

AC 1.1 Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of both a divisional structure and a matrix structure. Within the evaluation, you should include the reasons underpinning each structure.

Every single organisation has an in-built structure and will differ depending on the business objectives set. These structures present in many different forms; however, the main differentiating factor is whether they are hierarchical or non-hierarchical structures (Taylor and Woodhams, 2022).

To this point, I have looked two structures below in detail: a divisional structure, and a matrix structure.

Divisional Structure

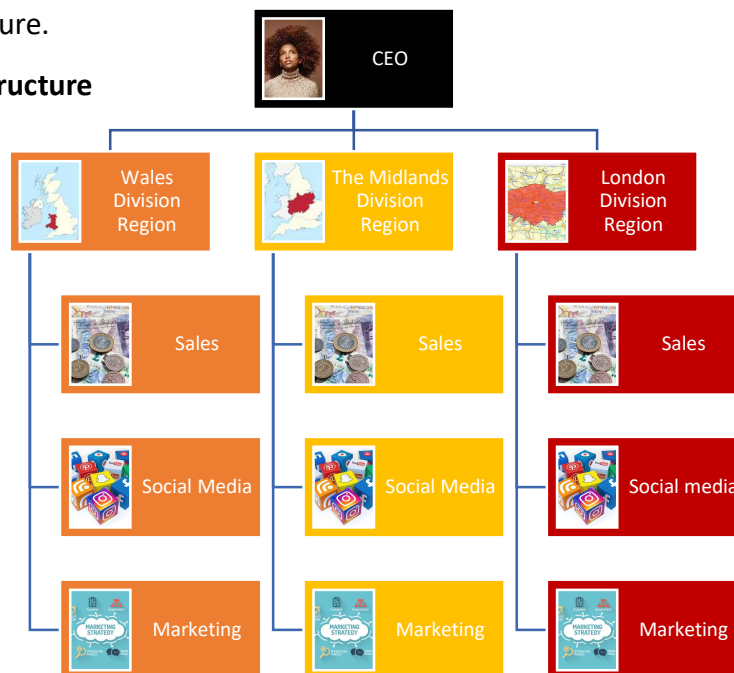


Image 1. Example experience of a divisional structure.

A divisional structure organises business activities by products, services, locations, or markets. Each division is somewhat autonomous, functioning as a singular entity with its own resources, but still a part of the larger organisation (Miller, 2025).

This structure aims to enhance efficiency and agility, making it suitable for companies with diverse product ranges and market operations.

The advantages in a divisional structure lie with the clearly defined specialist roles and responsibilities for employees and managers. These are in place to achieve the overall organisational strategic goals.

This structure allows each branch to function cohesively. This allows quick decision-making and flexibility due to each division acting as a single entity (Miller, 2025).

Disadvantages include, due to knowledge being siloed within each division, the organisation can be slow to changes. Communication can be an issue, when it breaks down, it leads to impacts to costs, resistance to organisational goals, and lead to isolation of divisions.

Divisional isolation can lead to rivalry between divisions (Miller, 2025). Conflict over resources, for example sales divisions are likely to have the same requirements, leading to resource duplication. Rivalries can occur between divisions, becoming negative and leading to loss of focus on the overall organisational goals.

Matrix Structure

A Matrix structure is a complex overlap of two or more elementary structures (Egelhoff & Wolf, 2017). The overlap includes employees reporting to two+ managers; (1) a direct functional manager, and (2) a project manager, working on a specific project goal for the organisation.

Advantages of a Matrix organisational structure include (1) Combining the project and functional management structures which can increase efficiency. (2) Interdepartmental communication is easier in this structure, allowing for an open dynamic work environment. (3) Collaboration between organisational departments. This structure brings highly skilled workers from different departments together to work on a project, rather than having to employ external experts.

The disadvantages include:

A lack of definition of the roles of managers around projects. Power struggles between functional and project managers are more likely to occur in a matrix structure rather than an elementary structure (Egelhoff & Wolf, 2017). Due to a lack of definition of the roles of managers around projects.

Matrix structures can lead to inefficiencies, where clarifications of team members functional role responsibilities are not made clear against projects. Lack of clarity can lead to burnout, with employees overloading on too much work, taking on project work, plus their divisional responsibilities. In these cases, quality of work declines, and every-day tasks become overlooked.

