The Open University

Hybrid working: organisational development

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Head of Intellectual Property, The Open University

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Introduction

In the last few years, all sectors including the higher education sector have had to react to unprecedented change and uncertainty. The COVID-19 global pandemic required us to continually adapt, as restrictions and guidance changed between 2019 and 2022. Many higher education institutions (HEIs) are reflecting on lessons learned from reactive ways of working during the pandemic and evolving their working practices and policies to consider inclusive and proactive ways of working in a hybrid environment.

This free course, which is part of the
Supporting hybrid working and digital transformation collection, is designed to give you the opportunity to consider the environment and context in which you, your team, and your organisation operate, and to encourage you to reflect on whether your current strategies, models, values and culture are fit for purpose. We will signpost the digital skills and capabilities required to meet your objectives in the post-pandemic hybrid working world and will take a holistic approach to wellbeing and sustainability, drawing on the Well-being Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Throughout the course there are documents, reports and articles. While you are encouraged to read these, the timings for activities will provide an indication if you are expected to read them in detail. Some are long and you may wish to save them for future reference and read them in full at a later date.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- apply the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and explain why sustainability and wellbeing need to be integrated into organisational development
- explore pre-pandemic organisational structural norms and analyse how they can be redesigned to support hybrid working and sustainability goals
- identify how digital transformation has accelerated the need for working practices and priorities around digital inclusion
- explore the impact hybrid working has on developing your organisation, including workforce policies and processes and future ways of working.

1 Thinking about your organisational context now

The external environment is still uncertain, as economic, and social stability continue to fluctuate, and the rising cost of living. How you plan and lead your organisation for business continuity and growth is critical to address your short, medium, and long-term needs, aims and objectives.

The framework illustrated below has been designed for this collection to highlight the key areas you need to consider when thinking about organisational development. As many organisations and higher education institutions (HEIs) continue to evolve their hybrid practice, how you work and plan for the long term is essential. You need to balance the needs of your stakeholders and organisation while embracing and adapting to external factors, to successfully meet strategic objectives.
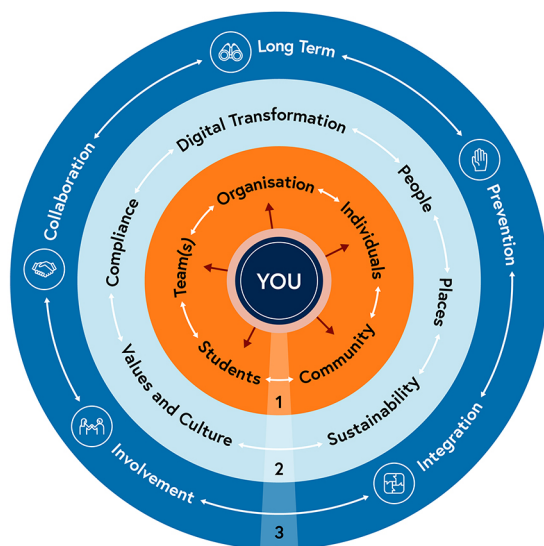

Figure 1: Hybrid ways of working: a contextual sustainability framework

1. You and your ways of working should take account of the key stakeholders within your environment and their needs in relation to organisational development.
2. You need to understand organisational requirements, the context, connections, and requirements for key areas of focus and how these relate to the needs of your stakeholders.
3. You need to consider your ways of working for the wellbeing of future generations.

Activity 1: Thinking about your organisation now

🕐 *15 minutes*

Think about the framework above in relation to your organisation. Do you feel it has a clear approach for new ways of working? Add your vote to the poll below.

Interactive content is not available in this format.

Then take some time to explore Bangor University's approach to ways of working:

[Dynamic Working | Human Resources | Bangor University](#)

In the free text box below list the areas you feel you need to focus on and make notes on Bangor's ways of working that are of interest to you.

Provide your answer...

2 Operating in uncertain times

During the pandemic organisations' ability to manage uncertainty became critical. Many had to make decisions and implement complicated changes, including digital transformation at an accelerated pace, to pivot most of the workforce to remote working during lockdowns.

The video below provides some insights from contributors about their experiencing of adapting ways of working during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Video content is not available in this format.

The impact of the pandemic on mental health, inequalities for certain groups in society, the economy and infrastructure are key areas organisations now need to focus on, alongside sustainability and how they can contribute to targets linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) (UN, 2022) and reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, workforce practices were evolving in response to organisational trends in the late-twentieth century.

If you research 'trends for organisations' online, you will see a consistent focus on:

- changing workforce and expectations
- authenticity, resilience, and purposeful business
- equality, diversity and inclusion
- flatter, more agile organisations
- sustainability, including climate change, net zero targets and global economic instability
- digital transformation, sometimes referred to as the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and effective use of data (Baker, 2021; Marr, 2021; Kropp and McRae, 2022).

Activity 2: Thinking about your HEI's experience of dealing with uncertainty

🕐 *15 minutes*

During the pandemic HEIs that had limited or no distance learning provision had to rapidly adapt their delivery models, alongside ensuring those who could work from home did, to ensure continuity of learning for their students.

Consider how your HEI and you as an individual deal with uncertainty. You may wish to make notes in the box below:

Provide your answer...

Discussion

Your experiences will vary, depending on how your organisation responded to COVID-19, and on your personal circumstances. While there is often a focus on the negatives, many positives have emerged as a result for new ways of working.

Take some time to research trends within the higher education sector and consider how organisations may need to adapt for the future, and the opportunities that could emerge.

You may wish to explore the following resources to help with your thinking. The Student Crowd page provides a snapshot of how UK universities adapted their modes of teaching in response to COVID-19 restrictions.

- A guide to higher education in Wales
- Future Trends Report Wales 2021: Narrative summary
- University Responses to COVID-19 | StudentCrowd

Then consider the impact of hybrid working for the wider community on:

- the economy and business
- towns and city centres
- issues affecting the workforce, and skills
- health (physical and mental) and wellbeing – see *Remote Working: Implications for Wales* (linked below)
- inequalities between different groups and different parts of Wales (including those areas with poor connectivity)
- the environment
- the transport network and infrastructure.

You may wish to access the full report:

Remote Working: Implications for Wales

Based on your research and that we are operating with uncertainty, do you agree with the following quote?

'Universities are well-placed to collaborate with partners across Wales to support our nation's recovery from the pandemic and build Wales' future together.'

Universities Wales, 2022

Add your vote to the poll below.

Interactive content is not available in this format.

2.1 Dealing with uncertainty

All organisations must deal with uncertainty, which can be due to internal and/or external factors. While this is a constant element for organisations, it not only can impact an organisation's ability to thrive, but also the wellbeing of those within it.

Having a robust approach to managing uncertainty requires a clear purpose and vision, and an embedded structure for change to help manage expectations and understanding as to why change is needed, both short term and long term.

Many organisations plan for the short- and long-term future, based on understanding the environment in which they operate.

The VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous), TUNA (Turbulent, Uncertain, Novel, Ambiguous) frameworks, and the Cynefin Framework focus on sense making for ordered, complex and chaotic systems in time of uncertainty. They are often used by organisations to help make sense of uncertainty, futures planning and approaching change.

The acronym VUCA was used by the US military in relation to the international security environment after 2001 (Stiehm, 2002).

Volatile	Uncertain	Complex	Ambiguous
Change is fast and unpredictable.	The present is unclear and the future uncertain.	There are many interconnected factors in play, causing chaos and confusion.	There is a lack of clarity or awareness about situations.

Figure 2: Original VUCA acronym meaning

This acronym was adapted for business by Bob Johansen (2009) to describe how external forces are disrupting organisations. Bill George (2017) suggested that leaders within organisations who plan for uncertainty need to be authentic, create clarity, and have the courage with their decision and the ability to adapt (Figure 3).

Vision	Understanding	Courage	Adaptability
Have a clear vision to see through the chaos.	In-depth understanding of capabilities and strategies.	Step up to challenges and make audacious decisions.	Be flexible in adapting to rapid change.

Figure 3: VUCA 2.0 acronym meaning

TUNA environments is a social theory approach to understanding the conditions of uncertainty, developed by Dr Rafael Ramirez and Dr Angela Wilkinson, within the Oxford Scenario Planning Approach (OSPA). This approach is useful to consider, plan for and respond to rapid and radical change, and can help organisations to develop 'Strategic re-framing' for solving problems.

Turbulence	Uncertainty	Novelty (& unique)	Ambiguity
Speed of change, with high complexity and uncertainty.	Uncertainty is unpredictable, disruptive and can be uncontrollable.	Response to situations that are both imaginable and unimaginable, that require new concepts, technologies and approaches.	Managing and understanding different interpretations of situation, often when there is little or contradictory information available.

Figure 4: TUNA environments

The Cynefin Sensemaking framework developed by Dr David Snowden helps leaders and organisations make sense of different situations, and show that they may need a different approach to decision making. It provides five domains to assess the situation.

