

Charity alignment

We discover which charity we have aligned to, and why.

Issue #1

Welcome to our first issue of Espresso.

Meet our team

Discover more about the Founder Alice and her vision for Espresso.

Espresso

From Peony & Magnolia



Your quarterly shot of ideas, collaboration & communication

Introduction

I am thrilled to launch, Espresso, issue #1! The idea around this project is to bring like minded people together to discuss key subjects, share thoughts and ideas and most importantly to have a platform to discuss, well simply, the topics which often get put into the 'tricky conversation' box.

we must be curious & brave

Naturally, we all are attracted to topics we are comfortable with, have a bit of knowledge about, can contribute to, or share own experiences of, but how often do we stray into new topic territory? To be able to develop and broaden our minds, we must be curious and brave, and tip toe into the unknown. Just be a little bit bolder!

The first issue will focus on the theme, 'to empower and to be empowered'. This is one of the four key underlying values at Peony & Magnolia and it feels

entirely appropriate for it to be the foundation of the first issue of Espresso.

Simply put, as the founder I believe that through supporting others to see their own potential is one of the most inspiring and energising elements of being a HR professional. Being part of a person's journey and seeing their growth, seeing a belief in oneself and the glow that comes from feeling empowered, is what makes working with people and in HR so special.





I wanted to share with you some of the key projects in P&M HQ over the last few months, reflect on some of my own development and introduce the focus topic section.

Alice

**...to empower
and to be
empowered...**

Looking back



The last year in brief

When we say, our business is your people, it really is. Since establishing the HR Consultancy in 2019, Peony & Magnolia are proud to say all our clients have been introduced to us through recommendations.

We are delighted to have supported these business owners through some pretty difficult times and look forward to seeing their companies prosper.

We do sit and reflect on a personal level and take on board any learnings, but we don't often shout about it.

Here is a taster of some of the projects P&M have led in the last 6 months...



Supporting clients resize their companies impacted by the pandemic. Advising on restructuring and leading many redundancy consultations. Translating the CJRS* (furlough) scheme and ensuring that decisions are made in line with the ever evolving scheme rules, influencing decision making and ensuring compliance. *extended to September 2021.



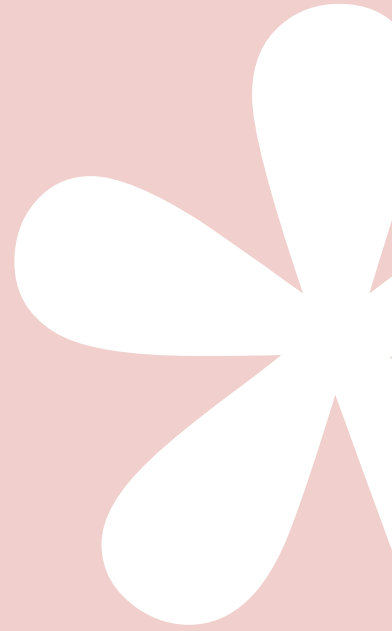
Making certain SME's are compliant by setting up their HR, this includes reviewing and understanding the correct contracts of employment, employee handbooks, policy and even procedures.



Employee Relations. Hearing complex disciplinarys and grievances and providing recommendations to our clients as part of the outcomes. Working and advising clients to embed the recommendations and taking forward any learnings, leaving a small P&M footprint of best practice as we go.



Reward and recognition, exploring benefits and incentives and how these can help motivate employees.



Values and Behaviours, working with senior leadership teams to define and articulate, in their own words what their culture means to them. Leading by example is a particularly key theme in 2021.



Wellbeing guidance and support across many clients. The impact of the pandemic continues to be felt, especially with the announcement of the additional lockdown restriction announced in January 2021.



Provide full outsourced HR consultancy support to several clients, simply being on hand as and when needed and offering flexibility and remote working.

So where do we go from here?

The range and scope of work has been interesting and varied and after the recent announcements in the Budget 2021, we can see that many SME's will require solid HR support in the next 6 months and we look forward to working with them.

