

# BLUE SKY

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### NEWSLETTER

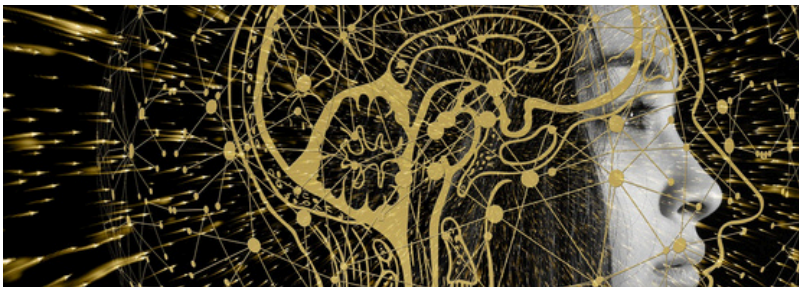


## PLATINUM CENTRE STATUS

We are very proud to announce that Blue Sky has achieved the new Platinum Centre status launched this month by the CIPD. Platinum Centre status has been awarded to only the top 12% of CIPD centres across the UK, recognising excellence in CIPD qualification delivery, learner support, and professional standards.

This recognition comes as we mark nearly 13 years as a CIPD-approved centre. The award reflects our long-standing commitment to excellence in people development, and the professionalism and expertise of our dedicated team.

Platinum Centre status recognises consistent delivery of excellent quality against CIPD's standards for marking, assessment and membership; they have robust Centre administration and operations in place; whilst demonstrating high levels of learner satisfaction.



## Mental Health First Aider

Do you or your colleagues know how to support someone experiencing a mental health issue?

MHFA training teaches you how to identify someone struggling with their mental health, listen, reassure and respond, even in a crisis. It gives you the confidence to approach and support someone, while still maintaining your own health.

The cost to organisations of employee mental health issues can be considerable. Nearly 10% of UK adults took time off for mental health reasons over the past year, with almost half (45%) of these absences lasting a month or longer (Webber, 2024). Work-related mental health issues now cost the UK economy £57.4 billion each year, nearly doubling in recent years (Paton, 2024)

In partnership with one of our tutors, Andrea Wilkinson, we are offering accredited MHFA England training with the first dates in August. This is a 2 day, in person workshop course at the Henderson Business Centre in Norwich, contact us for more information or if you'd like an in-house delivery at your workplace..

## LEVEL 7 FUNDING CUTS

### Important Update: Level 7 Apprenticeship Funding Deadline Announced

The government has just confirmed a key change we've been expecting: from January 2026, levy funding will no longer be available for the Level 7 Senior People Professional Apprenticeship—except for learners under the age of 21.

While the apprenticeship itself will still exist, organisations will need to self-fund places after this date. The good news is that anyone who enrolls before January 2026 will still be able to complete the full programme with levy funding in place.

So, if you or someone you know is considering taking advantage of this opportunity, now is the time to act. Please get in touch with us—or contact Colchester Institute directly—to begin the application process.

The CIPD Advanced Diploma in Strategic People Management, which is part of the Level 7 apprenticeship, will continue to be available to fee-paying students as normal. This qualification takes around 2 to 2.5 years to complete and is priced at £7,000 + VAT, with interest-free payment plans available.

## YOU SAID, WE DID...



We are pleased to report that again the overall satisfaction rates from student feedback have improved on last year. In response to some of the feedback -

- **Background colour of Studyhub**

To help with learning difficulties such as Dyslexia, we have started to change the background colour on Studyhub to cream/grey for new units with any older units being changed over in the next year.

- **3CO02 and 5CO02 data analysis**

Students have commented that better spreadsheet skills would have helped with this unit and we will be adding this to the learning materials as well as more explanation included in the workshops.