ENABLING CONSTRAINTS

GOVERNING CONSTRAINTS

COMPLEX

COMPLICATED

PROBE
↳SENSE
↳RESPOND

SENSE
↳ANALYSE
↳RESPOND

EXAPTIVE PRACTICES

GOOD PRACTICES

CONFUSED

NOVEL PRACTICES

BEST PRACTICES

ACT
↳SENSE
↳RESPOND

SENSE
↳CATEGORISE
↳RESPOND

CHAOTIC

CLEAR

NO EFFECTIVE CONSTRAINTS

CYNEFIN SENSE MAKING FRAMEWORK

FIXED CONSTRAINTS

Figure 5: The Cynefin framework

The complexity of operating in an uncertain environment means that many of the challenges facing organisations can be considered as 'wicked problems' (Rittel and Webber, 1973) or intractable problems. You will explore these in the next section.

2.2 The problem with problems

According to Wong (2020), a wicked problem is 'a social or cultural problem that's difficult or impossible to solve – normally because of its complex and interconnected nature'. Examples include poverty, global warming, and traffic jams.

Wicked problems can be complex and difficult to identify what the actual issue is, and what might be the best solution. This is often due to conflicting information and views, the interdependencies that need to be considered, the large numbers of people they might affect and their economic viability.

Rittel and Webber (1973) identified ten characteristics of wicked problems:

1. There is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem.
2. Wicked problems have no 'stopping rule' (i.e., no definitive solution).
3. Solutions to wicked problems are not true or false, but good or bad.
4. There is no immediate and no ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem.
5. Every (attempted) solution to a wicked problem is a 'one-shot operation'; the results cannot be readily undone, and there is no opportunity to learn by trial and error.

6.	Wicked problems do not have an enumerable (or an exhaustively describable) set of potential solutions, nor is there a well-described set of permissible operations that may be incorporated into the plan.

7.	Every wicked problem is essentially unique.

8.	Every wicked problem can be considered to be a symptom of another problem.

9.	The existence of a discrepancy representing a wicked problem can be explained in numerous ways.

10.	The planner has no 'right to be wrong' (i.e., there is no public tolerance of experiments that fail).

Figure 6: Wicked problems, adapted by Sarkar and Kotler (no date) from Rittel and Webber (1973)

By its very nature, you may not be able to solve the overall wicked problem, but you can mitigate some of the consequences. This requires being open to ideas and experimenting with different approaches, such as human-centred design or an interdisciplinary focus (IDEO, 2022).

While wicked problems have a framework from which to consider then, another approach is to think about problems as 'intractable' − those for which there is no obvious approach

to solving them. As you consider a problem you reframe it and try to make sense of the problem and look for different paths that will help to mitigate the issue. This draws from taking a more human-centred approach to problem solving.

> Human-centred design is a creative approach to problem solving that starts with the needs of the user, emphasises the importance of diverse perspectives, and encourages solution-seeking among multiple actors. It consists of five phases: Empathise, Define, Ideate, Prototype and Test. What differentiates human-centred design from other problem-solving approaches is its focus on understanding the perspective of the person who experiences a problem most acutely.
>
> Source: UNDP (no date) Human-Centered Design

This involves observing, using empathy to explore the problem further, to uncover what at first might not be obvious, generating ideas, with test-and-learn activities to gather feedback, prior to implementing a potential solution.

Activity 3: What problems does your HEI have?

🕐 *15 minutes*

Read the following article: Nothing is intractable: you can change the world and then consider if your HEI has wicked or intractable problems. And approaches that could be taken to understand them and potentially reframe or solve them.

Note your findings in the text box below.

Provide your answer...

2.3 Explore your organisation's external factors

As we are still operating in an uncertain world, understanding your external environment is critical. A simple framework for analysing your environment is the PESTLE model. It is designed to help explore the key external factors that might influence your organisations – Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental.

Figure 7: PESTLE model for analysis. Source: Impact Innovation (no date)

This model allows you to consider your context in relation to your organisational environment and think about the impact the control and influence external factors can have. It should stimulate an organisation to research these areas further.

Activity 4: Evaluate your environment

🕐 *15 minutes*

Using the PESTLE model for analysis, evaluate the environment you are operating in and drawing on the problems you identified in the previous activity. You may wish to use the template provided.

If you are unfamiliar with using the PESTLE model, the CIPD website provides a useful overview and video on the PESTLE analysis.

While you were thinking about the environment you are operating in and what might pose as a problem, you may have considered the importance of sustainability and wellbeing. We explore this in more detail in the next section of the course.

3 Sustainability and wellbeing

'In 1987, the United Nations Brundtland Commission defined sustainability as 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'

(UN, no date (a))

When developing an organisational approach to sustainability, it is important that wellbeing is at the forefront, and the focus is not just on the targets to mitigate the climate change emergency. The Paris Climate Agreement 2015 set a target to stop the world's average temperate rising above 2.0°C (ideally 1.5°C), and agreement from parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to reduce carbon emissions by 45% by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050.

All UK organisations are required by law to reduce their carbon emissions. The approach to this varies throughout the UK. You can explore these for your nation via the links below:

- Wales – Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015(Public bodies only) and Environment (Wales) Act 2016
- England – Climate Change Act 2008 and Sustainability and climate change: a strategy for the education and children's services systems
- Scotland – Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019
- Northern Ireland – Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme

3.1 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) form the framework for improving the lives of populations around the world and mitigating the hazardous man-made effects of climate change (UN, no date)

In 2015 the UN adopted the SDGs as a guide to development policies. There are 17 SDGs, as shown in the image below. The intention for these goals was to enable individual countries to set and measure their own progress towards the goals through appropriate targets. As organisations develop their approach to sustainability, they should consider how they can meet these goals, and interweave them into their strategies, policies and ways of working.

Figure 8: UN Sustainable development goals (SDGs)

Activity 5: Learn about the UN SDGs

⏱ *15 minutes*

Go to the UN SDG website, and take time to learn about the 17 goals and explore the site.

Consider which of the goals are most relevant to your organisation, how higher education institutions can contribute towards meeting these goals, and what your organisation is doing in relation to these goals. You may wish to use the box below to capture your thoughts.

Provide your answer...

3.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Wales has some of the most contemporary legislation in the world, drawing on best practice from across the globe. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (Welsh Government, 2015) places a duty on all Welsh public bodies to put sustainability at the heart of all decision making. A Future Generations Commissioner acts as a 'guardian of future generations', refocusing decisions on the long-term impacts and reporting on progress (Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, no date).

'The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 gives us the ambition, permission, and legal obligation to improve our social, cultural, environmental, and economic wellbeing.'

'The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities, and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.'

'The Act is unique to Wales attracting interest from countries across the world as it offers a huge opportunity to make a long-lasting, positive change to current and future generations.'

The Act is a legally binding common purpose centred around seven wellbeing goals that detail the ways in which specific public bodies must work and work together to improve the wellbeing of Wales. The Act is the most developed act of the four nations of the UK, aiming to improve social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing.

In the videos below Sophie Howe, The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, explains the Act and the impact it is has had for Wales, and Jane Davidson, Author of #futuregen: Lessons from a Small Country explains how the Act was created.

Video content is not available in this format.

SOPHIE HOWE
FUTURE GENERATIONS COMMISSIONER FOR WALES
COMISIYNYDD CENEDLAETHAU'R DYFODOL CYMRU

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The seven well-being goals

To ensure that Wales is working towards the same shared purpose and vision, the act has seven well-being goals that all public bodies must work to achieve. These are explained in Table 1.

Figure 9: Well-being goals

Table 1

A Prosperous Wales
An innovative, productive, and low carbon society that recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy that generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.

A Resilient Wales
A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change.

A More Equal Wales
A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic circumstances).

A Healthier Wales
A society in which people's physical and mental wellbeing is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.

A Wales of Cohesive Communities
Attractive, safe, viable and well-connected.

A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language
A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage, and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.

A Globally Responsible Wales
A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global wellbeing.

Source: https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/

The Act has a strong focus on how the goals will be achieved by encouraging public bodies and organisations to use sustainable development principles of long term, prevention, integration, collaboration, and involvement, as depicted in the Five Ways of Working table below.

Table 2 Five Ways of Working

Long-term: The importance of balancing short-term needs with the needs to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.

Integration: Considering how the public body's wellbeing objectives may impact upon each of the wellbeing goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.

Involvement: The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the wellbeing goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

Collaboration: Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its wellbeing objectives.

Prevention: How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.

The architecture of the Act links to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and framework. The image below provides a clear overview of how its impact will be measured.
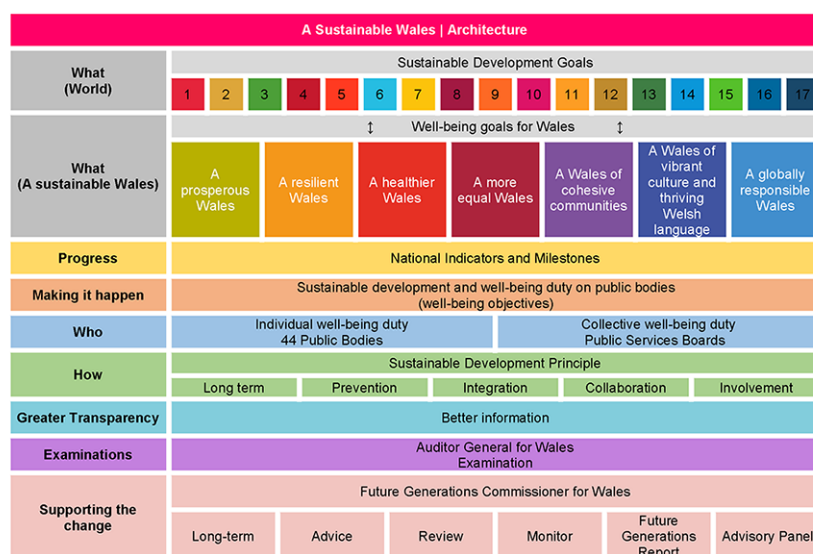
Figure 10: A sustainable Wales – architecture of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Activity 6: Familiarise yourself

🕐 *20 minutes*

Start to familiarise yourself with the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales website.