1.2 Analyse the extent to which the organisational strategy in your organisation helps to ensure products or services meet consumer needs.

Hywel Dda operates within the healthcare industry, providing a comprehensive range of health and social care services. The consumer base for Hywel Dda covers 384,000 residents in mid and west Wales.

A part of Hywel Dda's strategy is to monitor demographic changes and health trends to adapt its services to evolving demands. Consumer feedback, initiatives like The Big Conversation and public consultations help gather insights into patient priorities, ensuring services are inclusive and equitable (Hywel Dda, 2019).

Hywel Dda has a commitment to strategic adaptation and continuous improvement by working in partnership with regional partners and neighbouring health boards. This commitment ensures the strategy remains dynamic, informed by feedback, data analysis, and aligns with the long-term vision.

Hywel Dda uses insights to anticipate shifts in population health needs, ensuring the strategy is forward-thinking. Clear strategic goals are tailored to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive umbrella of the community, such as Starting and Developing Well, Living and Working Well, and Growing Older Well (Hywel Dda, 2019).

A whole-system approach is important in executing the strategy. This involves integrating services to provide seamless and holistic care experiences for consumers. The implementation of workforce/OD, digital technologies, and community-based healthcare have been key enablers for Hywel Dda.

The strategy has been built on an understanding of the consumer demographics. Strategic decisions are made through analysis demographical data. The service strategy has been built knowing critical insights of the needs, expectations and challenges for the population it serves.

The strategy has been built on the back of direct engagement with the community. In 2018, Hywel Dda used “The Big Conversation” as a consultation with the public it serves. The strategy was directly shaped and formed thanks to these interactions, having been provided with the rich foundations of what matters most to the community (Hywel Dda, 2022).

Moreover, the strategy leverages insights gained from market research and performance metrics to continually refine and adapt its service offerings. By analysing health and demographic trends, Hywel Dda continues to anticipate future healthcare demands and designs services that meets evolving needs. The integration of digital technologies, such as telehealth, further supports this goal by expanding access to care, particularly in rural or underserved areas. This adaptability ensures that services remain efficient and effective, ultimately improving patient outcomes and satisfaction. By aligning strategic initiatives with customer insights and market trends, Hywel Dda ensures that its services are always meeting the needs of its community.

AC 1.3 Analyse the current impact of interest rates, inflation and the aging population. Identify organisational priorities arising from your analysis.

I have used a PESTLE analysis, focusing on political, economic and environmental factors affecting Hywel Dda.

The current base rate of interest rate is 4.75% (Bank of England, 2024). Hywel Dda is impacted by interest rates through Welsh Government budgets.

High interest rates have positives and negatives for Hywel Dda. Fluctuations in rates affect Welsh Government spending. Hannah-Rose of the REAL Centre, notes that government promises for more NHS capital, often get broken to pay for other purposes (Louis Morris, 2024). When rates are high, the Welsh Government has less purchasing power, making it more expensive to fund Hywel Dda.

Interest rates influence investment returns for the health board. Higher rates can enhance saving returns, providing extra funds, while lower rates decrease available funds. This all impacts financial planning, adjustments to budgets and the ability to maintain essential services.

Inflation at 2% impacts Welsh Government budgets for its public services (Welsh Government, 2024a). High Inflation puts pressures onto Hywel Dda. Levels have been impacted by Covid, and the energy crises caused by the Ukraine war (Welsh Government, 2024b). These factors have cost implications for Hywel Dda.

Hywel Dda is under targeted intervention enforced by the Welsh Government due to poor financial results. Welsh health boards need an additional £186 million to handle pharmaceutical suppliers price increases thanks to inflation (Welsh Government, 2024b).

Inflation leads to higher wage demands, increasing future costs and pressure for the Welsh Government to supply more budget. If funding does not keep pace with inflation, the quality of healthcare services will decline.

In the short term, leaders must analyse potential savings, without affecting patients. Maria Battle, Hywel Dda chair, stated, “Our agency use will start tapering down immediately. While this will not deliver all required savings, it is a positive step forward” (Hywel Dda, 2023).

As people live longer, the demand increases for healthcare services. Hywel Dda operates in the oldest aging population area of Wales, requiring more resources, staff, planning, and finances.

People professionals now face recruitment and training challenges as Interest rates and inflation have stalled internal development programmes due to financial constraints. If the financial future remains bleak, new staff may lack development, affecting service quality.