Unfortunately, the increase in disputes within the workplace are increasing. So many of us are feeling overwhelmed with the constant restrictions, this is naturally spilling into our working lives. A focus on supporting clients to manage these grievance and providing mediation we feel, will be vital.

We envisage working alongside clients to support the phased changes as we transition through 2021, advising on how they can develop a resilient workforce and culture.

Inspiring Girls & International Women's Day

Alice has been involved on a personal level with Inspiring Girls for the last few years and has enjoyed speaking to Year 8 girls, empowering them to understand the possibilities and opportunities that lie ahead of them.

G I R L

B O S S

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#choosetochallenge

Unfortunately, many of these events are on hold at the current time but as this year's theme for IWD is **#choosetochallenge** it felt appropriate to bring to the agenda some of the myths and taboos that are associated with domestic abuse.

#choosetochallenge to simply raise awareness around domestic abuse and the understanding of how to recognise and respond if you feel someone is a victim or if you know someone who is a perpetrator.

#choosetochallenge the silence around domestic abuse. Provide safe spaces for people to talk, learn, gain support, recover and regain a voice.

1-4 women and 1-6 men will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime. This is defined as the abuse of power over one person by another and can take many different forms, Psychological, Emotional, Physical, Sexual, Verbal and Economic.

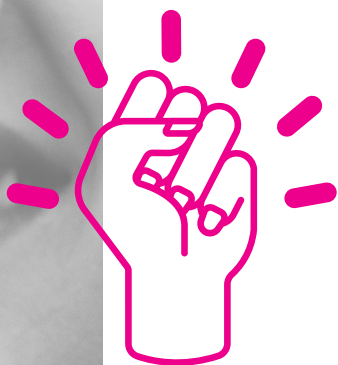
These figures can be greatly reduced by educating at grassroots, especially as 16-24 year olds are most at risk. So, combined with support within the workplace and the current review to the domestic abuse bill, there is a hope that these stats will look significantly different in years to come.

Empowering Projects

Alice completed a 9 month coaching programme with Elevate Her. Elevate Her are a coaching business that focuses specifically on women who want to redefine their version of success and specialise in emotional intelligence, resilience and confidence. As Alice moved away from her HRD role, into running her own HR Consultancy, this was a hugely empowering experience and the coaching greatly supported the transition during the first year.

Peony & Magnolia has supported the Grad Hub, through Resourcing4HR, since its inception in 2020. This is a brilliant way to support recent graduates gain experience within the work place when so many entry level opportunities were closed down due to the pandemic. Peony & Magnolia are proud to now support their second Grad, Eric Fulham as a HR Assistant.

Eric, a Business and Management Graduate completed a placement year at Morgan Stanley and whilst working in the HR division began to understand how valuable employees are to a successful business and how important it is to create healthy working cultures and practices. His motivation to now develop a career in HR is what attracted P&M to take him on board as a HR Assistant as he demonstrated a genuine and authentic passion for people management.



building resilience & confidence

As part of Alice's personal development she recently gained an CPD credit by completing the 'Awareness and Training on the impact of Domestic Abuse, Stalking, Bullying and Sexual Harassment in the workplace'. This partnership working is really important in being able to support clients as they develop their own workplace policies.

As an active member of the CIPD HR Independent Networking group, Alice presented in December 2020 an overview of the support channels which can be accessed to guide employers and educate on their duty of care with regards to domestic abuse.

Alice attended the Thrive Summit, an online event curated by Wisdom for Working Mums, to empower working mothers to banish burnout and thrive in 2021 and beyond. A fantastic collection of resources covering topic that include, wisdom for wellbeing, work, lifestyle, wealth and mindset, relationships and women in business.



Equality by Peony & Magnolia

At Peony & Magnolia, we tend not to do the same as everyone else; we could have produced some branded stationery for our clients, but instead decided to create our own bespoke candles! Clients had the pleasure of receiving the first samples as a gesture of thanks at Christmas and they were well received!

Working with a niche business based in London, the candles are made in small batches, using natural materials and upcycled products, with the underlying scent of Peony and Oud reflecting perfectly the masculine and feminine values that lay at the foundation of P&M.