As organisations operate in an uncertain climate, wellbeing and sustainability is critically important, and it is essential to embed this in organisational development activities and the development of employees' understanding and capabilities.

Throughout the Supporting Hybrid Working and Digital Transformation collection, you will be referred to the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales website, which contains not only the full act, but also numerous resources that explain it in simple terms, practical tips and case studies of how an organisation can improve wellbeing and support its local community.

It is recommended that you read the Well-being Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 essential guide available on the main page that provides access to the full Act and an overview of the approach Wales has taken, and then as you have time outside of the time allocated for studying this course, engage with website further.

3.3 Reducing your carbon emissions

It is **unequivocal** that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land. Widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere and biosphere have occurred.

(IPCC, 2021)

The above quote from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report highlights the impact of human activity on climate change, and many consider we are facing a climate emergency. The need to start to mitigate the impact of our activities and behaviours is now essential. As you have seen in the previous sections developing global goals, national legislative acts and setting targets provides a framework to drive change.

In this collection we have started to introduce you to think about sustainability, further resources are available in the Open University Sustainability Hub on OpenLearn.

While you may be familiar with many key terms and concepts related to climate change, in this section we provide an overview of some of the terms that are frequently used. You may also wish to bookmark the IPCC Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5 °C glossary, which provides a comprehensive list of definitions.

Climate change

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change defines climate change as:

'Climate change' means a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Net zero

Net zero is achieving the balance between the carbon emitted into the atmosphere and the amount removed from the atmosphere.

In the video Stephen Peake, Professor of Climate Change and Energy at The Open University, provides an overview of net zero.

Video content is not available in this format.

Global warming

Global warming is the long-term increase in temperature of the Earth's surface due to human activities, which increase greenhouse gases that have the potential to warm and change our global climate.

In the video Stephen Peake provides an overview of global warming.

Video content is not available in this format.

STEPHEN PEAKE PHD (CANTAB), PFHEA FRGS,
PROFESSOR OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY - THE OPEN UNIVERSITY
ATHRO NEWID HINSAWDD AC YNNI - Y BRIFYSGOL AGORED

Greenhouse gas emissions

The Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol is a global framework to measure and manage greenhouse gas emissions to enable corporate accounting and reporting standards for greenhouse gas emissions from organisations.

The greenhouse gas emissions are grouped into three 'scopes' shown in the table and figure below. Scope 1 and 2 require mandatory reporting by organisations. Scope 3 emissions can be challenging to determine, but account for approximately 80% of organisations emission.

Table 3

| Scope 1 Direct emissions	Scope 2 Indirect emissions	Scope 3 All other indirect emissions
From sources that are controlled or owned by an organisation.	From the purchase of electricity, steam, heat or cooling.	Emissions generated by an organisations supply and value chain.
Fuel combustion Company vehicles Company facilities		15 categories • purchased goods and services • capital goods • fuel- and energy-related activities • transportation and distribution • waste generated in operations • business travel • employee commuting • leased assets • processing of sold products • use of sold products • end of life treatment of sold products • franchises • investments

Based on information from the GHG Protocol website
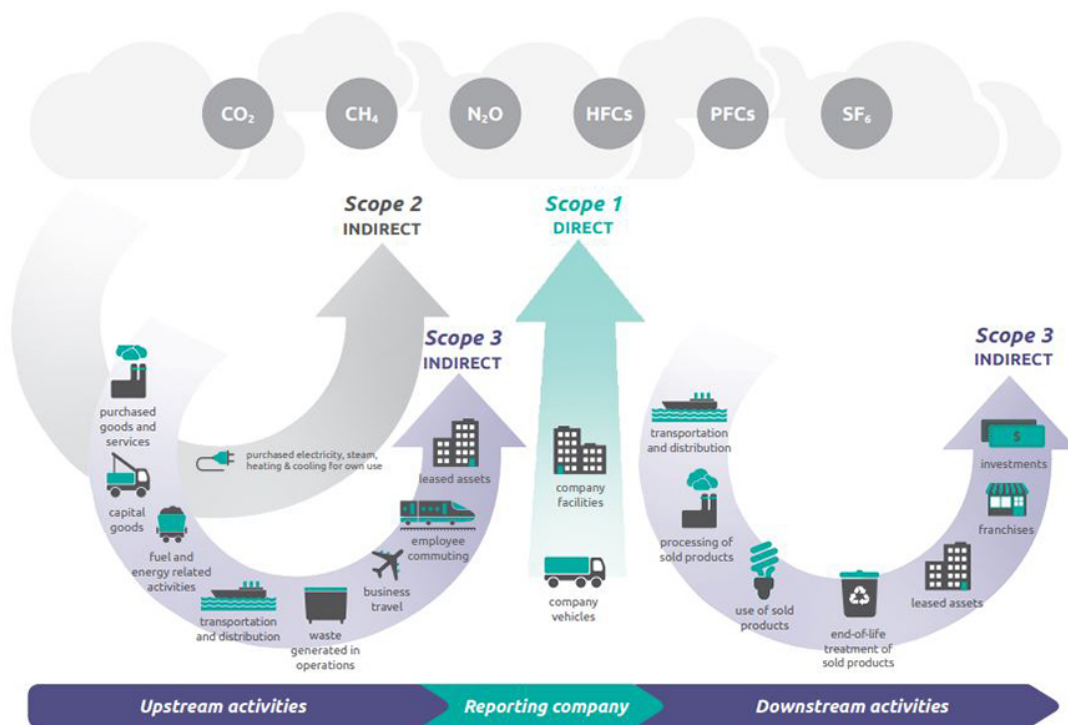
Figure 11: Diagram of scopes and emissions across the value chain

In the video Scott Stonham, an Independent Sustainable Tech Analyst and author of the Jisc Exploring digital carbon footprints report, explains the GHG Protocol.

Video content is not available in this format.

Carbon footprint

A carbon footprint is a measure of the greenhouse gases (GHG) that are produced directly or indirectly by the activities of an individual, organisations and community, and the activities for producing products.

In the video Stephen Peake explains what a carbon footprint is.

Video content is not available in this format.

If you wish to understand more about your own carbon footprint, you can use The Open University's Carbon Calculator on OpenLearn.

The circular economy

The circular economy is a framework to tackle global challenges including climate change that is based on three principles:

- Eliminate waste and pollution
- Circulate products and materials
- Regenerate nature

In the video Dr Alice Moncaster, Senior Lecturer in Sustainable Built Environment at The Open University, provides an overview of the circular economy.

Video content is not available in this format.

There is a growing focus on the circular economy, an area you may wish to come back to explore further. The
[Beyond Recycling area of the Welsh Government website, that includes its strategy to make the circular economy in Wales a reality](#), and the wellbeing assessment, provides an insight into what organisation need to consider to develop more sustainable ways reduce waste and preserve resources.

- [What is the circular economy and why does it matter?](#)
- [What is a circular economy?](#)

3.4 Digital carbon footprints

The carbon impact of technology and working digitally has been gaining more attention in recent years as we begin to understand and track the impact more effectively.

'IT is often one of the biggest contributors to an education institution's own carbon footprint, with one UK college attributing 20% of its emissions to IT alone.'

[Exploring digital carbon footprints](#)

In working towards reaching net zero, organisations need to start to understand their digital carbon footprint, not only within their 'digital spaces', but also the procurement, digital infrastructure, management of physical equipment and use of electricity.

We now live in a world where everything is 'in the cloud'. However, many people do not think about what the cloud actually is. At a very basic level, it is data servers. While many organisations still have on-site servers, most are using 'cloud servers'. These are servers managed by a third-party supplier based anywhere in the world.

This raises an interesting question for organisations – most IT purchasing decisions are based on the needs of the organisation, the reliability, service and tools a supplier can provide, and the cost. Many IT solutions may have been purchased before the focus on

sustainability started to become part of the procurement process. Large IT providers are aware of this and have voluntarily improved the sustainability of their services, especially connected to the cloud.

Many organisations are now developing strategies for their approach, for example the UK Ministry of Defence has published their Sustainable Digital Technology and Services Strategic Approach 2021-2025, which provides a simple ambition for net zero emissions.

There are some simple changes that individuals can be encouraged to adopt to help organisations reduce their digital carbon footprint. This can be managed through new polices and processes, such as not having images within email signatures, encourage links to shared documents rather than sending them as attachments and clear policies on deleting digital files.

