

This Week in Employment Law

Employees Unhappy with Physical Contact at Work

UK workers would like to experience less physical contact at work according to a survey by Totaljobs, shining a light on how employers may need to approach greetings such as hugs and handshakes in the #Metoo era. We take a closer look at this below:

- 76% of respondents want the amount of physical contact they experience at work reduced, whilst 42% would like an outright ban on certain interactions.
- Hugs and kisses proved to be particularly unpopular with 27% and 15% of respondents wanting to put a stop to these respective greetings.
- Handshakes proved the most popular, especially amongst 40-50 year olds, with 45% favouring this type of greeting.
- 30% said they experience an awkward greeting at least once a month, whilst 25% admitted to actively avoiding a colleague or client due to their choice of greeting.
- Although greetings may feel like a minor issue, you should consider how certain unwanted contact could qualify as harassment.
- Whilst a ban on all physical contact will probably be hard to enforce, clear policies on harassment reporting should help to protect staff from experiencing unwanted conduct at work.

Increase in disability discrimination claims

Disability discrimination claims increased by 37% last year; over 6,500 claims were brought to an employment tribunal according to the Ministry Of Justice. This is a growth rate eight times faster than the total number of claims over the same period.

Did you know?

Employers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to support disabled staff, however, keeping on top of these can be difficult at times. Failing to do so could lead to oversights and potential discrimination claims, therefore having a clear way of recording and reviewing any adjustments is advised.

Bolton Wanderers FC players go on strike

Bolton Wanderers were forced to postpone a league match after players went on strike over unpaid wages. The cash-strapped club have been struggling to pay wages on time all season and the players finally decided to take further action after not receiving their March salaries.

Did you know?

Employees may choose to take industrial action, however, they must follow certain rules to ensure any strike can be considered lawful. This is important as anyone found to be taking part in an unlawful strike could potentially face disciplinary action from their employer.

FSB suggest to bring back work experience

The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) has called on the government to re-introduce mandatory work experience for 14-16 year olds. This requirement was scrapped in 2012, and the FSB feel its return will help businesses engage with schools and local communities.

Did you know?

Children under the compulsory school leaving age will be exempt from certain employment rights that are attributed to employees and workers, including minimum wage. However, there are rules to follow on the amount of time in a day and a week that a school child can work, dependent on their age.

Whether its hugs or handshakes, opinions are likely to differ on what is an appropriate level of physical contact at work. Given the need to protect staff from harassment it will be important to lay down ground rules in your organisation. If you have any queries, or need help dealing with an allegation of harassment, 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.