

## Human Resources Subject Challenge

### Addressing Inequality and the “New Normal”

As the UK government’s roadmap for lifting lockdown has indicated a tentative “return to normal”, questions are being asked about what that “new normal” should look like. Pre-pandemic ideas about the “future of work”, which were focussed on robots and artificial intelligence, now seem less important when compared with the day-to-day changes that were required to enable large-scale working from home. The pandemic has provided a welcome focus on people issues, from the appreciation given to previously under-valued front-line workers (think the NHS, supermarket workers), to the negative exposure of organisations who mistreat their workers (think Wetherspoons). However, many inequalities such as those related to race, gender, mental health, poverty and skills have widened over the last 18 months (see figures 1 and 2). These need to be taken into account by human resources professionals as they determine what key functions like talent management, development, leadership and recruitment will look like going forward.



**Figure 1:** The government has been criticised for not considering gender equality in its post-pandemic recovery plan. Women were more likely than men to be furloughed or made redundant and do a greater share of unpaid care work.



**Figure 2:** Organisations are being pushed to demonstrate that their actions back up their stated commitment to Black Lives Matter. Understanding Society found that BAME workers were more likely to have lost their jobs than be furloughed during lockdown.

## Your Task

Design a poster (you can use Canva, Powerpoint, Prezi or other software of your choice) around the “future of work”, focussing on:

- How you think ‘work’ will look different after the pandemic, compared to before
- How you think these changes will address inequalities worsened by the pandemic
- Any examples you can find of companies that have made positive changes

You may wish to focus on one issue and/or group facing inequalities rather than try to cover everything.

## How to Submit

Please submit your completed poster via email to Helen Tracey ([helen.tracey@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:helen.tracey@northumbria.ac.uk)) by Friday 17 September 2021. There will be prizes awarded at Induction week for the best entries!