

What will a new Prime Minister mean for employers?

With the results of the Tory leadership contest to be announced next Monday 5 September 2022, we look at what changes might be seen in the coming weeks and months.

- The two remaining candidates, Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak, have different proposals for what they will do if they are elected.
- Liz Truss plans to introduce legislation which requires minimum staffing levels for strike action during her first 30 days. The threshold will be set individually for each industry, including for transport, education, healthcare, postal workers and energy.
- Truss also wants to remove standalone diversity and inclusion (D&I) jobs in the Civil Service and reduce their holiday entitlement from 27 days to 25 days per year (plus bank holidays).
- She further proposes to remove the National Insurance increase that was put in place this year to fund health and social care. This deduction has to be listed separately on payslips so, if removed, could impact HR and payroll teams.
- Rishi Sunak's proposals include scrapping the current Apprenticeship Levy and instead creating new incentives for businesses to invest in training and upskilling.
- Sunak also plans to publish a "manifesto for women's rights." It's unclear exactly what will be included within this.
- Finally, he wants to fine NHS patients for each second or subsequent appointment they miss. As such, if an employer cancels or refuses an employee's time off to attend a medical appointment, they might be liable for paying this fee.

School and nursery strikes in Scotland

A total of 13,000 trade union members will go on strike for 3 days next month on 6, 7 and 8 September 2022, including teachers, teaching assistants, cleaners, caterers, caretakers and early years practitioners. It will see schools, early years centres and nurseries disrupted in disputes over pay. Employers will need to prepare to manage requests for time off from employees who don't have any childcare for those days.

Did you know?

Alternative arrangements could include temporary flexible working so employees can work from home or amend their normal hours on the strike days, annual leave, parental leave or time off in lieu.

Impact of energy price cap increase

On Friday last week the energy regulator Ofgem announced an increase in the energy price cap of 80% from October. This will see typical household bills rise from £1,971 per year to £3,549. Employees may ask for a pay rise if they haven't already so businesses should give this some thought. If an across the board pay rise isn't possible, employers can look at other ways to help employees financially with other benefits.

Did you know?

As the energy price cap doesn't apply to businesses, many will be considering how to reduce their other outgoings, such as looking at redundancies or changes to terms and conditions.

Is feminism a philosophical belief?

A former Civil Servant has raised a claim against the Environment Agency, saying he was sacked for refusing to "positively discriminate" in favour of women. He says he was treated less favourably by his female boss, after resisting her agenda to hire and promote women rather than men. His case is that he would not have been treated in this way had he been a feminist, so was subject to philosophical belief discrimination.

Did you know?

So far, the case has been considered at a preliminary hearing, where the tribunal said it wanted to hear all the evidence before making a decision. There will be a full hearing later this year.

Organisations will need to keep up-to-date with the latest developments and how they affect employers, when our new Prime Minister is announced next week. 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.