What is more challenging is decisions on systems, infrastructure, procurement and management of equipment. The life and disposal of physical equipment contributes not only to carbon emissions but waste. Many organisations are adopting longer life policies for equipment, considering their choice of suppliers, especially for cloud services and starting to understand the implications of remote working carbon emissions.

Earlier in the course we introduced the GHG Protocol 'Scopes', which should be considered for managing your digital carbon footprint, by focusing on areas that may lead to the greatest impact for reducing your emissions.

The Jisc Exploring your digital carbon footprint report provides a comprehensive overview of the source and impact of digital carbon footprints in four areas: procurement, on-premise IT, cloud technologies and remote working.

In the video below Scott Stonham, the author of the report, provides an overview of the key findings.

Video content is not available in this format.

Bookmark the Jisc report to develop your understanding of your digital carbon footprint for use in your organisation and you may wish to explore the articles listed below written by

Scott Stonham on OpenLearn. While you can read it as part of this course, they are not included within the study time allocated.

- Reducing the digital carbon footprint of the cloud
- Reducing the carbon footprint of on-premises IT
- How we can all tackle our digital carbon footprints
- Reducing digital carbon footprint through responsible procurement
- Digital carbon footprints and remote working
- How can corporations reduce digital carbon footprints
- What is a digital carbon footprint?

Activity 7: Which cloud?

⏱ *15 minutes*

Read the following article, and answer the following question:

When making a purchasing decision, what should organisations be considering about the sustainability practices of the potential supplier? You may wish to make notes in the free text box below.

Amazon, Google, Microsoft: Here's who has the greenest cloud

Provide your answer...

3.5 Sustainable development

At the start of the course, we introduced hybrid ways of working: a contextual framework which suggests:

1. You and how you work need to be mindful of the key stakeholders within your environment and their needs in relation to organisational development.
2. You need to understand organisational needs, the context, connections, and requirements for key areas of focus and how these relate to the needs of your stakeholders.
3. You need to consider your ways of working for the wellbeing of future generations.

The framework draws on the Triple Bottom Line (Elkington, 1994), and has been designed to assist with ensuring that wellbeing is an integral part of developing your organisation's approach to sustainability, by considering the three pillars of sustainability: Social/People, Environmental/Planet, and Economic/Profit. They are of equal importance.

Figure 12: Three pillars of sustainability

People/Social – Organisations ensure responsible, ethical, and fair treatment of employees, stakeholders, and the community it operates in.

Planet/Environmental – Promoting activities that lead to the reduction of negative impact on the environment, both within the organisation and its supply chain.

Profit/Economic – An organisation needs to be profitable in order to operate.

In the video Stephen Peake explains the triple bottom line for sustainability. As you watch consider how it might assist you in embedding three pillars of sustainability within your organisation.

Video content is not available in this format.

Developing a sustainable organisation may require decisions on profit margins. Committing to sustainable business practices requires change, and demonstrating the 'environmental, social and governance' (ESG) metrics are as equally important as the financial data, for measuring the success of organisations.

Many HEIs belong to The Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education, which provides numerous resources, including the Higher Education Supply Chain Emissions (HESCET) Tool for helping with procurement decisions.

The triple bottom line: what it is & why it's important article from the Harvard Business School Online explains what organisations need to consider for measuring their social and environmental impact.

Activity 8: How can HEIs assist in meeting the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 well-being goals?

⏱ *15 minutes*

'The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.'

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Drawing on the information and your own research, how can HEIs develop sustainable practices, focus on the wellbeing of those within the organisation, and collaborate to ensure that long-term decisions provide better outcomes for future generations?

4 How we work now

It can be easy to forget that how we worked before the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic has many similarities to how we work now. For many the pivot to remote working involved minimal changes to the work they do, but setting up their offsite workplace was a challenge. Employees and students in the higher education sector became more responsible and accountable for managing how they worked – especially during lockdowns – and had to balance their work against their personal environments and needs. Going forward, a way of working is needed that allows for continued flexibility while meeting organisational needs.

Activity 9: Shifting the way of work

🕐 *20 minutes*

Watch the video in which Jacob Morgan shares insights about how organisations are evolving.

Video content is not available in this format.

Read the article from BBC Worklife –
How companies around the world are shifting the way they work. Does this feel familiar to your experiences of the changes of ways of working?

As you can see from the images below, it is important to remember that some individuals' working patterns did not change: they continued to go on site throughout lockdowns, or were already remote workers.
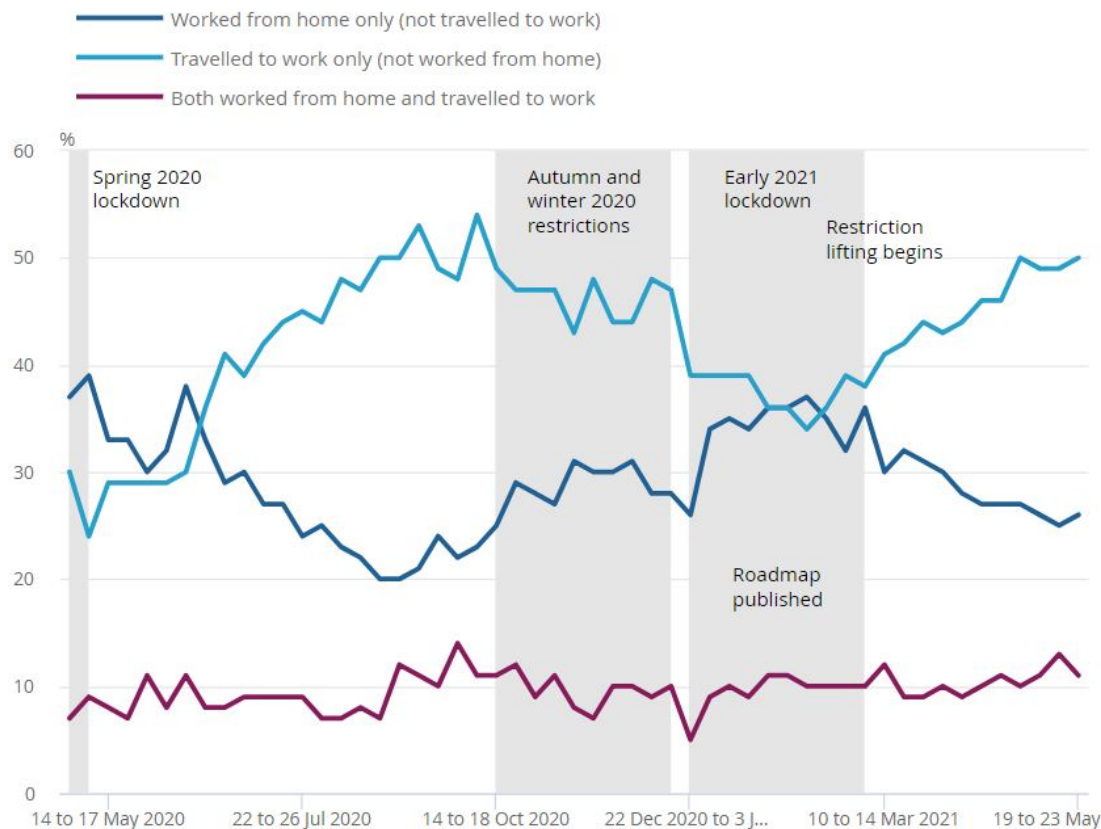
Figure 13: The proportion of working adults reporting working from home exclusively has varied over the course of the past year. Working adults, Great Britain, May 2020 to May 2021. Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey.

Notes for Figure 13:

1. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
2. 'Spring 2020 lockdown': 23 March 2020 to 13 May 2020.
    'Autumn and winter 2020 restrictions': 14 October 2020 to 4 January 2021.
    'Early 2021 lockdown': 5 January 2021 to 8 March 2021.
    'Roadmap for England published': 22 February 2021.
    'Restriction lifting begins': 8 March 2021.
3. You can explore the interactive version of the image here.
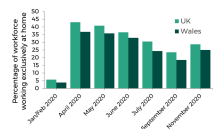
Figure 14: Numbers Exclusively Working at Home in the UK During 2020 Source: Remote working – the new normal?

As the skills required to work effectively evolve, the reliance on technology due to remote working and learning has meant that digital, communication and time-management capabilities have had to develop rapidly.

Individuals and HEIs adapted how they worked and had to quickly provide remote learning for their students, and take domestic arrangements into account without the infrastructure to properly support this. This uncertainty has raised concerns about the trust students have in their HEI to provide the services and support they require.

'UK should pay more attention to the potential relationship between trust and mental wellbeing. Among the more consistent findings in the literature are our results concerning gender, previous financial strain, food security and housing security, all of which have been found to impact mental health and/or mental wellbeing.'

Source: https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2021.646916/full

Activity 10: Learning from the pandemic:

🕐 *10 minutes*

Browse the following articles and reports linked below, which explore the impact of the pandemic on HEIs and students. Consider how these reflect your own organisation's current work practices.

- Lessons from the pandemic: making the most of technologies in teaching
- Student Mental Health in a pandemic
- Student Mental Health: Life in a pandemic
- Remote working – the new normal?
- Remote Working: Implications for Wales

Think about your own experience of the pandemic. How did you adapt, and how did your organisation respond? If you are within an HEI, what was the impact on students?

Make notes in the free text box below.