## TEAM NEWS

This year, we've said goodbye to two valued members of our team:

- Trish McCarthy, who had already stepped back from tutoring but continued to support us as a second assessor, is now focusing fully on her other professional role and her incredible expeditions. We wish her every success in her next adventures.
- Leatitia Dobson, who has taught across both our Level 5 and Level 7 programmes, is moving on to focus exclusively on her full-time role. Her insight and dedication will be greatly missed.

At the same time, we're delighted to welcome Jen Surtees to the Blue Sky team. Jen brings a wealth of HR management experience, along with a PhD in interorganisational team innovation. We're excited to have her on board and know she'll bring fresh perspective and expertise to our learners

## GRADUATION -

### **Celebrating Your Success – We Want Your Input!**

We're incredibly proud of the hard work and commitment our students have shown in their studies, and we believe this deserves to be celebrated properly. In the past, we've held evening 'graduation' events at venues like the Henderson Business Centre or local hotels—but this time, we'd love to hear your ideas.

This summer, we'll be sending out a short survey to ask how you would like to mark your achievement. Whether it's formal or informal, daytime or evening, your input will help shape a celebration that reflects the spirit of our amazing learners.

For our Colchester Institute apprentices: the college is also exploring plans for an autumn celebration event for apprentices across all programmes. We'll share more details as soon as they're confirmed—so keep an eye out!

## LEVEL 7 GOES ONLINE

We're excited to say that from September, we'll be launching a live online cohort for our CIPD Level 7 programmes—making this the final level to join our fully online offering.

This means you can now study any CIPD level with Blue Sky entirely online, attending live Zoom workshops from wherever you are. Whether you want to complete the full qualification remotely or just join us online for individual units, you now have complete flexibility to choose what works best for you—without needing to travel to Norwich or Colchester.

## BLUE SKY LEGACY OFFER

**Supporting your next step, whenever you're ready.**

We know that after completing your CIPD qualification, your first thought might not be jumping straight into another course—especially after all the hard work and well-earned celebrations! You might need a break, or it simply might not be the right time in your career.

That's why we've introduced the Blue Sky Legacy Offer—an exclusive discount for our alumni, available whenever you're ready to take your next step with us. Whether you're moving from Level 3 to Level 5, heading straight to Level 7 (where appropriate), or progressing from Level 5 to 7, this offer is designed to support your continued professional growth.

Several of our learners have already made use of this opportunity, and we'd love to support you too—whenever the time is right.

When you're ready to return to study, get in touch with us to discuss your options and claim your alumni discount.



# PROGRAMME PORTFOLIO

## **Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)**

Level 3 Certificate in People Practice  
Level 5 Diploma in People Management  
Level 7 Diploma in Strategic People Management

## **HR Apprenticeships in partnership with Colchester Institute and Crown Vocational Training**

Level 3 HR Support Apprenticeship  
Level 5 People Professional Apprenticeship  
Level 7 Senior HR Professional Apprenticeship

### **Online Learning**

Independent learning modules at Fundamental and Intermediate levels on HR topics such as

- Learning and Development
- Employee Relations
- Resourcing

## **Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM)**

Certificate and Diploma in  
Level 3 Leadership and Management  
Level 5 Leadership and Management

Level 5 Certificate and Diploma in  
Coaching and Mentoring

### **Bespoke Training**

We design and deliver bespoke training packages that can also be linked to qualifications on subjects such as Leadership, Coaching & Mentoring, Recruitment, Developing staff, Delegation

If you would like to discuss any organisational training needs please contact us to arrange a meeting.

## ABOUT BLUE SKY

After working together for over 20 years on CIPD and Management programmes, Beth and Kate founded Blue Sky almost 13 years ago. Their shared vision was clear: to deliver first-class programmes with personalised support that would lead to excellent success rates.

Originally established in Norwich, Blue Sky expanded to Colchester and introduced a range of HR apprenticeship programmes through a partnership with the Colchester Institute. Today, we're proud to offer all of our qualifications both in person (in Norwich and Colchester) and through online live workshops, making our programmes accessible to learners across the UK and beyond.