

What does the Conservative election victory mean for employers?

The results of last week's General Election have given the Conservative government a substantial majority in the House of Commons. In light of this, we take a look at the government's pledges which stand to have an impact on the workplace:

- **Brexit** – The Conservatives promised to ensure the UK leaves the EU before January 31st 2020. If they succeed, this will bring an end to 'freedom of movement', meaning many existing EU workers must apply for settled status to remain in the country.
- **Points based immigration** – Stricter immigration restrictions will also be introduced in the future, which means visas for overseas workers are more likely to be issued to high-skilled individuals with desirable qualifications.
- **Minimum Wage** – There is a commitment to increase the national living wage to £10.50 per hour by 2024, whilst also lowering the age threshold for this incrementally to 23+ in 2021 and 21+ by 2024.
- **Day one flexibility** – The party intends to ensure flexible working is the 'default arrangement' for future job vacancies, unless organisations have good reasons not to offer this.
- **Family Friendly** – Neo-natal leave will be introduced for parents whose child requires extensive medical care after birth, whilst a week of carers leave will be on offer to millions who currently juggle work and unpaid care commitments.
- **Good Work Plan** – The commitments made as part of the Good Work Plan will also go ahead, including plans for irregular workers to be able to request a more stable contract and a review into ways to simplify employment status disputes.

Settled status timelines explained

If the UK is successful in departing the EU with a deal by 31st January 2020 then EU nationals currently living and working in the UK will have until 30th June 2021 to apply for settled status. If successful, individuals will receive the indefinite right to remain in the UK as a result.

Did you know?

Employers cannot force EU workers to apply for settled status, nor can they dismiss anyone who refuses to apply in the interim. Instead employers should keep accurate records of which EU staff have attained the right to remain and make sure they are not unlawfully hiring EU workers after 30th June 2021.

Increase to national minimum wage (NMW)

Employers may be concerned about the idea of the national living wage increasing to £10.50 per hour by 2024, however this will not be a sudden increase. Additionally, the idea of fewer age bands for employers to worry about in the future may make the system easier to understand for many.

Did you know?

Currently the national living wage is the highest rate of NMW and is available to those aged 25 and over. However, lowering the age threshold to 21 and over will effectively revert the minimum wage structure back to how it was before the introduction of the national living wage.

Allowing workers to request more stable contracts

The Good Work plan originally confirmed the government's intention for zero hours staff, and other variable hours workers, to be able to request a more stable contract and it now seems that these plans will go ahead under the Conservative government.

Did you know?

The idea behind this pledge was to provide additional support to gig-economy staff and others in similar insecure employment. However, as this flexibility is seen as integral to many employers' business practices it will be interesting to see which changes, if any, are introduced.

The Conservative party remain in power following last week's General Election and their election manifesto promises significant change to the UK workplace. With this in mind, remember that our Advisory Team are on hand 24/7 to explain how the result of the election could stand to impact your business.

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