

# Business Leaders Zoom Call Report



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For a confident future

## *Building Value & Profit in 2021 - with Care & Support for Employees*

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**Sources:**

ONS  
Guardian  
Bank of England  
Gallup

## Introduction

24th May 2021

### Welcome to our latest Business Leaders Zoom Call.

Cautious optimism abounds as the economy is showing signs of bouncing back strongly, following what is hoped to be the last major lockdown in the UK. The Government is likely to resist further lockdowns as the country is now more able to cope with the impact of the virus thanks to the success of the vaccination programme.

Caution does however make sense as the current resurgence in consumer spending may taper off by the autumn and inflation begins to erode living standards.

An ONS report out today showed that retail spending was up by 9.2% from March to April. Overall, sales volumes and values continued to rise above pre-pandemic levels (February 2020).

March 2021 saw UK house price growth at its highest level since August 2007. The UK's average house price now stands at a record level of £256,000. It has increased by 10.2% in the year to March 2021, up from 9.2% in the year to February 2021.

UK employers who were getting ready for the easing of lockdown started hiring again in March, driving down unemployment for a third consecutive month, according to official figures. The number of adults seeking work fell to 1.6 million in the three months to March, compared with 1.7 million in the three months to February, the Office for National Statistics said. The quarterly rate was down to 4.8% from 4.9% in February.

The proportion of UK businesses' workforce on furlough leave has fallen from 13% (around 3.3 million people) in early April 2021 to 10% (2.7 million people) in late April to early May 2021. Although there is still concern around what will happen to employment rates as the furlough scheme becomes less generous during the Summer and closes in September.

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**EMPLOYMENT LAW UPDATE**  
**HELEN DYKE,**  
**SENIOR ASSOCIATE SOLICITOR**

Channel 4 recently aired a documentary - Sex, Myths and the Menopause, presented by Davina McColl. It revealed that many women experiencing menopausal symptoms are wrongly diagnosed and are prescribed medicines that don't tackle the core issue. It's clear from the feedback we receive that there is a huge appetite amongst businesses to support menopausal women in their organisations and retain their skills and experience. There is good reason for this too – menopausal symptoms can lead to absence, decline in performance and cause women to leave roles in which they once thrived:

<https://imbusiness.passle.net/post/102gxzd/why-menopause-is-a-business-issue>

Anyone who's been embroiled in a workplace dispute will tell you how stressful and time consuming the process is. And once you add up the costs of dealing with these types of disputes, the figures are quite scary – around £1,000 for each UK employee according to recent research published by Acas. We can help businesses nip problems in the bud and train managers about how to handle difficult conversations:

<https://imbusiness.passle.net/post/102gxq7/workplace-conflict-costs-uk-employers-28-5nh-each-year>

The recent Queen's Speech said practically nothing of relevance to HR professionals. The government has been criticised for omitting employment from the speech and has said that it will introduce an Employment Bill when the 'time is right'. According to sources that may not be until 2022. Don't hold your breath. This blog takes a look at seven employment law changes the government promised to implement:

<https://imbusiness.passle.net/post/102gxvy/queens-speech-what-are-the-implications-for-employment-law>

A few weeks ago we informed our clients that the temporary right to work checks in force during the COVID-19 pandemic would end on 16 May. However, the government has revised that timetable and has moved the end date back to 20 June. This date aligns with the government's 'roadmap' to ease all national lockdown restrictions and social distancing measures:

<https://imbusiness.passle.net/post/102gxwe/right-to-work-checks-covid-flexibility-now-due-to-end-on-20-june>

EU citizens who wish to continue to live and work in the UK must apply for settled or pre-settled status by 30 June 2021. If they don't they may be considered an illegal immigrant and could be deported. What options do they have if they miss the deadline?

<https://imbusiness.passle.net/post/102gxle/eu-settlement-scheme-what-options-do-your-staff-have-if-they-miss-the-deadline>

# Supporting employees through domestic crisis



In Gallup 12 there are 12 universally proven questions to understand employee engagement but not all questions are equal and in the past 12 months of extreme pressure and uncertainty the most significant of the 12 questions has been:

***"My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person."***

## Why It's Important

Employees need to know that they are more than just a number. They need to know that someone is concerned about them as people first and as employees second. The fifth element of engagement may seem like a "soft" aspect of management, but there are key payoffs when people work in an environment where they feel safe.

They are more likely to experiment with new ideas, share information and support each other in their work and personal lives. They are prepared to give their manager and organization the benefit of the doubt, and they feel more equipped to strike a balance between their work and personal lives.

In turn, they are more likely to be advocates for their employer.

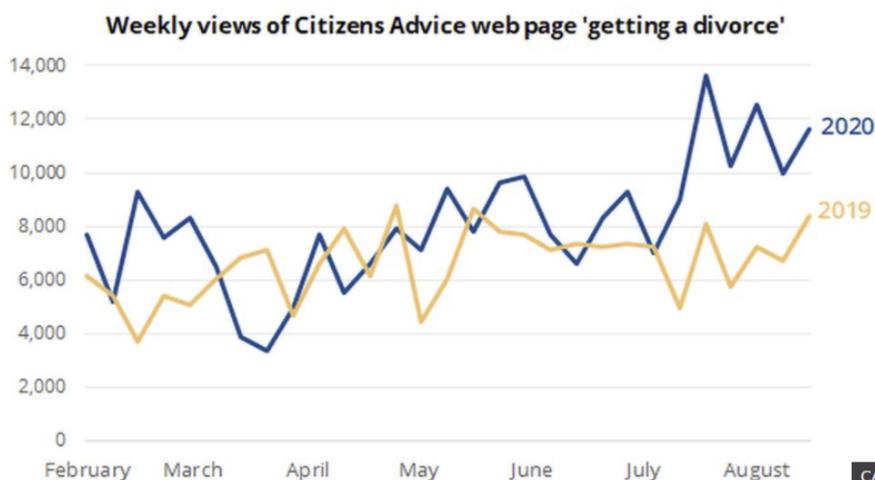
## Why It's Important by the Numbers

Globally, four in ten employees strongly agree that their supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about them as a person. By doubling that ratio to eight in ten, organizations could realize an 8% improvement in customer engagement scores, a 46% reduction in safety incidents and a 41% reduction in absenteeism.