Hywel Dda priorities are to balance cost, safety and quality. High interest rates and inflation requires ongoing cost-saving to ensure financial stability. In current overspend, the priority is on cost management without affecting service quality and patient care.

AC 1.4 Assess the extent that AI is, or could be, used in your organisation (or an organisation with which you are familiar) and assess how AI impacts work.

Artificial Intelligence is being used throughout the organisation. Hywel Dda is notably making waves with AI. Ward managers using AI to optimise bed allocation and forecast discharge dates – have achieved a 35 percent reduction in delayed discharges (Iosad et al, 2024).

Hywel Dda utilises AI technologies for innovative patient care, to deliver better outcomes for service users and employees. AI innovation has provided patients with connected telehealth wearable devices to assist patients to prevent falls and identify risks (Hywel Dda, 2024a).

The Digital team relies on AI for its information services to include clinical coding, maintaining data for reporting, and health analytics which informs managerial decision-making (Hywel Dda, 2024b).

The NHS has taken advantage of computing and technology since the 1950's. Today, AI is used as payroll, health predictors, patient flow data collectors, and automated prescription robots working in pharmacies across the country.

Hywel Dda only spends 1% of its budget on IM&T. 1% is low compared to the industry averages and is reflected in the speed of adoption of new IT (Hywel Dda, 2016). This speed and spend is viewed thanks to a lack of funding by the Welsh Government (Hywel Dda, 2016).

Hywel Dda has a robust learning and development department, providing training and support of AI technology adoption. L&D teach key skills, tackle barriers and how to implement AI effectively in the workplace.

Knowing why you want technology helps focus the implementation development, and review its effectiveness (CIPD, 2024a). Hywel Dda's wellbeing team are trialling AI, specifically virtual reality devices that 'transport' staff into a forest relaxation space. These implementations have been authorised thanks to feedback on the lack of staff break-out spaces in hospitals.

AI social media technologies has allowed for organisations to enable diverse workforces to contribute more effectively (CIPD, 2024a). Hywel Dda uses social platforms for those with neurodivergence, physical limitations, or home workers to stay connected with their team. Trust in AI technologies can see an increase in satisfaction, creativity and innovation in the service. Hywel Dda concentrates on a human-centred AI approach to ensure it only enhances job roles and responsibilities and does not take away from human creativity (Morgan, 2023).

In conclusion, AI has positively benefited work in the service. AI has sped up processing of data. It has given departments new innovative ways of working. Collaboration has increased, bringing people closer together. "Striving to deliver and develop excellent services" is core to the mission statement and the use of AI is a positive step forward to achieving this (Hywel Dda, 2024c).

AC 2.1 Explain Charles Handy's model of organisational culture and explain David Rock's SCARF theory.

Charles handy introduced four types of culture in his book, 'Understanding Organisations', in 1976, and the theory holds true and relevant today (Personnel Today, 2023).

1. **Power Culture** - In a power culture the sole responsibility for making major decisions rests with a single individual. For example, business owners holding majority control, with employees following instructions from above (Personnel Today, 2023).
2. **Role Culture** - Role cultures have a structured environment. Employees have assigned roles and responsibilities relevant to their skills and qualifications. There is usually a clear career pathway forward in role cultures. Staff have opportunities to

change roles, and progress gaining more power and influence (Personnel Today, 2023).

Role cultures are common in large organisations containing clear hierarchies. Hierarchies need talent placed in the right positions, therefore a precedence on talent acquisition and succession planning is a priority.

3. **Task Culture** - Task cultures focus on teams coming together to complete tasks and projects. There are no necessary individual objectives involved, instead the team takes precedence, with expertise to the task of the most importance. A task culture is seen in advertising agencies whose livelihood is based on project-based work such as creating effective bespoke campaigns (Personnel Today, 2023).
4. **Person Culture** - In this culture, individuals are seen to work independently to an organisational objective. Instead, they look to further their own careers and interests. This culture can be found in the relationship between consultants and GP surgeries. Consultants hold their own caseloads of patients, and the only tie to the surgery is the building in which they operate.

David Rock's SCARF Theory

David Rock's SCARF theory focuses on the human aspect around how people professionals create workplaces that are attractive for people to belong (HRC Online, 2024).

