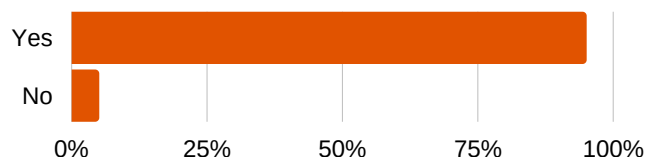
i.e. A psychologically unsafe environment



Have you ever...

- Been in a team where mistakes are consistently seen in the spirit of 'gotta break eggs to make omelettes'?
- Been in an environment where it's OK to be wrong and not know something?
- Spoken up with a different point of view and not been rejected or punished?

i.e. A psychologically safe environment



Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered, some of the big issues raised included:

- The role of leaders in creating an environment of psychological safety and how best to support them
- A team's responsibility in maintaining psychological safety
- Dealing with people who perceive a psychologically unsafe situation due to previous experiences and applying it when colleagues' productivity is impacted on by these experiences
- The link between inclusion and psychological safety

WIG members can listen to Alex's and Anna's presentation [here](#)

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'People' Series

Taking action on stress and resilience

11 June 2020

Expert Insight

We were joined by Rachel Austen, Director at Austen Advisory and Sean Maywood, Mental Health First Aider at PwC, to discuss how organisations can tackle stress and build resilience in a time of crisis. They touched upon points including:

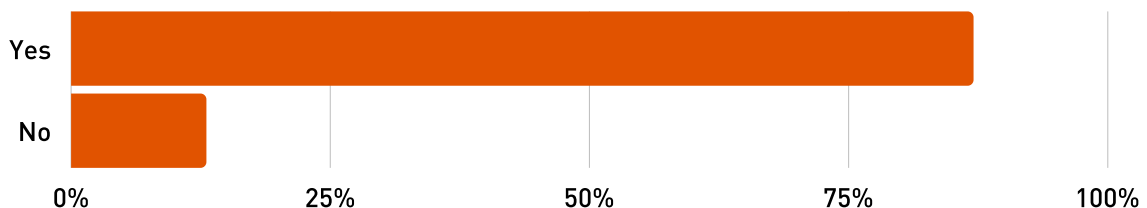
- Stress can be detrimental to organisations, employers of choice are the ones that create environments where people can thrive and not just survive.
- There is a clear business case for tackling stress and building resilience in organisations: less stressed employees take fewer sick days, it leads to a reduction in presenteeism, and particularly after early action, the ROI of mental health interventions has been shown to be high.
- There are 5 main types of initiatives for taking action on stress: access to mental health support, education and awareness building, benefits and incentives, clear policies, and training.
- At PwC, wellbeing has been made a global priority. They have found that it is important to adapt your approach to tackling stress to the culture that you have, thereby ensuring it is relevant to your organisation.
- COVID-19 has led to a rise in anxiety and isolation. These can be addressed by providing clarity, access to support, opportunities for meaningful connections, and by being more vigilant for signs of stress.
- The use of scientific tools to measure stress, such as Austen Advisory's AURA tool, are important for allowing issues to be identified and prioritised, and to subsequently be confronted and discussed openly.



Cross-sector Opinion

Attendees from the breadth of our cross-sector membership listened in, we asked them:

Have you suffered increased stress in the period of lockdown?



Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered, some of the big issues raised included:

- How to address cultural barriers to open conversations
- The role of a mental health first aider and support for middle management to understand mental illness
- How to successfully run a resilience programme for employees
- How to support BAME colleagues whose stress has been overlaid and reinforced by recent events
- How to support colleagues returning to the office post-lockdown

WIG members can listen to Rachel and Sean's presentation [here](#)
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'People' Series

Developing a successful job share

30 June, 2020

Expert Insight

We were joined by Hannah Gregory and Nicola Thomas, Deputy Director, Integration & Vulnerability Resettlement, Asylum Support & Integration Directorate at the Home Office to discuss their experience of job sharing. They touched upon points including:

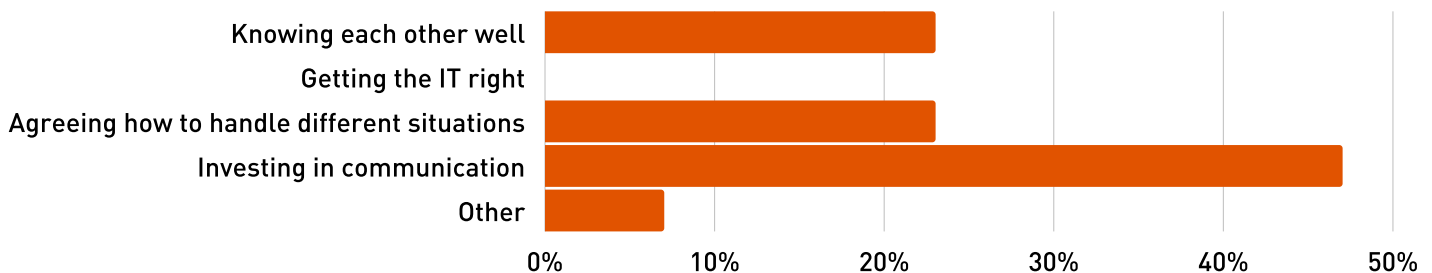
- When setting up a job share, it is important to find the right person with whom you share the same values. At the beginning, basic ground rules for the partnership and methods for communication and information-sharing must be considered. A job share is like a marriage, thus requiring effort and energy to function well.
- Job sharing brings greater emotional and practical resilience for both the individual and organisation. The arrangement allows for flexibility with working patterns whilst ensuring business continuity, particularly since the impact of changes in circumstances for one person can be diminished by their counterpart.
- Although a job share requires time-consuming investment in updates, systems, and information-sharing, this is invaluable for corporate memory, establishing clarity of focus, and automatically building in time for reflection.
- Job sharers bring a much wider skill set to an organisation than one individual can bring. It allows highly skilled workers to do a much wider range of challenging roles, keeping their skills alive whilst also learning from each other.



Cross-sector Opinion

Attendees from the breadth of our cross-sector membership listened in, we asked them:

What do you think the most important things are about setting up as a job share?



Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered, some of the big issues raised included:

- The relationship with your counterpart and finding the right partner for you
- Line managing teams as a job share and the impact on direct reports
- Sharing of responsibilities and establishing continuity throughout the week and across different issues
- The practicalities of a job share such as payment and working patterns
- Introducing job sharing into organisations where it is uncommon
- Job sharing as part of a broader culture change plan and other flexible working programmes

WIG members can listen to Hannah and Nicola's presentation [here](#)

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'People' Series

Incident Response and Crisis Management
at the Environment Agency

7 July, 2020

Expert Insight

We were joined by Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive at the Environment Agency, to discuss some of his organisation's recent experiences with incident management. He touched upon points including:

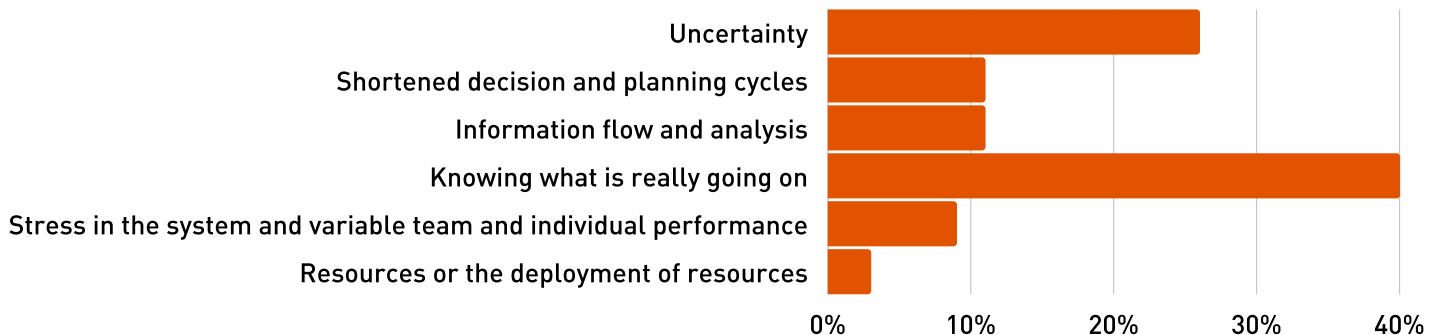


- The Environment Agency responds to over 75,000 incidents a year and has been set up to respond through pre-agreed plans and standard incident management procedures. These include daily reporting, agreed command and control, and resources such as trained staff and dedicated facilities. The EA also regularly practices managing incidents, and has tools for measuring performance.
- Sir James advised incident response leaders to be decisive, to move fast and over-resource at the start, and to be present and visible. Being ready beforehand and having a strategy is key, but you must be prepared to adjust it. Finally, it is important to use the media, but keep your message simple; ensure you and your staff stay well; and to always learn from your experience.
- Responding to COVID-19 has presented three main challenges: managing in ambiguous circumstances, managing changes in how work is carried out, and managing staff well-being and morale. To overcome these the EA's response has been to be agile, to move with deliberate pace, and to practise maximum empathy, relentless over-communication, and practical steps for improving staff experience.