## What the Best Do

Few managers take defined action to meet this employee need because caring about someone else cannot be manufactured. But the most successful managers know employees as individuals, acknowledge achievements, have performance conversations, conduct formal reviews and, above all, respect their employees.

These behaviours build a work environment where employees feel safe experimenting with new ideas, sharing information, exploring opportunities for development, and supporting each other in their work and personal lives.



Citizens Advice said more people were viewing guidance on divorce compared with last year

CA

*30% of matrimonial enquiries received have been from couples separating because of issues in relationships being "exacerbated" during the lockdown.*



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Lockdown has put relationships under pressure and this relates to working from home as people are not leaving the house and going to work for personal space when it might be needed.

Some employees are more vulnerable than others:

- Those with children
- Home schooling
- Elderly parents
- Adult social care commitments

Employers should be sensitive to employee's contracted hours.  
Home work space; some working from bedrooms and dining rooms.

It can be difficult to tell if employees are struggling when you don't physically see them every day.

Look at what you can see, make sure they have their camera on for internal calls and look at their body language, are they as neat and tidy as usual?

Are they starting to make mistakes?

Are they starting to miss deadlines?

If they are at office you can see if they are having to take a lot of time for non-work calls. To compensate for this lack of contact ask open questions, set up well being meetings and ask open questions which solicit real replies.

How are you feeling?

What's causing you difficulties at work?

What can we support you with?

Don't feel that you are going to be a counsellor and deal with the issue; you might need to signpost them to other help, get a mental health first aider (one per 50 heads) and they can direct people in the right direction.

Mental Health First Aiders are expected to become mandatory so it's worth leading the way with this initiative in your business.

Research at the moment points towards people being far more aware of mental health, and it is more awareness that mental health is not a stigma.

Domestic abuse has risen as well as divorce

## Open Questions

What, Why, How or Could

How are things going?

What's causing you difficulties at work?

How can I best support you?

Why is this a problem right now?

Could you tell me a bit more?



## Duty of Care

People are individuals

Signpost to support

Mental Health First Aiders

Domestic crises management



## What to be aware of

Being distracted

Making mistakes

On their phone

Being late – deadlines

Looking flustered



## What can you do?

Trained Mental Health First Aiders

Support for First Aiders

121 Wellbeing sessions

Signpost to specialist support



## Pressure on relationships

Divorce on the increase

Lockdown exacerbated existing problems

People can't escape each other

Domestic abuse numbers rising





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### Background to Post Covid Divorce Rates:

- Last year, everyone expected divorce increases, this didn't happen, but there was a spike in complaints / issues around not being able to see their children during lockdown. Divorce was "put on hold" and people held on because of the social upheaval of Covid. For lots of reasons such as illness, childcare, bereavement partners stuck together to provide support and felt they needed to join forces to get through it together.
- Although I'm a divorce lawyer I believe in marriage and am happily married, so during the pandemic I referred a lot of people to counselling, Relate, business coaches, well being consultants and saw many couples go through reconciliation.
- Unfortunately, as we exit the pandemic divorce is now on an upwards curve.
- Anyone going through a divorce will suffer mental health – mild or severe. Anxiety around where they will live, money, children etc..
- As employers we know that anyone going through a difficult time in their personal life is going to have their work affected.
- They will try to hide it.
- May start taking random days off...often for court hearings (not interviews!)

### To help your employees:

- Create a flyer – and post on your intranet or email to your staff. Those people who are ashamed or embarrassed might see that there is a partnership. IM will offer your employees a free 30 minute session, which will always reassure and make them feel better.
- Often this will lead to signposting to mediation, Relate, or appropriate legal advice.
- Divorce cases can take 6 months to 2 years. Working with employees to be flexible and supportive will support them through this difficult time.

### Employees:

- As an employee the distraction of your work is just the distraction you need. AND you need to keep your livelihood so you can pay your way forward. Having your job will help you with your sense of identity and sanity. You need to be open with your employer in order to get the flexibility and openness that you might need in terms of agreeing pick up / drop off on the school run.



## Euro Projects Recruitment Zoom Attendee Client offer:

Zahra Pabani of Irwin Mitchell will provide a free 30 minute consultation for any of your employees seeking support with a possible divorce.



**STEPHEN BROWN**  
**MD**  
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*"Today we covered a deep and very personal topic with the support of some incredible contributors, who we are truly grateful for supporting us and sharing their ideas with us."*

## JOIN US AGAIN...

Please join us again on **7th June 2021 at 2.00 pm** for 30 minutes to share the latest news affecting your business and to hear how to **Build Value & Profit with Employee Feedback and Engagement**.

Your Zoom Call invitation for this event will follow next week.

### HOW ELSE CAN WE HELP YOU?

**IF YOU HAVE A ROLE YOU WOULD LIKE US TO HELP YOU TO RECRUIT FOR, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR REGULAR CONSULTANT, ME, OR IF YOU'RE NEW TO US VIA THE DETAILS BELOW:**

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