SCARF introduces five interconnected ways of thinking (David Rock, 2025). Including

1. **Status**, individualistic importance and how this impacts their behaviour onto others.
2. **Certainty**, simplistically an individuals need for predictability in the workplace.
3. **Autonomy**, workplaces that give employees choices and control over their own work is attractive, vs. where micromanagement is the norm.
4. **Relatedness**, and how individuals need to feel a sense of belonging and safety with others around them.
5. **Fairness** perception and the need for fair exchanges within the workforce is the last way of thinking that interconnects for employees in an organisation.

AC 2.2 Assess how employee development impacts organisational culture and behaviour in Hywel Dda.

Employee development is a core part of the 20-year organisational strategy. 80% of the staff in Hywel Dda's future are already employees and therefore development programmes are crucial for the impact on culture and behaviour (Hywel Dda, 2019).

Hywel Dda uses employee development to significantly impact organisational culture and behaviour. The organisation has an OD department, tasked to concentrate on the development and culture of the Hywel Dda workforce. The organisation promotes the importance of continuous professional development and provides extensive access to

learning and development programmes. Hywel Dda works to foster cultures to enable employees to reach potentials and align personal values to the organisations own.

Hywel Dda attracts further development of its employees through people champions. To aid an aging workforce, digital champions influence culture and behaviour by being passionate about improving service delivery through the digital practices. Hywel Dda uses champions to train and support employees get to grips with new technologies – to improve the service. (Hywel Dda, 2020).

Hywel Dda uses champions within the wellbeing directorate. A duty of this role is sharing the needs of colleagues with the wellbeing team, in order shape the future health and wellbeing agenda (Hywel Dda, 2024d).

Employee development increases better culture and behaviour by providing better understanding of organisational policies. Policies shape culture, by setting clear expectations, highlights accountability and creates a better environment. For example, the uniform policies in Hywel Dda, where nurses have differences in uniform depending on seniority in the department.

Performance review policies like 360's encourage development. When reviews are regular, it supports motivation, and informs Development (CIPD, 2025b). Employees should get the opportunity to contribute and respond to their feedback, which will enhance trust and openness in their development.

Role modelling is a core part of Hywel Dda employee development programmes. Through leaders setting the standard, showing others the correct culture, and influencing behaviours of those around them. Leadership programmes teach leaders how to live the values of the health board. Wellbeing directorates teach personal wellbeing, little aspects like role modelling and taking a lunch break. Employee development encourages role modelling for others to make changes and create a better culture around them.

Employee development reinforces the core values of dignity, respect, fairness, integrity, honesty, openness, caring, kindness and compassion and how to embody into their daily roles (Hywel Dda, 2018).

Hywel Dda enhances motivation through links to rewards, engagement initiatives, and EDI policies. Hywel Dda uses this motivation to incentivise employees to participate, for example, the digital inclusion program that rewards completion of digital literacy courses (Hywel Dda, 2025). The digital team identified issues with motivation as not everyone in Hywel Dda sees why using the internet would be useful (Hywel Dda, 2025). Therefore, rewards are used to increase numbers taking up employee development opportunities.

AC 2.3 An organisation is planning a change relating to hybrid working. Many employees moved to home working during the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst this approach worked well at the time, the organisation now wants all employees to work at least two days a week on site. Explain how Kotter's approach to managing change could be used to successfully implement this change.

Kotter's book 'Leading Change' describes how successful change needs strong leadership and effective management (CIPD, 2024b). According to Kotter, a structured step-by-step process can implement change. By following Kotter's eight stage model, this change can be successfully implemented with buy in.

Stage one – Establish a sense of urgency.

Effective leadership requires bold actions to create a sense of urgency (Appelbaum et al, 2012). The organisation needs to present compelling reasons for returning to the workplace. Communication is key of benefits and drawbacks of the change for employees to gain buy in.

Highlighting the lack of collaboration due to home working can establish urgency. Home working can lead to isolation, lack of collaborative working and social learning (Armstrong and Taylor, 2023).

Stage two – Creating a guiding coalition.

Assemble a group of great leaders committed to implementing the change and creating the organisational vision. Kotter notes that not one person is capable of leading change, but a guiding coalition is critical to success (Appelbaum et al, 2012).

This organisation needs buy in from leaders to drive change and show how the two days are working for them. The organisation needs a coalition of leaders from across the organisation which can be more effective than a top-down approach.

Stage three – Creating a vision for change.