Cross-sector Opinion

Attendees from the breadth of our cross-sector membership listened in, we asked them:

Which do you consider to be the greatest challenge in your organisation's ability to cope with crisis?



Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered, some of the big issues raised included:

- Collaboration across sectors, organisations and borders in incident management
- Running effective tabletop exercises and general crisis management training
- Advice for how to prepare to react to a variety of potential climate disasters
- Responding to crises occurring in succession and advice for managing the next one whilst still dealing with the fallout of the previous one

WIG members can listen to Sir James' presentation [here](#)
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'People' Series

Maintaining the momentum of D&I
28 July, 2020

Expert Insight

We were joined by Abu Bundu-Kamara, Global Diversity & Inclusion Leader at Boeing, to discuss how the momentum of D&I can be maintained in the context of recent world events. He touched upon points including:

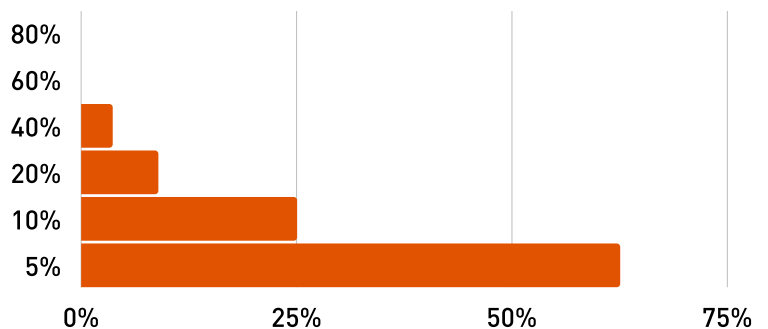
- During the COVID-19 period, women and those from diverse backgrounds have felt particularly excluded in the workplace. There are huge disparities between the impact of COVID-19 on different communities; black people have been shown to be 4 times more likely to die from COVID-19 than white people, which has had a devastating impact on the black community. We must therefore be sensitive and empathetic to what individuals are going through at this time and ensure that those most affected can be included.
- To tackle the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on employees, employers must carry out race equality impact assessments on all business decisions, review and monitor which employees are earmarked for furlough/redundancy to ensure these do not disproportionately affect BAME colleagues, and pro-actively encourage more health and wellbeing sessions for employees from diverse backgrounds.
- Organisations must also tackle the structures that systematically disadvantage some and advantage others. For example, progression and senior leadership positions are more difficult for employees of diverse backgrounds to attain. In fact, there is only 1.5% BAME representation in leadership positions in the UK public and private sectors.
- Abu recommended seven disruptive actions to address race equality in organisations: (1) publish aspirational targets, (2) establish a race task force with executives and senior leaders only, (3) carry out ethnicity pay gap reporting, (4) ensure that senior executives take accountability and ownership of key targets and KPIs, (5) carry out talent spotlighting, (6) implement organisation-wide racial micro-aggression training, and (7) monitor performance ratings for diverse groups.



Cross-sector Opinion

Attendees from the breadth of our cross-sector membership listened in, we asked them:

What do you think is the representation of black people in leadership positions in the public and private sectors in the UK?



Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered, some of the big issues raised included:

- Achieving positive action without tokenism and successfully supporting diverse talent management and talent spotlighting
- Approaches to tackling microaggression at different levels and the link with unconscious bias
- Encouraging conversations around race, inclusive language and the use of the term 'BAME'
- The importance of building a psychologically safe work environment for inclusivity
- The role of staff networks and actions for changing bias and prejudice within an organisation
- Addressing white fragility and empowering allyship from other groups

WIG members can listen to Abu's presentation [here](#)
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'People' Series

In conversation with: Dame Deirdre Hutton,
Chair, Civil Aviation Authority

29 July, 2020

Expert Insight

We were joined live in studio by Dame Deirdre Hutton, Chair, Civil Aviation Authority, for an exclusive farewell valedictorian presentation. Dame Deirdre reflected on her 11 year tenure as Chair of the UK's aviation regulator, sharing lessons learned from natural disaster crises, to the current COVID-19 pandemic and the role of strong leadership. A few insights she shared included:

- Some context-setting of the UK aviation industry pre COVID-19: passenger numbers had been increasing every year for the past seven years, with 284 million travellers projected to increase to 434 million by 2050. This means the industry will contribute significantly to the creation of jobs and adoption of new technologies.
- That the aviation industry will need to become greener in order to survive.
- Her key takeaways from three crises in particular; the Icelandic volcanic eruption, the Thomas Cook repatriation, and the current pandemic.
- The role of the Chair and what successful leadership looks like.



Presentation Spotlight



"Leadership is about the culture that you build day-to-day. Crises are when you find out if that's worked."

"Whether leading through crisis or business as usual, leadership is actually about what you enable others to achieve."

Our members' questions

Those who tuned in live had the opportunity to put their questions to Dame Deirdre. Some of the big topics included:

- The impact of leaving the European Union Safety Agency and how prepared the CAA is for this new responsibility.
- Whether electric planes had a future in UK aviation.
- Advice for those starting their career in aviation during this challenging time.
- Whether there would be more point-to-point flying outside of main corridors likely to happen in the future.
- Advice for young women looking to establish themselves as leaders.

WIG members can listen to Dame Deirdre's presentation [here](#)
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'People' Series

The Future of the Workplace

19 August, 2020

Expert Insight

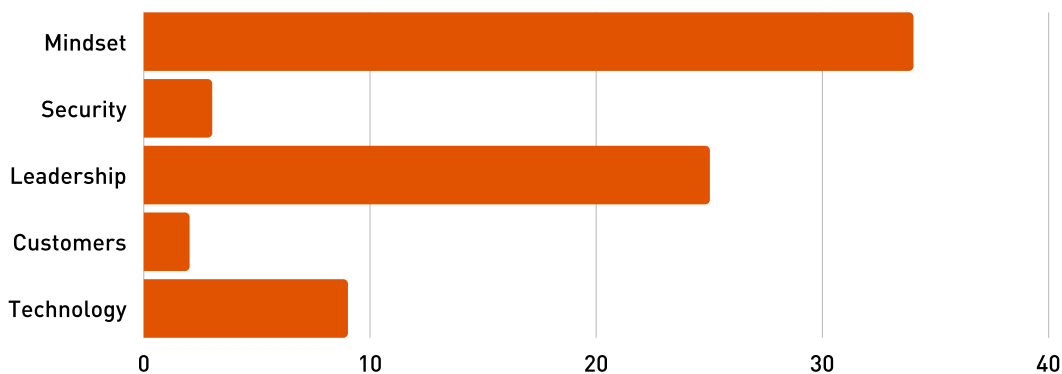
We were joined by Leslie Benson, Global Head of People & Change at FTI Consulting and Robin Colman, Senior Vice President, Strategy and Transformation at Software AG to discuss the impact that COVID-19 has had on the traditional workplace and what effect this will have in shaping the future of work. They touched upon points including:

- The workplace should not include only the physical environment, there also needs to be an adaptation of the wider environment, this includes: organisational culture, capability development, leadership, your customers and market, and the employee experience.
- Simplifying and prioritising technologies in this new working environment is key in maintaining engagement and collaboration.
- Retaining flexibility is something that is very important, along with taking into consideration people's living and work situations- there needs to be an empathetic side of what you are asking your team to do.
- Ultimately, there is a mindset and behavioural shift that will be required as we shift towards a longer-term change in the way that we work.



Cross-sector Opinion

Over 100 attendees from the breadth of our cross-sector membership listened in, we asked them: What do you think will be the greatest barrier in moving to adopting new ways of working?



Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered, some of the big issues raised included:

- Ways for organisations to facilitate "water cooler conversations" to help maintain wider organisational interaction
- How to ensure that managers can still operate and lead effectively without the opportunity for physical supervision
- Potential alternatives, such as more local office hubs as a substitute to help reduce commuting
- Managing "burn out" for leaders that feel that they need to stay in touch with their team members remotely
- The effect of this on people's living situations, especially younger people

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