Provide your answer...

....

Answer

At a personal level your experience will depend on your personal circumstances.

For example, I had to shield. From a working perspective nothing really changed as I was already a remote worker, but I changed jobs 4 times during the 2-year lockdown period, due to redundancy, freelancing and securing a fixed-term contract then a permanent role. I home schooled, renovated my house, and on some days relied on the dog walks and coffee from the local café to speak to another adult in person. Shielding has impacted my ability for socialisation. It is only recently that I feel more comfortable to start to mix with others again.

From an organisational perspective, this varied, from being sent 'care packages' to feeling completely isolated, with an increasing unseen workload. While also recognising that organisations were adapting daily and starting to find their own way through the uncertainty.

For some people, this rapid and continual adjustment to ambiguity and uncertainty had a significant impact on their wellbeing, thanks to factors such as restrictions forced upon them, concerns about risks to their health, and balancing the demands of their personal lives as they dealt with constant change.

The full impact of this varied depending on personal circumstances. For example, people who had to shield faced the immediate implications of being completely shut off from the world, but in practice they had to consider circumnavigating the rules to do simple things like walk the dog, or even buy food. If you are told you cannot go to the shops, you have to work out other options, such as relying on friends/family to shop for you, online deliveries (if you could get a slot) or council-run food schemes, while having periods of not speaking to or seeing another person in the flesh.

Cultural changes will have occurred in organisations too, especially HEIs, where once thriving campuses became ghost towns, and the demand for online learning provision became a necessity. As a result, more HEIs will now be planning to offer a 'blended' approach to learning – 'which included e-learning with only online formats, a blended approach that mixed online and face-to-face teaching with in-person teaching' (Ameduni and Ligoro, 2022) – as a standard part of their provision, not just as an emergency response to the pandemic.

4.1 The new working environment

While some organisations might prefer to take a wait-and-see approach to working practices and cultural evolution, learning from their workforce's experiences can provide valuable insights. Listening to those whose working patterns did not significantly alter during the pandemic, as well as those who had to change their working patterns, gives organisations an opportunity to consider and experiment with which working practices to keep and which to discard.

Research by the Corporate Research Forum suggests that hybrid flexible working has become the norm, and how organisations develop their policies and working practices needs to accommodate the new norms whilst considering ongoing organisational needs.
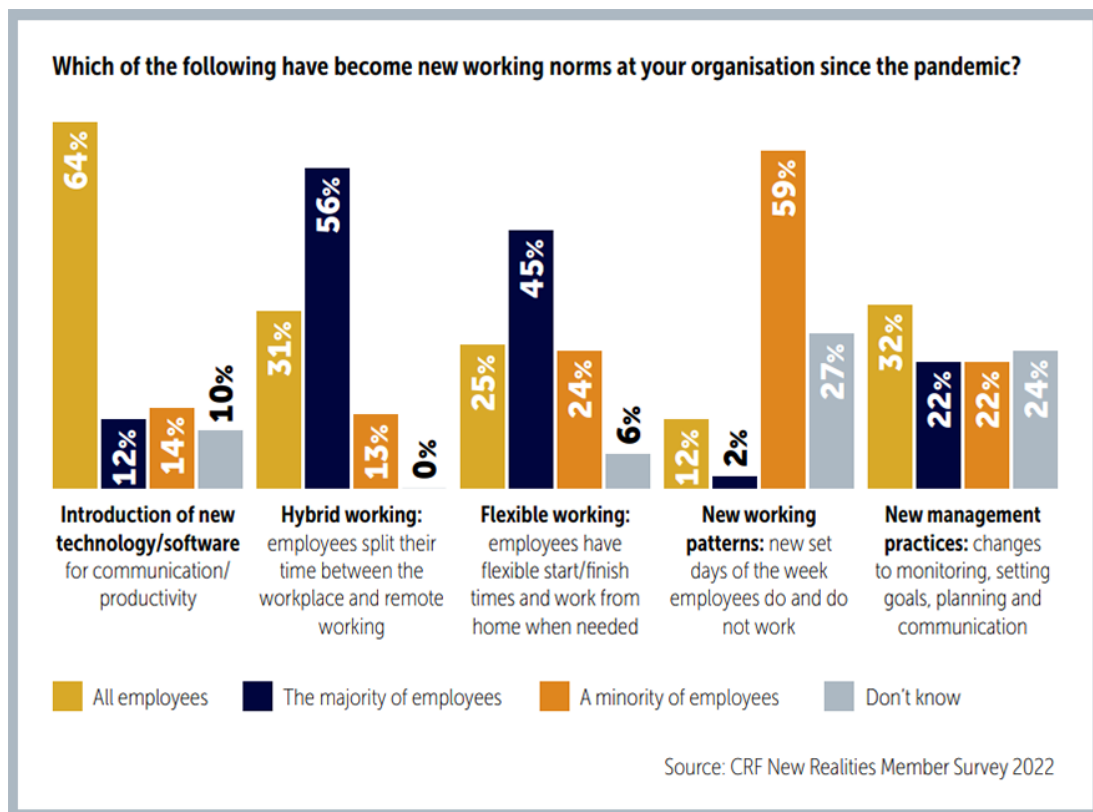
Figure 15: New working norms

The Advanced Workplace Hybrid Working Index tracks the uptake of hybrid working globally, and its first report in August 2022 found:

- On average only 26% of the population are attending the office each day with a peak of 31% in the office on a Wednesday.
- Only 40% of the desks in office are being used at peak time on a Wednesday, with an average run rate of 31% leaving over two thirds of the desks empty on average across the week.
- On average each worker, is attending the office 1.3 days a week, which is similar to the intentions expressed through our surveys during the pandemic.
- The majority of organisations have not set a Hybrid Working Policy and for those that have attendance is well below the level set in their policy.

Source: The AWA Hybrid Working Index

This index can help organisations to understand how its hybrid workforce is now working, which can be useful for planning new ways of working, including the use of space. You will explore this later in the course.

Activity 11: How do you work now?

⏱ *10 minutes*

While some organisations are now fully remote only, this is not achievable/practical for others. The Welsh Government has an ambition to see around 30% of Welsh workers working 'at or close to home' (source: senedd.wales).

Working practice approaches can be split into four areas:

1. On site only
2. Hybrid – on site and in remote location
3. Remote location only
4. Remote location – away from primary base. (e.g., field research as an academic, work hubs)

Take some time to consider the different types of working practice and the Future Generations Five Ways of Working. Spend some time researching what these approaches could mean for an organisation, teams and individuals.

What are your principles for ways of working and how they might relate to the Future Generations Five Ways of Working?

Summarise your thoughts in the box below.

Provide your answer...

. . . .

Feedback

In answering this you may have drawn on your own values and experiences or centred on the organisational context. The purpose of this activity is for you to start thinking about what principles may help to develop new ways of working within your organisation.

The OU uses the following principles which have been mapped to the Five Ways of Working from the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*.

OU – University-wide principles for ways of working:

• Strive to create a working environment that is inclusive, collaborative, and equitable.

• Strive to achieve a balance between our personal preferences, the needs of our colleagues/team/unit/school and the requirements of the organisation to deliver education, support students and undertake research.

• Position sustainability and our commitment to achieve net zero carbon as an important driver in our decision making.

• Learn from our experiences and commit to testing new ideas and approaches.

• Empower local units/teams.

Source: https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/

4.2 Putting people first

While people have always been at the heart of an organisation it has never been more important to take a human-centred approach to organisational development, change and culture – often referred to as 'The employee experience'. This may feel challenging

because you have to balance the needs of the organisation and the needs of the individuals: you cannot be all things to all people and one size does not fit all, while also considering wellbeing and inclusion.

Figure 16: Putting people first

Adopting a human-centred approach, with a clear communications plan, can help build empathy within an organisation, to create better experiences, and build resilience to and trust in change, so the organisation culture enables confidence to try news ways of working, learn and evolve.

The International Organization for Standardization guidance, which contributes to UN SDG Goals 3 and 8, states that:

'The term human-centred is used to reflect that organisations not only have an impact on their customers (the users of their products and services), but also on other stakeholders, including their employees, their families, and the wider community.'

International Organization for Standardization (2019)

The ISO has seven principles that characterise a human-centred organisation. These are outlined below:

Table 4

Capitalise on individual differences as an organisational strength	The organisation recognises individual differences as a strength and takes this into account in all areas of its business. The organisation accommodates the nature and extent of individual differences and creates teams of individuals who have complementary skills.
Make usability and accessibility strategic business objectives	The human-centred organisation uses International Standards and best practices to ensure that products, systems and services are accessible and usable (effective, efficient and satisfying to use) both by personnel and by other stakeholders.
Adopt a total system approach	The organisation recognises that people are part of a comprehensive system, which can include many elements such as equipment, workspace, and the physical, social and organisational environment in which people work and live. These elements interact and are interdependent, and the organisation understands this and acts accordingly.
Ensure that health, safety and wellbeing are business priorities	The organisation takes the necessary steps to protect individuals (both inside and outside the organisation) from hazards to their health, safety and wellbeing, and aims to exceed the minimum requirements required by legislation.
Value personnel and create meaningful work	The organisation values and acknowledges the contribution that personnel make. It strives to create meaningful tasks for all potential users of the system. The intent for this principle is not to develop a workplace within which a worker simply 'survives' (passive vision), but to create an environment within which to live and thrive as a meaningful part of the organisation's objectives and work.
Be open and trustworthy	The organisation benefits from being open and trustworthy through enhanced customer relations (internal and external), user confidence, and increased loyalty, as well as an enhanced reputation.
Act in socially responsible ways	The organisation is socially responsible. It behaves ethically and instils pride and confidence in its personnel, customers, and the local community.

