

BALLOT BOX

This Week in Employment Law

02-12-2019

General Election: Party manifestos promise employment law changes

With a little over a week until the General Election, the leading political parties have released their manifestos in an attempt to convince voters that they are the right choice to lead the UK. Each party has promised a host of new policies that could have a significant impact on the workplace. Join us as we take a look at these in more detail below:

- **Conservatives** – Promised to increase the living wage to £10.50 per hour by 2024, introduce a new right to one week of leave for working carers and implement a new points-based immigration policy that favours high-skilled workers.
- **Labour** - Pledges include the implementation of a £10 per hour minimum wage for everyone aged 16 and over, preventing staff from opting out of the 48-hour weekly working time limit and extending maternity pay from 9 to 12 months.
- **Liberal Democrats** – They have no set figures in place for the minimum wage, but plan to ensure zero-hour staff receive 20% more per hour than the statutory minimum. There are also plans to make flexible working opportunities available to all employees from day one and allow gig-economy workers to request a fixed-hours contract after 12 months.
- These proposals give employers some ideas of the changes that may be introduced in the future that could impact employment law.
- Therefore, employers should pay close attention to the results of the election and be prepared to adjust to any new laws that are implemented.

Conservatives pledge to provide carers leave

The Conservatives plan to introduce one week of leave specifically for working carers. Although there has been no information on how it will be applied in practice, it may prove to significantly help those who have to juggle work and outside care commitments.

Did you know?

There is currently no right to time off work for carers, apart from time off for dependants, which is limited solely for 'emergency situations'. Therefore, offering this leave should help the 2.6 million working age carers in the UK, who often have to reduce their hours to cope according to a Work Foundation report.

Labour promise blanket minimum wage for all staff

The Labour party has announced their intention to introduce an 'immediate increase' to the national minimum wage (NMW) if they are elected, which would see all workers entitled to the same minimum rate of £10 an hour, as long as they are aged 16 or over.

Did you know?

This proposal would result in significant pay rise for all minimum wage staff, especially those who are not old enough to qualify for the Living Wage. It also means minimum wage will be more per hour than the voluntary real living wage of £9.30 which has recently been recommended for those living outside of London.

Liberal Democrats plan to embrace flexible working

Making flexible working a day one right is a key part of the Lib Dem manifesto and they plan to ensure all employers clearly include this in job adverts, unless there is a specific reason not to. These efforts should help facilitate more flexible working arrangements.

Did you know?

Currently, employees must have 26 weeks' continuous service before they can make requests for flexible working and there is no need for employers to advertise this fact. However, flexible working arrangements can be beneficial to many staff, including working parents, in achieving a positive work/life balance.

Aside from Brexit, employment rights appear to be a major focus for the political parties in the lead up to the General Election. With different parties promising different things it can sometimes be hard for business owners to keep up, however our Advisory Team are on hand 24/7 to offer expert guidance on all existing and future workplace rights.

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