



## **June 2010 HR Newsletter**

Once again our HR newsletter focuses on current topical HR issues and highlights some of the services we offer.

### **Managing a Disciplinary - Employer 5 top tips!**

1. Ensure you undertake a thorough investigation leaving no stone unturned. Take comprehensive witness statements from all witnesses which are signed and dated. The investigator should be an independent manager.
2. Invite the employee to a disciplinary hearing giving plenty of notice and providing all written evidence against them. Provide the right to be accompanied.
3. Ensure the employee has adequate time to give their version of events at hearing. Adjourn to investigate new evidence if necessary and reconvene at a later date if appropriate. Ensure the process is documented by a note taker.
4. Ensure the decision from the hearing is appropriate. If in doubt do not dismiss!
5. Ensure the employee has the right to appeal and the hearing is chaired by an independent more senior manager.

### **Coalition document: Key implications for employers**

Here are the key implications for employers from the new coalition document produced by the new liberal/conservative government:

#### **Jobs and pensions**

The government says it will scrap all existing welfare-to-work programmes and create a single welfare-to-work programme to help all unemployed people get back into work.

- It vows to ensure that Jobseekers' Allowance claimants facing the most significant barriers to work are referred to the new welfare-to-work programme immediately.
- The document outlines "support" for the national minimum wage, although there is no stated commitment to raising it.
- The government will commit to establishing an independent commission to review the long-term affordability of public sector pensions, while protecting accrued rights.

#### **Retirement age**

- The government will "phase out" the default retirement age of 65 and hold a review to set the date at which the state pension age starts to rise to 66, although it will not be sooner than 2016 for men and 2020 for women.

#### **Immigration**

- The two parties have agreed to the Conservative commitment to introduce an annual limit on the number of non-EU economic migrants admitted into the UK to live and work - despite the Liberal Democrats' strong opposition to the move. They will jointly consider the mechanism for implementing the limit.

#### **Equality**

This section has perhaps the clearest Liberal Democrat imprint, with the government vowing to promote equal pay and take a range of measures to end discrimination in the workplace, including:

- Extending the right to request flexible working to all employees, consulting with business on how best to do so

- Undertaking a fair pay review in the public sector to implement the proposed '20 times' pay multiple - ensuring that no public sector worker can earn over 20 times more than the lowest-paid person in their organisation
- Promoting gender equality on the boards of listed companies.

## **Legislation**

- The document outlines the commitment to cutting red tape by introducing a 'one-in, one-out' rule whereby no new regulation is brought in without other regulation being cut by a greater amount.
- The government promises to review employment and workplace laws for employers and employees, to ensure they maximise flexibility for both parties while protecting fairness and providing the competitive environment required for enterprise to thrive.
- It also vows to reinstate an Operating and Financial Review to ensure that directors' social and environmental duties have to be covered in company reporting, and investigate further ways of improving corporate accountability and transparency.
- The coalition will seek to ensure an injection of private capital into Royal Mail, including opportunities for employee ownership, while retaining the Post Office in public ownership.

There are also plans to undertake a wholesale review of employment law in the UK. An area which the Conservative's have previously considered ripe for reform is employment tribunal system. Their pre-election policy paper contained a commitment "to ensure the system offers fast, cheap and accessible justice which is fair to all sides" and to address perceived inconsistencies in the tribunal system and deter weak claims.

The National Minimum Wage is to be retained, the Government acknowledging the protection it gives low-income workers and the incentives to work it provides. It remains to be seen whether and by how much the rate will increase or whether the age bandings will be retained.

Longer term goals likely to be introduced reasonably early in the life of this government are "family friendly" changes including an extension to the right to request flexible working to all employees, steps to encourage shared parenting from the earliest stages of pregnancy – including the promotion of a system of flexible parental leave and support for the provision of free nursery care for pre-school children.

## **ACAS – Free Guide to Managing Performance**



ACAS has published a new free guide on managing performance including dealing with potential problems, see <http://www.acas.org.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=2714&p=0>.

## **Free Occupational Health Advice**

For free occupational health advice call the Health for Work Advice Line on 0800 0 7788 44. Run by the NHS this invaluable service can help employers get staff back to work quickly and fairly after sickness absence. Alternatively the service can help with disability issues and ill health terminations and retirements. For more details see <http://www.health4work.nhs.uk/>

## **The Fit Note – FREE HR Factsheet**

Need to know more about the new fit note that replaced the old sick note from 6 April 2010? We have prepared a comprehensive FREE fact sheet. This is available on our website on the useful hr articles page or you can email us for a copy.



## **HR in a Day - Management Training – Let us Help**

Looking for a practical hands-on training course on your staff covering all aspects of HR management? We offer a practical, interactive, comprehensive full day workshop entitled "HR in a Day" and can deliver this in house to your front line managers and trainee HR professionals for £999.00 (up to 12 delegates). Includes a workbook and lots of free employment documentation templates. Call 07762 771290 for more details.

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