An effective vision is essential to breaking up the status quo (Appelbaum et al, 2012). The organisation must create a vision that makes returning to the workplace a desirable prospect for all employees.

Stage four – Communicate the vision.

Leaders have to communicate visions clearly and consistently to implement changes.

Effective communication decreases ambiguity, and positively affects the requirement for two days back in the workplace (Appelbaum et al, 2012).

Stage five – Empower others for broad-based action.

Organisations need to remove obstacles for employees. For organisations to empower employees address four obstacles: Structures, skills, systems and managers (Appelbaum et al, 2012).

Stage six – Generate short-term wins.

With the Kotter approach, its important momentum is maintained with successful change. By celebrating the success of the adoption of the two-day model, will build confidence in others. Social proof, or the fear of missing out can be a powerful tool.

Stage seven – Consolidation.

Leaders must continue to prove the new way of working is effective (Appelbaum et al, 2012). Continually assess the new model according to workforce feedback on how what's working.

Stage eight – Institutionalise the new approaches.

Show how the hybrid change has positively influenced behaviours, attitudes and improved the performance of employees (Appelbaum et al, 2012).

Here the organisation ensures the change is long lasting and becomes part of the organisational culture.

AC 2.4 Using the Kubler-Ross change curve, discuss how change is experienced.

Each person experiences change differently depending on their own readiness. To survey those most affected by the change, will gauge readiness (CIPD, 2024b).

There are models that explain how people's behaviour is influenced by change. There is not one change model that is idea across the board (Hicks, 2024), but the Kubler-Ross change curve is popular.

Elizabeth Kübler-Ross whilst studying the different responses to grief, split the responses into different stages individuals will face (CIPD, 2024b). Elizabeth's studied the responses to grief, and due to the parallels of how change is experienced, her curve has evolved into the Kubler-Ross Change curve.

Kubler-Ross found that whilst you experience grief, there are stages each individual will go through (EKR Foundation, 2025), this is no different with change.

The first stage experienced in change is **shock**. This leads to questioning the decision, and why the change is needed.

Stage of **Denial** occurs when people refuse to believe change is needed. Denial is a protective procedure against emotions change brings – there's always the hope change will not be implemented (EKR Foundation, 2025).

Frustration, which can sometimes mean anger, can come to the surface during change, and therefore forms a stage in the model. Awareness of challenges and differences from the working norm, leads to frustration or anger (EKR Foundation, 2025).

Depression marks the lowest point of the curve, where people feel hopelessness and withdraw (CIPD, 2024b). Where the change is felt strongest, depression can hit, causing individuals to struggle with their sense of purpose.

Experimentation marks the beginning of an upward turn. Engagement with changes are implemented, with people exploring new ways of working in the change (EKR Foundation, 2025).

Where individuals see a clear strategy with the change, and become more comfortable, there then marks the next stage – **Decision**. Concrete choices on how to proceed are integrated into their everyday tasks and living with the change feels more normal (EKR Foundation, 2025).

In the **Integration** stage you find a renewed individual with the changes made, it's now a part of their new reality (EKR Foundation, 2025). The changes have been accepted, there is a clear new way of working, and it's being embraced.

There are other models to be aware of other that show how people experience change, such as the Tannenbaum and Hanna three stage model.

AC 2.5 The CIPD's Health and wellbeing at work survey 2023 found the percentage of organisations that have a standalone wellbeing strategy has risen from 40% in 2018 to 53% in 2023. Although the percentage has increased, this means that 47% of organisations do not have a standalone wellbeing strategy. Assess the importance of wellbeing at work from an employer's perspective and employee perspectives and assess how good work could impact wellbeing. Assess the importance of wellbeing at work from an employer's perspective and employee perspectives and assess how good work could impact wellbeing.

Wellbeing workplace levels are essential to organisational long-term success. Lower degrees of wellbeing at work, effects high staff turnover, presenteeism, low performance, motivation and satisfaction (Emeka et al, 2022).

Organisations that recognise the significance of employee wellbeing, create safe cultures, eradicating mental and physical health stigmas.

CIPD surveying found a focus on wellbeing significantly boosts engagement levels, morale, culture, and aids better work-life balance (CIPD, 2024c).

Supportive work environment fosters psychological safety and wellbeing, which enhances engagement. Controlled pressure from employers can boost energy and productivity.

