

## *This Week in Employment Law*

### Ryanair Staff Dismissed for ‘Staged’ Photo

**Ryanair made the headlines last week by dismissing a number of staff who took part in a ‘staged’ photo that was widely shared on social media. We take a closer look at the details of this incident below:**

- Six members of airline staff were dismissed after they appeared in a photo which showed them ‘asleep’ on the floor of an airport in Malaga after their flight had been diverted.
- This photo was shared widely online and appeared to suggest that Ryanair had not provided proper rest facilities for their staff which had forced them to sleep on the floor.
- Ryanair claims they have CCTV footage which showed the photo was staged in an attempt to portray them in a negative light, maintaining that all employees had been provided with suitable facilities in the VIP lounge.
- Ryanair felt the actions led to media reports that damaged the company’s reputation and caused an ‘irreparable breach of trust’ with the employees involved.
- Employees’ use of social media can be used as a reason for dismissal if, as alleged in this case, the employer can show that the actions brought the company into disrepute. An investigation will be needed before a dismissal is undertaken, and a fair procedure followed.

#### PM looks to improve rights of gig economy workers

Prime Minister Theresa May is pressing ahead with plans to boost the rights of workers in the gig economy. These plans include giving gig economy workers the right to request a more secure contract after 12 months’ service, as well as forcing firms to give paid holiday to vulnerable gig economy workers.

##### Did you know?

Debates continue on the rights of gig economy workers and employers may unknowingly be in breach of the law by participating in ‘bogus-self employment’. Understanding employment status is key to complying with the law and those who don’t could face costly tribunal claims.

#### Anti-bullying week focuses on ‘choosing respect’

This week is national Anti-Bullying Week. Businesses are asked to place an extra emphasis on preventing instances of bullying amongst their workforce. This year’s key theme is ‘Choose Respect’ and employers are advised to educate staff on the dangers of bullying in their workplace.

##### Did you know?

It is important for employers to take measures to prevent bullying and portray a zero tolerance stance, including an anti-bullying policy and investigations into any alleged incidents to. Allowing a bullying culture to exist can negatively impact morale, retention and overall productivity.

#### 14 high-street stores close each day

Research by PWC has revealed that 2,700 shops closed in the first half of 2018 at a rate of 14 shops a day. These figures echo the recent news of high street staples such as House of Fraser, Debenhams and Maplin having to close stores and make redundancies due to a drop in profits.

##### Did you know?

Even though a business may be closing, full redundancy procedures must be followed to avoid employment tribunal claims for unfair dismissal. This includes consulting with employees over the impending closure, and involving trade unions where certain criteria are met.

It can be hard to regulate employees’ behaviour on social media, however, businesses can take steps to try to protect themselves from any reputational damage caused by this. If you need advice with social media conduct or have any other misconduct issues, please call 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.