



This Week in Employment Law

World Mental Health Day: 10th October 2018

Taking place this week, World Mental Health Day seeks to improve awareness of poor mental health and in doing so reduce the stigma that often exists in the workplace and wider society. Below we take a look at a number of ways employers can improve their approach towards mental health at work:

- Creating a specific policy on positive mental health allows employers to outline their approach towards supporting employees who are experiencing a period of poor mental health, making clear the support that will be provided and who within the organisation is equipped to provide assistance.
- Line managers should be trained to spot the signs of mental health problems amongst employees and encouraged to act sensitively should they believe individuals are at risk.
- Introducing Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) and mental health first aiders will afford employees the opportunity to discuss any problems confidentially and gain access to advice or resources to help them.
- Under certain circumstances mental health conditions could be classed as a disability, meaning employers will be legally obliged to make reasonable adjustments wherever possible to remove any barriers that the disability creates.

EAPs pay dividends for employers in the long term

A study has revealed that employers who use employee assistance programmes (EAPs) receive a return on their investment of £12 for every £1 spent. This shows the benefits of EAPs, which despite an initial cost, can save employers money that would otherwise be lost due to absence or reduced productivity.

Did you know?

EAPs are becoming a more common occurrence in the workplace on account of their ability to guard against mental ill health.. These often allow staff the opportunity to confidentially discuss any problems, personal or professional, and receive guidance from a trained counsellor.

London Mayor introduces premature and neonatal leave

Sadiq Khan has announced that eligible employees working in City Hall will be entitled to extra paid leave if their child is born prematurely. This will enhance legal entitlements of working parents who would otherwise use up some of their leave entitlement while the baby is in hospital.

Did you know?

There is currently no requirement for employers to offer additional leave to staff whose child is born prematurely. However, those who do may be rewarded with increased retention rates from working parents by offering a supportive working environment.

Govt consider new measures around flexible working

The government are considering new plans to impose a duty on employers to advertise whether a role can be worked flexibly at the application stage. Introducing these measures may help reduce the gender pay gap by enabling mothers to better balance their work and childcare commitments.

Did you know?

Whilst there is currently no legal requirement to advertise if a role can be worked flexibly, employees with 26 weeks' service have the right to request flexible working arrangements. These requests can be rejected by employers so long as there is a valid business reason.

Poor mental health can be incredibly costly for employers, both in terms of absences and lost productivity, therefore it would be wise to tackle the issue. If you would like further advice on how to guard against mental ill health at work becoming a problem at work, get in touch with our 24 hour Advisory Service.

Please contact the 24 Hour Advice Service for advice on your specific situation before acting on the information in this publication.