Investing in looking after the wellbeing of staff provides greater job satisfaction and purpose, leading to higher performance, productivity and innovation.

The global workforce happiness study found employees who feel autonomy, have greater job satisfaction. This is particularly prevalent in Nordic countries and happiness at work (Stevenson and Farmer, 2017).

Stress is a leading cause of absence. The Health and Safety Executive defines stress as an adverse reaction to excessive pressure or demands (CIPD, 2024d). Strong wellbeing strategies minimise stress and conflicts, to create healthier workplaces.

Line manager training to spot the early signs of stress is beneficial, as the day-to-day responsibility of managing employee wellbeing falls on them. Line managers who can spot

the signs, can work with employees to adjust, be supportive and nurture positive relationships (CIPD, 2024c).

Operational demands impact employee wellbeing. Employees can also suffer by continuing to work whilst unwell; commonly known as presenteeism. Evidence has been shown by the CIPD, that presenteeism is present in over three-quarters of organisations (CIPD, 2024c).

Wellbeing at work can be affected by each employees' opinions on their work-life balance and issues in their private family/home life. Where employers actively discourage overtime, employees feel that their personal wellbeing is the priority over organisation goals, and thus have a positive work-life balance.

In a survey by Relate, 25% of those surveyed say that stress at home, including family issues, adversely affects what they do at work (Stevenson and Farmer, 2017).

The impact of good organisational concentration of employee wellbeing for employees includes feeling an increased commitment to the company cause. Both the employer and employee will also see enhanced trust in each other, which will have a direct correlation to wellbeing. Psychological safety is the building block of trust, where there's trust, employees can speak up in confidence about wellbeing knowing their employer will support them (CIPD, 2024d).

Where there is a positive culture of wellbeing in an organisation, it fosters better relationships between the members of the workforce, decreasing conflicts.

Mental wellbeing can be improved by encouraging peer support, including using wellbeing champions and mentoring (NICE, 2022), this also develops better cultures.

AC 3.1 Provide a brief overview of the employee lifecycle and discuss people practice roles at the recruitment, development and separation stages of the lifecycle.

The employee lifecycle is a framework which outlines each stage employees go through during their time with an organisation. The employee lifecycle, generally is made up of six stages:

1. Attraction
2. Recruitment
3. Induction or Onboarding
4. Development
5. Retention or Engagement
6. Exit or Separation.

An example journey: A potential employee notices a job on social media (Attraction), applies and is successful (Recruitment), learns the role (Onboarding), develops skills through L&D opportunities (Development), stays for years (Retention), and eventually moves on or retires (Exit).

Each stage of the employee lifecycle presents unique touch points where specific people practice roles are vital including at:

Recruitment

The HR department is crucial to this stage in attracting new talent to the workforce. Collaboration between HR and seniors to create a job analysis and description to tailor the requirements, and indicate skills needed in the right applicant.

People professionals will then assist in sourcing candidates for the role, this includes promoting the organisation to be an attractive place to work. Following the posting of the role, they also help with the shortlisting and interviewing process within this stage.

The final part of the recruitment stage is through selection of the right employee and offering the role. HR deal with negotiation, compliance and documentation to ensure fairness, employment laws and regulations are adhered to, with all documentation stored confidentially (CIPD, 2024e).

Development

L&D and OD departments provide growth opportunities, including:

Training and development programmes. E.g., leadership training, developing current leaders and potential leaders of the future.

Performance Management, including 360's. People professionals are trained to provide constructive feedback.

Talent Management and Succession Planning. People Professionals create development plans. Key role is to identify employee readiness for higher level roles (Taylor and Woodhams, 2022).

Coaching. People professionals provide coaching and mentoring opportunities for employees who could benefit from more experienced professionals.

Separation

HR plays an important role upon exits from organisations. The end can positive or negative for individuals. The peak-end rule speaks of employees judging their experiences with organisations on how it ends (Sutton, 2019), and for most leaving can be emotional.

HR conducts exit interviews. Employees get closure, and a chance to celebrate or raise concerns about their employment during this process. HR gather feedback, assess reasons, and identify ways the organisation can improve future retention (CIPD, 2025a).

Offboarding. HR ensures employees leave with necessary paperwork, adhering to legal requirements, such as the employment laws and regulations.

Communication. An individual leaving an organisation can come as a surprise. In these circumstances, HR teams communicate the departure across the organisation respectfully.