International Organization for Standardization (2016)

In the next section you will consider how employee expectations have evolved, and how having a human-centred approach may benefit leaders in organisations for developing their ways of working and adapting for digital transformation.

4.3 The evolution of the employee

When people are put first, and a human-centred approach is taken, organisations need to consider what this will mean in reality, given the environment the organisation operates – what is possible? When there is finite resource, budget and limitations on infrastructure.

By understanding the evolution of the employee, organisations can start to design how they will work by considering the implications and how they can manage expectations and needs between organisations, teams and individuals.

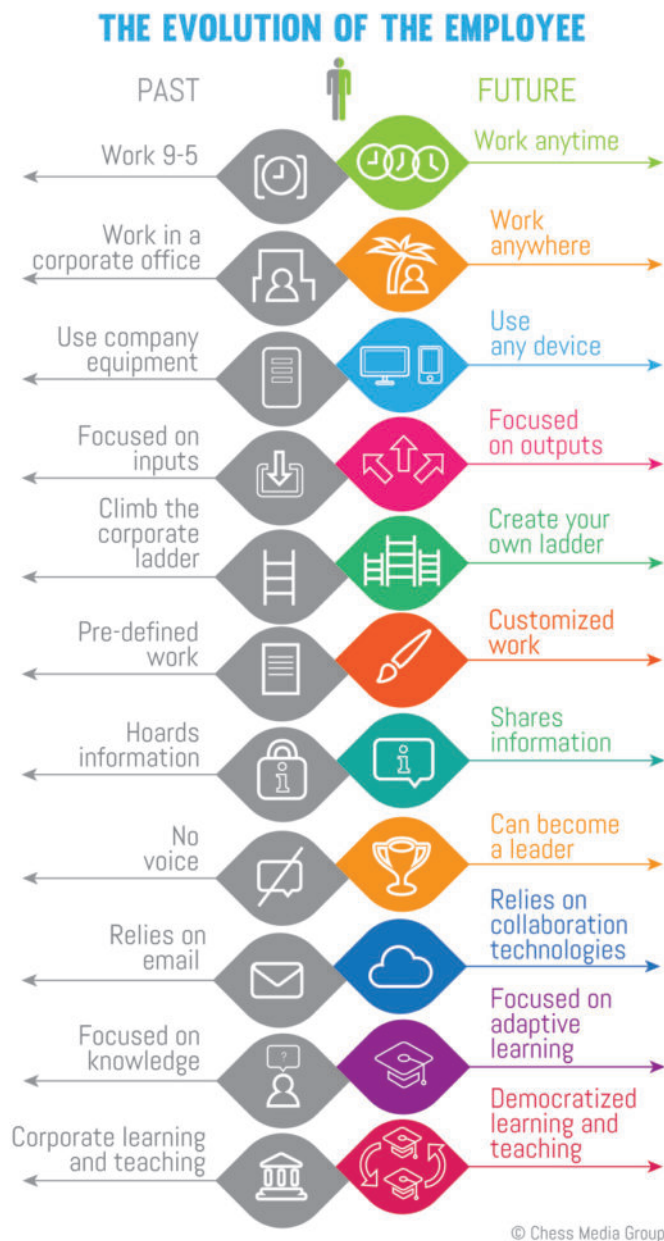Jacob Morgan's info graphic succinctly visualises how the employee's relationship to work has evolved.

Figure 17: The Evolution of the employee

In the video below, Jacob Morgan explains the evolution of the employee, and what this might mean for organisations.

Video content is not available in this format.

The evolution of the employee must be considered alongside the Hybrid Ways of Working: A Contextual Framework because the elements within it will have an impact on your decisions as a leader, for example around cyber security. Hybrid working can mean organisations have less control over how, where and what devices employees use, which means that good online security policies and procedures for both employees and contractors are essential.

Now and the future

The evolution of the employee diagram above clearly shows the shift in expectations; some are already a reality, and understanding them will help you plan better for the future.

Work anytime: Employees set how they work their contracted hours around the needs of the outputs they need to deliver and the teams they are working with. This is especially important for those working on international projects, working across time zones, or those who welcome the flexibility to fit around their family commitments or have found that early mornings or late nights are when they perform best, with fewer distractions.

Work anywhere: Where does someone need to be to work? The pandemic has brought to the forefront that people can and will work anywhere if needed, for example those who regularly travel for business will frequently sit in cafés, airports, hotels to work. Online security and secure Wi-Fi access becomes essential in these situations.

Use any device: As an organisation you need to consider what devices your employees – and contractors – are using. People are using multiple devices as technology makes it easier to access work systems from smartphones and tablets, not just desktop computers or employer-issued laptops.

Focused on outputs: Trusting employees to deliver their outputs rather than 'presenteeism' allows flexible working and gives employees ownership over their work.

Managing this can be challenging: leaders need to be able to monitor not only whether those outputs are delivered, but also whether employees are managing their workload effectively – both in terms of too little and too much – which can be hidden when working in hybrid teams.

Create your own ladder: Depending on the environment in which you operate, not all careers have a formal path of starting at the bottom of the ladder and working your way up. For many there is no fixed route, especially where the job they might go into doesn't exist today or hasn't even been imagined. People move in all directions within their careers, often completely changing their vocation and lifestyle choices.

Customised work: Many employees who can do so are managing their own careers and choosing to work for organisations or on projects either as employees or on contracts that fit with their lifestyles and career interests. Often the decisions are not about the career ladder, but their own motivations and values.

Can become a leader: The voice of the employee has become more valuable, especially as we come out of the pandemic, to understand their needs and share their ideas, thoughts and concepts that can help organisations develop. Access to people through collaboration platforms is enabling people to lead especially on projects, but also to lead others both formally and informally. A leader is not now seen as someone who has just been given that title, but through the actions they display to bring others together and take them on a journey.

Knowledge vs adaptive learning: The ability to find 'knowledge' via an internet search means most people can find an answer with ease. What becomes more important is an employee's critical thinking skills to interpret that knowledge, and learn new things to adapt, understand interdependencies and apply the learnings to new situations and scenarios.

Everyone's a teacher or a student: While formal education and organisational learning is still required, encouraging informal learning allows employees to quickly learn from each other, connect and build networks. Access to 'learning' through online platforms and networks such as OpenLearn, FutureLearn, Coursera, LinkedIn Learning, TikTok and YouTube has made it more accessible, cheaper and faster.

Source: adapted from The evolution of the employee

Activity 12: What makes a good employee and student experience?

🕐 *15 minutes*

Think about the expectations of 'evolving employees' and students, and what Josh Morgan believes organisations need to be focusing on for a good employee experience. Listen to Alayla Castle-Herbert, Policy Officer (Learning & Teaching) talking to Louise Casella, Director – The Open University in Wales about their experience of starting a new role.

Video content is not available in this format.

What might this mean for your organisation, what policies and procedures might be required?

How flexible can you be as an organisation, both for employees and for students?

How can you ensure the best experience for those within your organisation?

....

Discussion

Much of the focus of this model appears to be based on those workers who have some control over their work, but what does this mean for those who need to be onsite and have 'prescriptive' tasks – for example 'on site catering roles'.

What could be the challenges if an organisation focuses on those who can work more flexibly, while not considering the impact of those in 'constrained' roles?

As ways of working change, it is important to consider all the stakeholders in an organisation, and what you are required to by law to consider/adhere to. While in some areas employees can work more flexibility, others either due to their 'job' or their individual needs cannot. It is essential to consider equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility when developing your organisation.

To explore this further, the following articles from McKinsey provide further insights into employee's needs.

[Three types of modern flexibility today's workers demand | McKinsey & Company](#)

[This time it's personal: Shaping the 'new possible' through employee experience | McKinsey](#)

4.4 Thinking about inclusion

Equality, diversity, accessibility and inclusion (EDAI) should be at the heart of organisational development, to ensure you can provide the best experience for all those connected to your organisation, be they staff, students or other end users, and to develop a diverse workforce that is representative of the wider world, and that can bring different perspectives and experience, to help you thrive in a more connected world.

While inclusion was important prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the pandemic brought to the forefront of people's minds what do we mean by inclusion. During the pandemic the media focused on the lack of laptops or tablets for school children who had to be home schooled, and many communities came together to donate such devices to local schools for those children who did not have access to them.

The disparity for certain groups were more visible, but also expectations as we all adapted to lockdowns, in order to live and work. Having started to feel the world was returning to a new normal, many people are now having to face the impact of the increasing cost of living, which brings new challenges when considering inclusion and wellbeing.

EDAI is a wide and complex topic which we cannot cover in depth within this course. Instead, this course offers areas to consider. The Hybrid working: wellbeing and inclusion course explores inclusion further. You can find this course here: Supporting hybrid working in Wales.

