



This Week in Employment Law

06-01-2020

ET officially recognises veganism as a protected belief

In a landmark ruling, an employment tribunal has recognised ethical veganism as a philosophical belief. This effectively protects ethical vegans from suffering discrimination and harassment at work. Here, we consider what the judgment means:

- The employee, Mr Casamitjana, claimed he was dismissed because of his belief in ethical veganism, after raising concerns that his employer's pension fund invested in companies that were involved in animal testing.
- The ET applied the appropriate tests and confirmed that ethical veganism could qualify as a philosophical belief under the Equality Act 2010.
- The judge confirmed that ethical veganism was "important" and "worthy" of respect in a democratic society, which is one of the key elements required.
- As a result, employers must ensure ethical vegans are protected from less favourable treatment in the workplace to avoid costly discrimination claims; this could mean reviewing things like the food on offer in a staff canteen etc
- The term "ethical vegan" is likely to be interpreted narrowly meaning that only certain vegans will be protected; someone who abstains from eating animal products but is unable to show that veganism influences other areas of their life are unlikely to qualify.

A third of staff consider moving jobs in the New Year

A survey conducted by Investors in People has revealed that 32% of workers are considering moving jobs in 2020. The most popular reasons given for seeking a new role were "more money", a "better work life balance" and "not feeling valued" by their current employer.

Did you know?

Retaining skilled employees is often seen as integral to business operations and flexible working practices have proved especially popular in recent years in keeping staff who are looking for an improved work/life balance. Therefore, embracing flexibility could be seen as a way to prevent any avoidable departures.

Number of teenagers in work falls significantly

The Resolution Foundation has produced a report revealing that the number of 16 and 17 year olds in work has reduced by 23% in the last 20 years. In their commentary, the Foundation suggested the lack of available part-time "Saturday jobs" is likely to be a contributing factor.

Did you know?

The study has revealed that a large number of 16-17 year olds have never participated in paid work. This represents a wealth of potentially untapped talent for UK employers, who may want to consider how creating part-time roles may appeal more to applicants who have to balance work with their school routine.

Australia declare free movement with UK 'unlikely'

Australia's Trade Minister has indicated that any plans for freedom of movement to be introduced between the UK and Australia are 'unlikely', however, existing immigration rules could be adjusted. This news comes amidst concerns over the availability of workers post-Brexit.

Did you know?

In an attempt to allay fears over the availability of workers after the UK leaves the EU the government has confirmed a new points-based immigration scheme will be introduced. This will focus on ensuring people who have desirable skills and qualifications are able to come to the UK to work.

In light of "Veganuary" the news that ethical veganism has been recognised as a protected characteristic is likely to cause a degree of concern amongst UK employers looking to avoid discrimination claims. Thankfully, our expert 24-hour Advisory Service are here to help address any concerns morning, noon or night.

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