

## *This Week in Employment Law*

### **Paid Carers Leave Proposed for UK Workers**

**The Government will consider new proposals that, if approved, would provide greater support to the 1 in 8 individuals in the UK who currently combine paid work with unpaid care responsibilities. We take a closer look at the impact these proposals will have on employers below:**

- The headline proposal is to provide five days' paid leave each year for working carers.
- If approved, this 'carer's leave' allowance would be in addition to the current minimum annual leave allowance of 5.6 weeks per year.
- Employers would need to factor the cost of this additional leave into their payroll budgets.
- A separate proposal would see flexible working become a day one right to help staff manage care responsibilities.
- This means current rules which require staff to have a minimum of 26 weeks' service with an employer would be removed, potentially leading to an increased number of flexible working requests.
- Although employers can still reject flexible working requests for a valid business reason, they may have to consider prioritising any that relate to care in order to foster a supportive working environment.

#### **Employees Seeking Extra Work to Make Ends Meet**

Over recent months a number of reports have focused on individuals having to work multiple jobs due to growing financial pressures. Businesses need to be wary of this and ensure their employees' additional work commitments do not exceed the weekly restrictions in the Working Time Regulations 1998 (WTR).

##### **Did you know?**

Under the WTR workers cannot generally work more than an average of 48 hours per week over a 17 week period. Careful drafting of employment contracts can require employees to tell you of any other work they are doing to ensure you do not breach the limits.

#### **'Man Bun' Employee Claims He Was Dismissed for His Hairstyle**

A former employee at British Airways has claimed he was dismissed because his 'man bun' hairstyle was not in line with the company's uniform policy. The firm has been accused of having a sexist uniform policy which allowed different hairstyles for male and female staff.

##### **Did you know?**

Many employers see uniform policies and dress codes as an important way of presenting a professional company image. However, recent government guidance has stressed that rules on uniforms and dress codes must be equal, with employers told to avoid gender specific requirements.

#### **Tfl Criticised for Use of Non Disclosure Agreements**

Transport for London (TFL) has received criticism as over 800 former workers were made to sign non-disclosure agreements when they left. Although these agreements are not illegal, recent examples have been used to prevent disclosure of sexual harassment allegations.

##### **Did you know?**

There is growing focus on the use of non-disclosure agreements. The Women and Equalities Committee has called for tighter rules on how these can be used in order to protect employees' interests and stop the concealment of potentially criminal behaviour.

Whilst these proposals are still a long way from taking effect, employers should realise that working carers make up a significant part of the workforce and need to be provided with appropriate support. If you would like further advice from Croner on supporting carers in your organisation give us a call using our 24 Hour Advisory Service.

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