A limited amount of candles will be made available in exchange for a donation to the P&M aligned charity. Simply donate a min of £20 to HDAH via Text Donate, please contact alice@peonyandmagnolia.com to reserve your candle.

TEXT DONATE - HDAH text donate service makes it very easy for supporters to donate. The amounts you can donate are £20, £15, £10, £5, £3 and £1.

For example to donate £20 text HDAH 20 to 70085.

This text will cost you £20 plus a standard network rate message fee.

Herts Domestic Abuse Helpline

Herts Domestic Abuse Helpline is Peony & Magnolia's chosen charity. It costs £25 per hour to keep the confidential helpline at HDAH running. The helpline is a free service which means that nobody is prevented by lack of funds from calling it, but as a charity it needs support with operating costs.

Christine Roach, Chair said, 'the charity receives about 200 calls and emails a month. Owing to the impact of COVID-19 this is **up about 30%** on 2019 because more victims have been stuck in lockdown with their abusers.

At the same time more children have been witnessing domestic abuse and reports now suggest that more children have been victims themselves of DA during lockdown'.

The Helpline was established in 2002 and in that time has estimated to have taken around 36,000 calls. The Helpline is volunteer-led with 10 Board members and 30 volunteer call takers. There are 2 part time staff covering 41 hours per week between them and are open for 74 hours a week, Monday to Friday 9am-9pm, weekends 9am-4pm.

For more information about how the charity operates or if you would like to donate, visit hertsdomesticabusehelpline.org

Why you need to make a difference...

With the key theme as empowerment and collaboration, P&M are proud to welcome, *Kate Marston, Director of Mast People Support* and *Julie Johns, Founder of Safe Space Consultancy* to the first issue of Espresso.

As Employer Initiative on Domestic Abuse (EIDA) members we all focus on the importance of raising awareness of domestic abuse and supporting employers to understand their obligations. **75% of victims are targeted at work** and it is estimated it takes **2-10 years for victims to recover** post abuse and there is a huge duty of care to consider as an employer.

EIDA is a membership network of organisations who are committed to raising awareness of domestic abuse as a collective, and whose mission is *'to enable employers to take action on domestic abuse, raising awareness among all employees, supporting those facing domestic abuse, and providing access to service to help perpetrators to stop'*.

We can help you navigate your business through this space and ensure you develop a safe workplace and fully understand your responsibilities and duty of care.

If you are interested in becoming a member, the next meeting is on the 12 March with keynote speaker Jess Phillips, MP., please contact P&M for more details.



Domestic abuse is everyones business

Kate and Alice first met through HR Ninja's, after Kate wrote a blog on Domestic Abuse. After a few conversations it became clear that they have more than one shared vision of how HR can influence leaders of the future and how we, as HR professionals could ruffle a few feathers along the way.

One area of discussion was the need to focus on creating work environments where people feel they can talk openly about any life event. This is about creating cultures of trust that encourage people to feel safe to seek support whatever their situation is.

Whether your employee is experiencing domestic abuse, lost a loved one, having fertility issues, caring for a relative, been a victim of crime, suffering with their mental health, or fighting addiction to name but a few, the impacts of these events can be long lasting and how they are treated at work plays a big part.



Tools to support

Many businesses will have HR policies and procedures in place already, these set the tone of how companies manage people. These are a good foundation to help make decisions and look at what is available already within the business.

Only **5% of employers** have a stand alone domestic abuse policy in place so how can your current policies be amended to provide support?

Investing in your culture and your people

We are delighted to be working with Julie Johns. Julie was awarded an MBE in 2019 in recognition of her 20-year contribution to the sector.

Julie said: 'Since 2015, I have worked tirelessly with many business sectors, helping to improve employer's understanding of domestic abuse, to gain confidence in better supporting their staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse and other associated issues, such as sexual harassment in the workplace and bullying and harassment culture'.

She continued: 'In the early days the stigma associated with domestic abuse in the workplace meant you were too fearful of discussing the problem with employers, due to not being believed, being negatively judged, or a fear of being supported in a way that could cause more harm than good – due to not understanding the complex nature of domestic abuse'.

