

Proposals to reform Statutory Sick Pay unveiled in parliament

Leading experts presented recommendations to parliament last week to overhaul the Statutory Sick Pay system by introducing new Statutory Sickness Support.

- Research has found that around 2 million workers, 70% of them women, do not qualify for Statutory Sick Pay. Industry experts are calling for reform to provide a stronger financial safety net for workers.
- The changes would put new obligations on employers to pro-actively implement measures to support positive health and wellbeing in the workplace, with the aim of reducing sickness absences.
- SMEs who do so effectively would be given access to a conditional sick pay rebate scheme, meaning they could claim back the cost of SSP. However, they would have to show that their measures noticeably reduced absences and improved employees' health.
- Statutory Sickness Support would widen eligibility to protect all workers, accommodate flexible working / phased returns, and simplify calculation and administration for employers.
- The reforms would mean that on average workers on SSP would get 63% of their salary covered while on sickness absence compared to 28% under the current system.
- The proposals are still in the early stages with much more work needed before they are brought before parliament for consultation.

Gamers encouraged to check their pay

The government has announced it will use mobile game adverts for the first time to encourage gamers to check they are receiving the correct pay. The adverts will appear in games such as Angry Birds, The Sims and FIFA. The aim is to raise awareness among younger workers of the increase in National Minimum Wage rates on 1 April 2022, which included the largest ever rise in the National Living Wage to £9.50 per hour.

Did you know?

The adverts will run during natural pauses in the game play and players will be incentivised to watch the full advert by gaining an in-game reward such as coins, points or extra lives.

Teachers' right to be accompanied

It is being reported that the Education Minister, Nadhim Zahawi, wants to amend the Employment Relations Act to give teachers the right to be accompanied at grievance and disciplinary meetings by an external lawyer or representative of a body other than a trade union. Extending the current right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative is intended to strengthen the rights of teachers who are not union members.

Did you know?

There is no indication from the government that any change will be implemented yet, although this will certainly be unwelcome news for employers if it does progress.

Tribunal finds Dolly Parton comments were harassment

A policeman who was called 'Dolly' after Dolly Parton because he worked '9 to 5' has brought a successful employment tribunal claim for victimisation and harassment relating to disability. It was alleged that another officer whistled the song and printed photos of Dolly Parton to display on his desk. The claimant had changed his hours as he had childcare responsibilities and he cared for his disabled mother.

Did you know?

The tribunal concluded that an "intimidating" email sent to the claimant when he was long-term sick, threatening disciplinary action if he failed to return to work, amounted to harassment.

Adequately supporting employees during sickness absence is an essential part of improving their financial wellbeing. 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.