AC 3.2 Analyse how people practice supports organisational strategy through vertical integration and how people practice supports wider people strategies through horizontal integration.

Organisations use vertical strategy to control all aspects of its operations and supply chain (Taylor and Woodhams, 2022). People practices support vertical integration by ensuring employees are aligned with organisation's goals and equipped with necessary skills and knowledge.

HR strategies derived from the corporate strategy contributes to achieving strategic goals through effective people management. For instance, policy development ensures that organisational policies support the overall strategy and culture, fostering a cohesive work environment.

HR is critical in mitigating risks and maintain adherence to legal and financial laws. This is particularly important during the acquisition and mergers of organisations (Taylor and Woodhams, 2022).

HR in recruitment focusses on attracting and retaining talent who align with organisational strategy to ensure the workforce is capable of supporting the expanded operation. Learning and development programmes are also designed to develop skills that directly support business objectives.

Management development prepares leaders to drive strategic initiatives, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation. In integrating these HR services, organisations can effectively support vertical integration, enhancing their ability to fulfil strategic vision and achieving long-term success.

Horizontal integration involves the expansion of the organisation by acquiring their industry competitors (Taylor and Woodhams, 2022). A recent example was Facebook acquiring Instagram to stop the competition, and instead increase market share visibility. People practices are essential during horizontal integration to introduce culture and integrate the newly merged employees. HR experts in onboarding can train and team build to merge employees, whilst also teaching the culture, values and goals of the new organisation.

HR departments can ensure current policies support the new organisational strategy and culture and are adopted in the acquired organisations.

TMSP and leadership development plays a pivotal role for the success of horizontal integration. It's their role to identify talent from all organisations using methods such as a nine-box grid or listing employees into five categories, including ready, and one to watch (Armstrong and Taylor, 2023). This must be the same in the recruitment of new talent through skills analysis helps to identify gaps and plan for the future.

In horizontal integration, engaging employees through transparent communication, recognition programmes, and opportunities for professional growth can enhance their commitment and productivity.

In all, people practice for horizontal integration can significantly enhance the organisations' ability to achieve strategic vision and grab a competitive edge over other marketing competitors.

AC 3.3 An organisation is planning to introduce a four-day working week. Discuss the processes the people function could use to consult and engage with managers and employees to understand their needs when moving from a five-day to four-day working week.

In introducing change, the HR department must identify the internal needs of its workforce. HR can do this by using 'employee voice' to give the fundamental right to all employees express why this change matters to them (CIPD, 2025c). Utilising surveys and questionnaires are popular processes to gauge opinions. The purpose is to gather quantitative data on workforces' preferences, concerns, and expectations of the proposed changes.

Organisations use surveys and questionnaires, to reach large parts of the workforce quickly. surveys generate valuable insights into the 'general' feelings of employees across the organisation. They are also cheaper and faster for analysis to identify key trends and common issues (Taylor and Woodhams, 2022).

Interviewing is a popular people process during the consultation stage. The purpose is to have in-depth conversations with managers and employees, to understand the individual challenges, and appreciate needs and requirements.

Interviews have the ability to uncover nuanced perspectives that could be missed in surveys. They allow deeper conversations which also allows for more detailed feedback (Taylor and Woodhams, 2022). Interviews can be targeted to key employees to explore complex issues and individualities.

Open communication from the people function is critical during consultation, using focus groups to gather diverse opinions to the 4-day week. In facilitated focus groups, attitudes can be explored and be useful for temperature checks of the employees positively or negatively affected. Focus groups are a dynamic, open dialogue format and allows colleagues to build on ideas to build a clearer insightful picture (Taylor and Woodhams, 2022).

Through communication channels, people professionals can ensure stakeholders are consistently informed throughout the transition of moving to a four-day working week.

People professionals can use regular meetings to provide transparency and continuous feedback. This process will enhance trust, and engagement with the workforce.

For the change to be enforced, people professionals need to gauge opinion of stakeholders. After stakeholder analysis, people professionals must prioritise efforts, and tailor communication of the change that will specifically tackle their concerns (Armstrong and Taylor, 2023).

During significant change, people professionals must evaluate the current workload at a five-day week and determine how that workload translates to a four-day week. People

professionals can undertake workload assessments to ensure pressure is not elevated in the change, but still ensure productivity is maintained.

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