Through equipping employers, managers, and supervisors in having a greater understanding of these issues, we empower employers to feel more able to address these issues appropriately and safely in the workplace. We help employers to understand the barriers to disclosure, how to appropriately respond and to implement the support measures such as domestic abuse and stalking policies, thereby reducing stress, fear, and risk of harm to staff and the organisation.

Through engaging with Safe Space awareness and training, every business can take the lead and become a Safe Space to work, where the message is violence and abuse will not be tolerated.

For future courses and to explore CPD Training options please contact Julie @ Safe Space Consultancy - safespaceconsultancy.org

1. Leave Policy – paid emergency leave, paid special leave days (Vodafone offer 10 days paid DA days)

2. Flexible working policy – offer flexible working hours, different locations, changing routines

3. Wellbeing – create wellbeing support, EAP, Counselling, access to support channels

4. Management Training – train and coach managers to support their teams effectively

5. Health and Safety – offer additional security, consider impact of any court orders, safeguard offices, car parks and IT systems

Recognise, Respond and Refer

Through their discussions Kate and Alice agreed that often managers are not prepared to manage difficult conversations. However there are three simple steps which should be followed;

1. **Recognise**, Acknowledge, Believe

Simply listen. Show empathy and support.

2. **Respond** and Support

If you have policies refer to these, look at support channels, consider EAP and counselling, speak to HR. Do you have managers trained in the company who can support this conversation?

3. **Refer**, Reflect and Redefine

Whatever the level of disclosure, seek professional support. Reflect as a business how you access these and redefine your practices so you understand the risks.

A simple initiative is Bright Sky, a mobile app and website for anyone experiencing domestic abuse is free and easily accessed. This was formed through a partnership with Hestia and Vodafone, it can be downloaded as a simple tool which all employers can access.

Kate reflected, when she started her training in the police, she remembered so clearly a lesson we had which stated we need to treat people fairly, and that does not mean treating everyone the same. It means **treating people according to their needs**. If an employee needs additional support, then employers do have a duty of care to support them through this journey.

If you would like to know what changes you can make then contact Alice and/or Kate at *Mast People Support* to see how we can support further.



**treating
people
according to
their needs**



Being bold, being brave

It is estimated that £2billion* is lost in productivity in the workplace per year as a direct result of domestic abuse. How can any business afford to ignore this?

The aim is for leaders to view this through a different perspective, create a safe environment where people trust they can get support, they will not be victimised in the workplace for raising it or have a stigma attached to them or their future career.

It is extremely hard for victims of domestic abuse to speak up, especially sharing or asking for support from their employer.

Creating inclusive environments, through practices, through leadership and management training will ensure that duty of care is really understood, and good practice is adhered to. reducing stress, fear, and risk of harm to staff and the organisation.

If you have a concern about a member of your team, the three steps will help frame a wellbeing conversation, refer to supporting policies and materials until that person is ready to disclose any detail. Raising awareness will simply save lives.

It is crucial to create an open channel of communication, especially as DA often is not static and harassment and stalking will increase post separation. This allows someone to start a conversation within a set context and reinforces the culture of trust.

And of course, the team at P&M are here to assist.

**Raising
awareness
will simply
save lives**

*EIDA



And finally...

I really do hope that you have enjoyed issue #1 of Espresso, for myself it is was an empowering project and I thank you for investing the time to read it. I hope that as you finish your coffee (or tea!) you reflect a little on the key themes.

- * To feel empowered to take action and bring domestic abuse to your own agenda.
- * That you encourage yourself to be little bolder and a lot more curious.
- * That you do something to empower someone else, to start a conversation and see where that leads.

Espresso #2 is already in the planning- we will be looking at the importance of leading with Compassion. We will explore, why this is important and why a 'lip service' approach to wellbeing simply isn't good enough.

If you would like to contribute please do get in touch by emailing me at the dedicated email address espresso@peonyandmagnolia.com. and of course...

With many thanks from,

All at Peony & Magnolia



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Espresso

From Peony & Magnolia