During the research and speaking to contributors for this collection of courses, alongside diversity in the workplace, four topics were frequently raised that should be discussed when focusing on new ways of working: generational diversity; inclusion considerations for females; inclusion for those in rural locations; and digital inclusion – this is covered later.

4.5 Generational diversity

Understanding generational expectations is useful to explore the needs of both your employees and students.

The generational differences, experiences and expectations of those established within the workplace, or joined during lockdown who may have been furloughed or made redundant, to those starting in their first job will be very different from those in the organisation pre-COVID-19. Their confidence levels, needs and expectations will vary. Those who joined during lockdown might never have met their team in person, and those who have come straight from formal education will have had an unprecedented experience of a continual cycle of formal education adapting during lockdowns.

It is likely that their skillset and levels of understanding of how to behave in a workplace may need to be developed and supported. If their initial experience was working remotely, in-person work environments will be an adjustment, their digital capabilities will vary, and their resilience may be lower than expected.

Most organisations will have a diverse generational workforce. While it is sensible to consider their values and beliefs and work styles, it is also important not to assume that all Millennials are 'digital natives' or that Baby Boomers may not be tech-savvy. Depending on their roles within the organisation and experience, you need to consider the individual. It is important to understand the environments that different generations have been exposed to, their education, work expectations and access to technology. Understanding how to bring different generations together to learn from each other can be beneficial to an organisation, to encourage diversity and different perspectives.

The infographic from Generation Z provides a useful overview of the traits, characteristics and values each generation may bring to the workplace.

Activity 13: How to build trust across generations

🕐 *25 minutes*

In the video contributors share insights into generational needs. As you watch, consider how you could develop a culture of better inter-generational understanding in your organisation.

Video content is not available in this format.

You may also wish to watch this optional video
Why GQ is the kind of intelligence we all need | Poornima Luthra | TEDxOdense-Women in which Dr Poornima Lurtha explains the three tools to develop generational intelligence (GQ), minimise micro-aggressions, and build trust each and how these could be applied within your own context.

View at: youtube:-5XtiNuBs0c

You may wish to make some notes in the free text box below.

Provide your answer...

4.6 Inclusion considerations for females

'The United Nations' report
[Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot 2021](#) highlighted that the pandemic has not only dented progress in key goals on gender equality but also reversed progress in expanding the rights of women worldwide.

The video below summaries the key findings of the report.

Video content is not available in this format.

Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2021 (Please note this video has no spoken audio.)

Reports of violence against women and girls are increasing in many parts of the world.

While there has always been an awareness of female equality and equity in the workplace, organisations need to consider how they can support closing the gap in their approach to new ways of working, and work to understand the needs of females.

In the videos below Natasha Davies, Policy and Research Lead from [Chwarae Teg](#), who works to ensure women in Wales can enter and thrive in the workplace, and Samantha Hawtin, Research Student, The Open University, whose work focuses on the importance of place in the workplace, provide insights for what organisations should consider.

Video content is not available in this format.

Video content is not available in this format.

SAMANTHA HAWTIN
PHD STUDENT RESEARCHER, DEPARTMENT OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATION
MYFYRIWR YMCHWIL PHD, ADRAN POBL A SEFYDLIAD

Activity 14: How flexible can you be as an organisation?

🕐 *10 minutes*

Many women have more time commitments outside the workplace, with responsibilities ranging from looking after children, ageing family members, managing the household, which not only can lead to difficulties managing their time in the workplace and home, due to having to work around 'fixed hours' (such as

school hours, health care and financial service providers hours), which may cause anxieties about how they are perceived in the workplace, and impact their wellbeing.

Read Agile-and-Inclusive-Working-Practices.pdf (chwaraeteg.com) and consider the videos from this section.

What can organisations do to enable more flexibility and create a more supportive culture for women in the workplace, which allows them to be open to what they may help with when managing personal commitments? Make notes in the box below.

Provide your answer...

4.7 Rural inclusion

In 2021 the rural population in the United Kingdom was about 16%. In the image below, you can see that nearly 82% of Wales is classed as rural, with approximately 32% of the population living in rural areas.
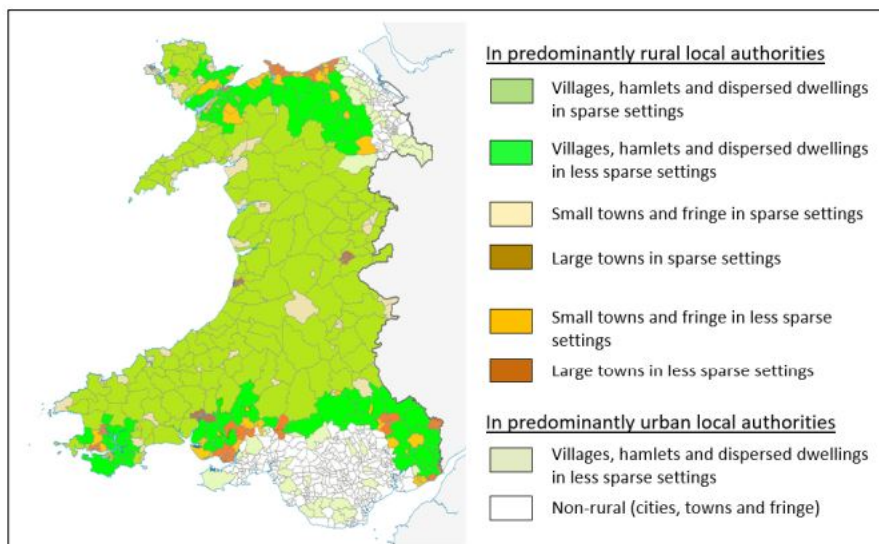

Figure 18: Typology of areas within Rural Wales using ONS classifications of settlement type and setting

Hybrid working potentially opens up opportunities for people living in rural areas to secure jobs that once were only available to those living in large towns or cities. As organisations embrace more flexible approaches to work, there are many factors that need to be considered to ensure an equal and equitable experience, including considering the cost and feasibility of sustainable commuting. Access to public transport can be limited and some people may have a low economic status.

Digital infrastructure in rural areas is often less developed, so the ability to work effectively remotely can be impacted. Rural communities are finding innovative ways to address this such as the Llanover Digital Inclusion Project (LDIP), to use village halls to provide access to improved broadband provision, raise digital awareness and digital skills in the community, alongside the use of co-working hubs that were explored earlier in the course.

In the video below, Professor Michael Woods – Co-Director, Centre for Welsh Politics and Society – Aberystwyth University, who is one of the co-authors of

The Rural Vision for Wales, evidence report, explains the considerations for rural inclusion.

Video content is not available in this format.

Activity 15: 15-minute neighbourhoods

🕐 *15 minutes*

The '15-minute neighbourhood concept' was originally conceived by Carlos Moreno in 2016. His theory focuses on urban areas, with the aim of encouraging regeneration, improving social cohesion, thriving communities, health and well-being, while reducing the use of motor vehicles and promoting more sustainable living.

This place-based approach essentially promotes the idea of all residents of all ages and abilities being able to access their daily needs (housing, work, food, health, education, and culture and leisure) within the distance of a 15-minute walk or bike ride.

Reflect on the video above, how could the concept of a 15-minute neighbourhood enable long-term rural inclusion for hybrid working and sustainable ways of working? Make notes in the free text box below.

Provide your answer...

5 Organisational structures

As organisations plan for how they will work in the future, most HEIs may have structures that were originally designed for primarily 'on site' working, with boundaries between units and functional roles clearly defined. As technology, the scope of roles – which may be more interdisciplinary – and hybrid working environments have evolved, there may need to be significant changes, which allow more flexibility and have a more collaborative and integrated approach to meet the needs of how we need to work now.

'The structure of an organisation is the pattern of relationships between roles in an organisation and its different parts. The purpose of the structure serves to allocate work and responsibilities in order to direct activities and achieve the organisation's goals. Structure enables managers to plan, direct, organise and control the activities of the organisation.'

(Mullins, 1993)

Structures should reflect the organisation's purpose and how it needs to work to enable effective and accountable decision making and policy making. While many organisations try to reduce 'bureaucratic structures', if appropriate parameters of 'bureaucracy' are understood and integrated effectively, they can provide clarity for employees on their roles, responsibilities and expectations of their organisation.

