

'Real living wage' increase announced

The Living Wage Foundation has announced the new 'real living wage' rates to be paid by accredited employers. We look at the key points for employers.

- Not to be confused with the National Living Wage, the 'real living wage' is voluntarily paid by nearly 9,000 UK businesses and is based on calculations of the cost of living covering everyday needs.
- These calculations are carried out by the Living Wage Foundation which has just made its annual announcement of the rates to be paid in 2021/22 by accredited employers - £11.05 an hour for London (a 20 pence increase from the current rate of £10.85) and £9.90 an hour for the rest of the UK (a 40 pence increase from the current rate of £9.50).
- Accredited employers should implement the rise as soon as possible and within 6 months. All employees of accredited employers should receive the new rate by 15 May 2022.
- The 'real living wage' is not a legal requirement; it's a movement that employers can voluntarily sign up to if they want.
- The Living Wage Foundation says almost 300,000 employees have received a pay rise as a result of the Living Wage campaign. It has a broad range of employers accredited with the Foundation including half of the FTSE 100 and big household names including Nationwide, Google, Everton FC and Chelsea FC.
- The National Living Wage is a legal requirement which currently applies to workers aged 23 and over.

Covid booster jabs to be offered to those in their 40s

Covid booster jabs are to be offered to those aged 40 and over, the government has announced. This could mean a greater number of the workforce taking time off to attend vaccination appointments. Employers should ensure they treat all employees the same in terms of time off for booster appointments to prevent age discrimination, unless they can objectively justify different treatment.

Did you know?

Both direct and indirect age discrimination can be objectively justified as a potential defence for the employer; with all other protected characteristics, only indirect discrimination claims can be objectively justified.

Acas publishes advice on 'fire and rehire'

In response to a request from the government, Acas has published new advice to help employers maintain good working relations and reach agreement with staff if they are considering making changes to employment contracts. Acas advises to continue to explore all options for as long as is reasonably possible and to only consider 'fire and rehire' as a last resort.

Did you know?

'Dismissal and re-engagement', known as 'fire and rehire', is not illegal but it can still be an unfair dismissal if the correct process is not followed including having a sound business case for the change and consulting with staff.

Male employee wins sex discrimination case

A Tesco employee has won nearly £50,000 in compensation for sex discrimination. He was impeded from leaving a room by his manager after a discussion with her. When he complained, he was told that a "big man" like him couldn't be frightened by a "little pregnant woman". He suffered from PTSD after an event in a previous job where he was "held hostage".

Did you know?

The Tribunal concluded that a female in the same situation as the claimant would not have been dismissed. The case shows the importance of not jumping to conclusions and ensuring that allegations of this nature are fully investigated.

Becoming a 'real living wage' employer could help to attract new talent to your business, retain existing talent and set your business apart from the competition. Contact our 24-hour Advisory Service for up-to-date guidance on this and more.

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