

Clare Conaghan

Clare is a commercially focused HR Director with proven experience of delivering large scale transformational change and performance improvement, bringing over 20 years' experience in organisational improvement programmes across a broad range of public, private and charitable organisations. She has a strong track record of enabling improvement in organisations and a proven ability to make immediate positive impact.

She is an accomplished HR Director with extensive experience in developing value-add HR Functions; delivering cultural and transformational change and introducing technology to enhance organisational effectiveness. She is passionate about people and thrives on business change and collaboration to achieve sustainable improvement.

Clare is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and an accredited workplace mediator

Core skills include:

- Culture Change
- Leveraging technology to improve organisational effectiveness
- Transformational change
- Performance improvement
- Reward and recognition
- Improving operational effectiveness
- Strategic Business partnering
- Improving Employee Engagement
- Up-to-date knowledge of best practice HR and OD interventions
- Significant Employee Relations Experience

Recent Relevant Experience

Dearden HR, March 2021 – Present HR Director

Consultancy work with clients and senior stakeholders across public, private and third sector. Clare supports board-level partners to design creative and bespoke solutions to the most complex of people situations. Recent work has included:

- Supporting a number of private, public and 3rd Sector organisations to review their existing Pay & Reward offer. Identifying areas of concern with their current pay and reward arrangements and recommending key areas of focus for improvement, to enable competitive, fair and affordable pay offer going forward.
- Developing an approach to Strategic Workforce Planning for a large Government Department, to enable the organisation to have the right number of people (capacity) with the right skills and behaviours (capability), in the right place and time (deployment), affordably (right cost), to deliver future strategy and current business operations.
- Delivered a number of HR Team reviews, including external benchmarking to identify areas of best practice, enabling development of an action plan to address variance, to enable alignment with and delivery of organisational strategy.

- Supported a university to affect culture change, by designing and developing a new policy and decision-making framework, to shift behaviours and culture.
- Supporting NHS Trusts to affect culture change, by addressing bureaucratic people processes, removing complex and unnecessary steps in the process and upskilling and improving capacity and capacity of ER Team and Line managers.
- Providing Strategic and Tactical advice to a number of clients, typically at Board and Senior Executive level on complex Employee Relations Cases.

Pro Bono Consultancy and Interim Assignments, May 2020 – February 2021 Freelance

- Via the CIPD mentoring scheme, provided support, mentoring, advice and guidance to a number of charities during the Covid crisis; including but not limited to advice about developing a digital strategy, workforce transformation and improvements in the approach to fundraising and communication capability.
- Provided consultative support to HR Director at Moorfields Eye Hospital, implementing and embedding new HR structure, to increase productivity and enhance the strategic value of the function.

East Suffolk and North Essex Foundation Trust, September 2019 – March 2020 Director of HR and Organisational Development

Reporting to the CEO and a member of the Board, with a headcount of circa 10,000 following the merger of two large acute trusts. Responsible for the HR Function, including Occupational Health, L&D Education and Training and in-house nursery, headcount 120+.

Achievements included:

- Developed People Strategy including plans to transform workforce make-up.
- Devised a fresh and inclusive approach to enhance engagement through better use of technology, to improve staff experience and address areas of concern in the staff survey.
- Worked in partnership with CIO to develop Corporate Services improvement plan to reduce complexity and cost across a number of functions through automation, workforce transformation and introduction of a shared service centre across all corporate functions.

Save the Children UK, December 2016 – September 2019 Executive Director HR

- Member of the Executive Board during a period of major organisational transformation with a headcount of circa 1,000.
- Played a pivotal role in shaping the new three-year strategy for the organisation, including successfully influencing the Executive Leadership Team and the Board to undertake a full review of the operating model. Working with external consultants to remodel the organisational structure and ways of working, introducing agile methodology and transforming our approach to fundraising and engagement with supporters, to enable delivery of the strategy, whilst realising efficiency savings to address significant funding deficit.

- Initiated and delivered a transformational change programme impacting all facets of HR, encompassing realignment of end-to-end processes and systems and a fundamental shift towards a 'business partnering' model; improving KPI and turnaround times for service delivery, including a reduction in time to hire and a substantial reduction in agency costs.
- Worked in partnership with CFO to develop and implement new IT structure and operating model to modernise the function and achieve greater alignment with organisational strategy and delivery of key priorities; influencing the CEO and Board to introduce the role of CIO, to drive forward digital transformation agenda.
- Worked with the Executive Leadership Team to develop and improve team cohesion and effectiveness, creating a stronger leadership dynamic and better collective decision making; resulting in an increase from 43% to 71% in staff confidence in the Executive Leadership Team.
- Developed and launched a people strategy focusing on key areas including Diversity and Inclusion, Health and Wellbeing, improved line manager capability, increased accountability for staff and enabling greater collaboration across the organisation. Year on year results demonstrate an increase in staff engagement, including establishment of a number of employee representative groups to support delivery of a key initiatives.
- Successful rollout of new pay and grading offering; addressing issues of pay inequity, improving gender pay gap and the attraction and retention of key talent, with defined career progression routes.
- As a leading advocate for improved Safeguarding globally, involved in driving systemic cultural change in how NGOs deploy more robust frameworks. Working with stakeholders across the sector, including key government departments; developed a new, innovative framework to affect change on a global scale, ensuring organisations create and maintain safe working practices to protect staff and beneficiaries.

Earlier Career History:

- Transport for London - Led a critical work stream to enable wide scale transformational change, through shifts in culture, systems and processes that improve organisational performance
- British Transport Police – Led a comprehensive change programme to transform service delivery, aligned to organisational requirements
- West Midlands Police – Introduced a new policing model which transformed delivery of the operational policy capability, against fierce resistance from the police federation.
- Moorgate House – Established the HR Function and implement a robust structure and supporting policies and procedures, to support a rapidly growing financial service business.

Qualifications and accreditations

- University of the West of Scotland, BA (Hons) Business Studies and Human Resources Management
- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (FCIPD)
- Accredited workplace mediator