It can be useful to consider Charles Handy's factors affecting organisational effectiveness, and the relationship between people power and practicalities, when reviewing your organisational needs and structure.
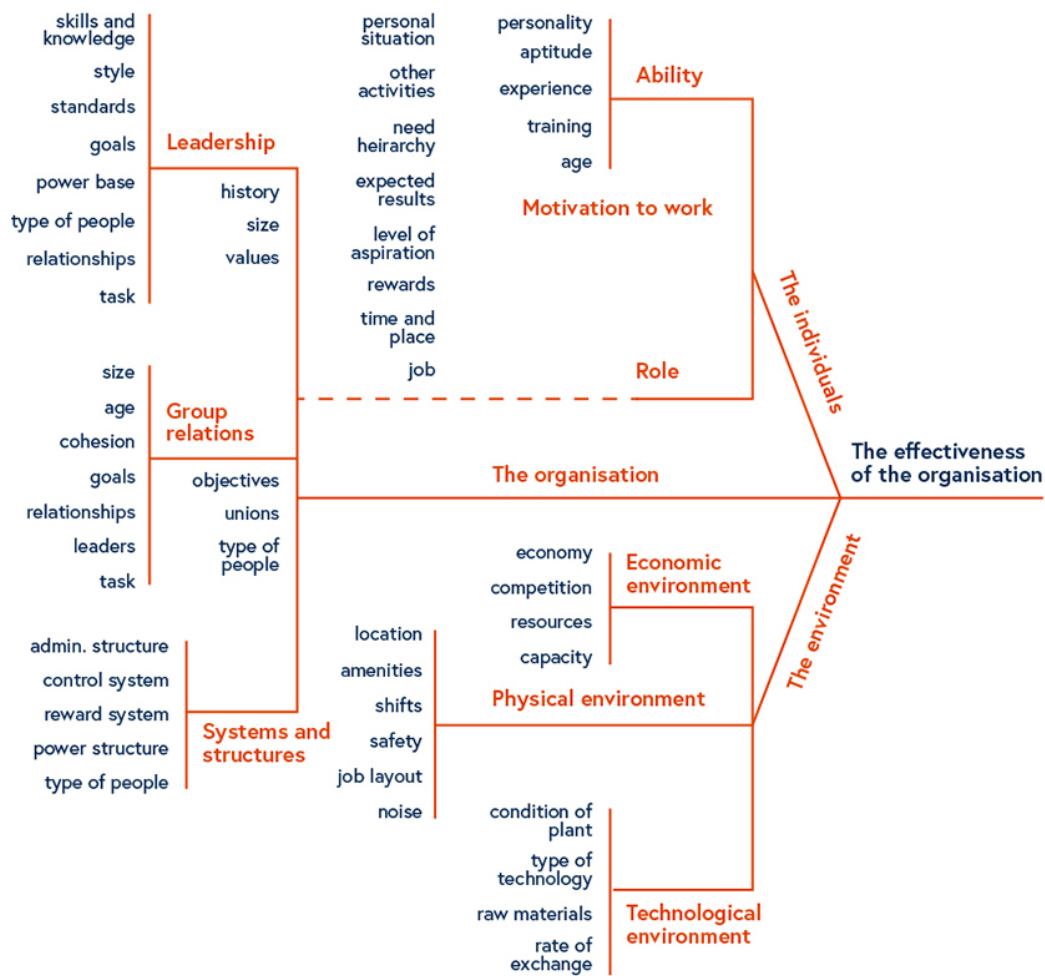
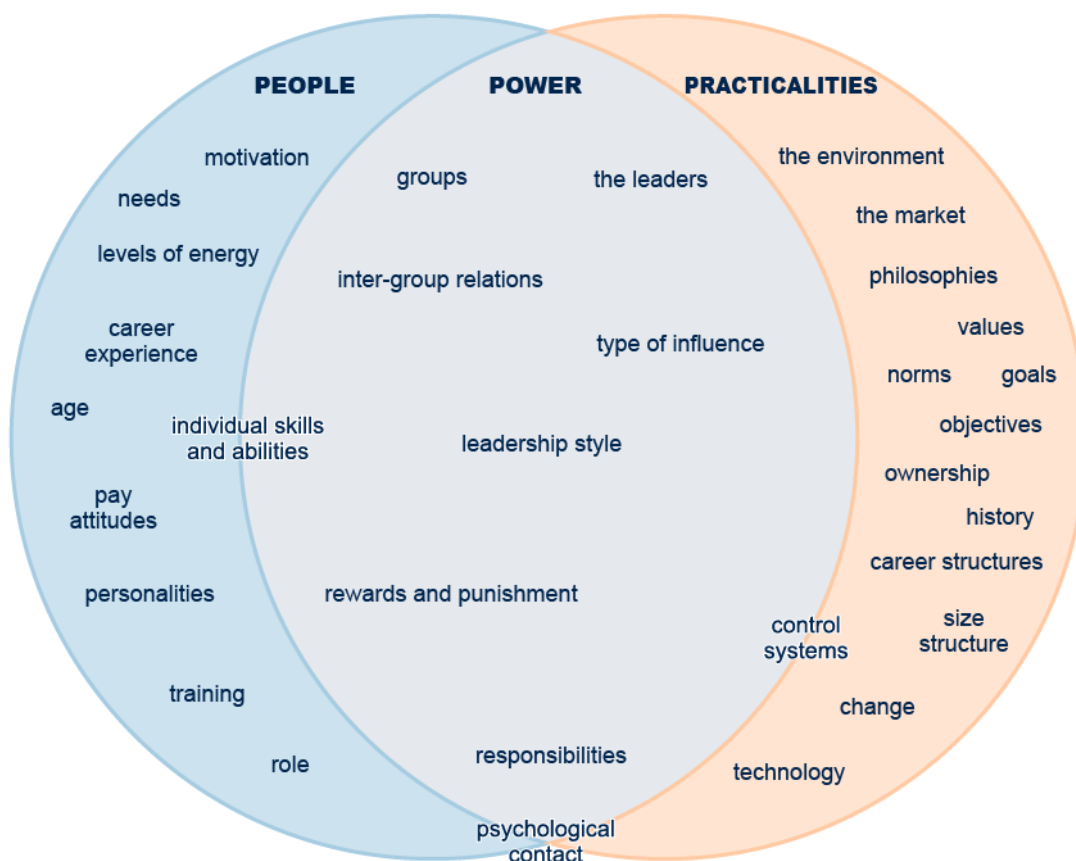Figure 19: Factors affecting organisational effectiveness

Figure 20: Factors affecting organisational effectiveness

There are various structural approaches that can be adopted, which tend to be based on either a horizontal, vertical or matrix structure.

Horizontal structures aim to have fewer levels of management, with many employees having a wide span of control that allows for better communication, autonomy and responsibility. When these are effective, they naturally encourage collaboration.

Vertical structures, in contrast, tend to be more hierarchical, defining a clear chain of command that can lead to complicated approval processes.

Many organisations have now adopted a Matrix structure, that allows for pathways throughout the organisation that enable dual reporting and task delegation. These are more common in complex organisational environments that need to be adaptive to change. This approach can lead to better and more informed decision-making, as can reduce silos and achieve better communication across departments.
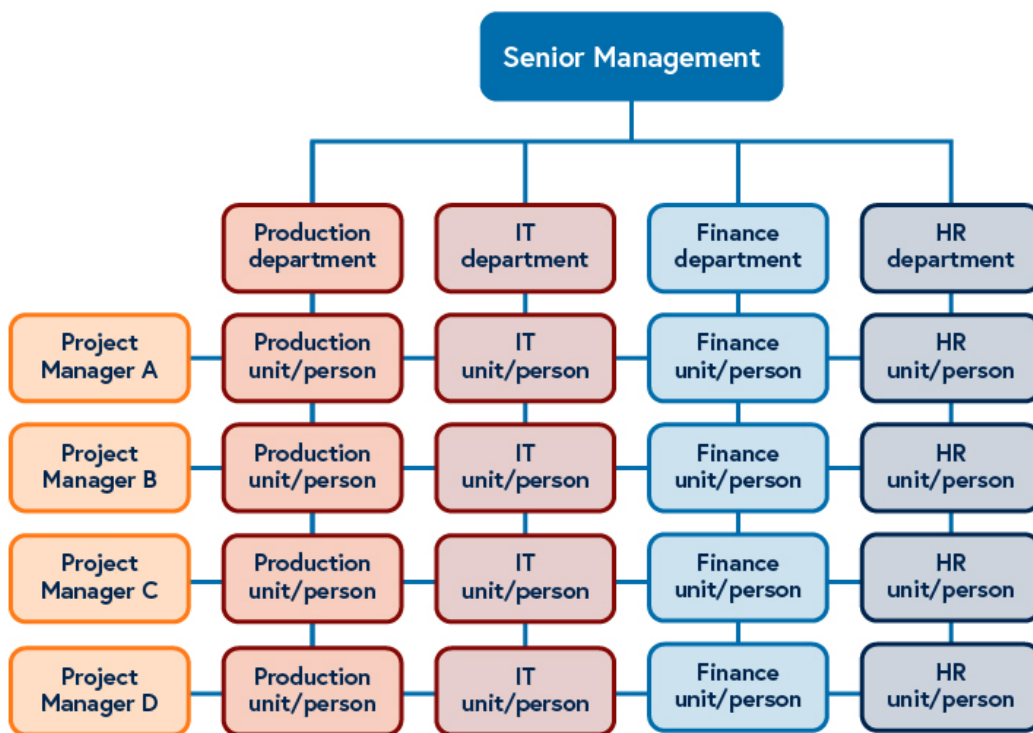
Figure 21: Matrix structure

Various approaches can be taken for organisational structure design and may HEIs will have their preferred approach, which links to change models. The Burke-Litwin change model's premise is 'that change starts externally and transitions to the individual' (Burke-Litwin,1992) which can be complex due the factors it suggests considering. It has an integrated approach that focuses on the interdependences that may lead to better collaboration and involvement, as it allows you to consider the needs of the organisation, team and individual.