



ActifHR

Where people matter...

November 2019 Update

Welcome to this month's update - where we discuss the latest guidance and legislation.

In this Edition we report on:

- Managing stress in the workplace
 - Anti-bullying guidance
 - Investigation reports – what should they include?
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Managing stress in the workplace

National Stress Awareness Day was the 6th November this year. It is part of international stress awareness week (4th – 8th November 2019). Employee wellbeing is very much in the news and is the focus of discussion.

What can employers do to help?

- * Talk to your employees. If the employee doesn't want to talk – encourage them to speak to their GP. Some companies offer an employee assistance program (telephone support), which is worth considering.

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- * Talk about stress busters, such as exercise and relaxation. Exercising can help reduce tension and help with self-esteem. Think about the communal space of your business – is there space for a pool table or table tennis table perhaps? It helps with cohesiveness.
- * Talk about healthy eating. Have fruit and water available.
- * Make sure employees take regular breaks and their holiday

Employers: fostering wellbeing will help with motivation and retention

Contact us: we can assist with employee stress issues

Anti-bullying guidance

Anti-bullying week was on the 11-15 November.

What constitutes bullying? What policies can employers put in place to help reduce possible occasions of bullying?

Bullying and harassment is any unwanted behaviour that makes someone feel intimidated, degraded, humiliated or offended. It is not always obvious to other people and may happen without an employer being aware.

People do not always feel able to complain, particularly if it involves a senior member of staff. Sometimes they just resign and you never know why.

Examples of bullying / harassing behaviour could include:

- * spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone
- * exclusion or victimisation
- * unfair treatment
- * deliberately undermining a good worker with constant criticism.

There are a number of ways to prevent this behaviour:

- * develop and implement a policy - it can be simple. It helps if you involve staff reviewing it
- * include a standard of behaviour, maybe in a handbook
- * set a good example - including the managers
- * have fair procedures to deal with concerns

Employers: if such behaviour is tolerated productivity is affected

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Investigation reports – what should they include?

The recent case of *Dr J Dronsfield v The University of Reading* looked at what investigators should focus on when writing their investigation report?

It appears only facts and not opinions.

Dr Dronsfield was an academic at Reading University who was dismissed. He brought a claim that amendments to the investigation report made his dismissal procedurally unfair. The amendments removed the opinion of the investigator.

The court held that the amendments did not make the report procedural unfair. But in any case, investigation reports should focus on facts and not views as part of the disciplinary process.

Employers: investigation reports must be balanced and backed up by evidence

Contact us: We can assist with investigations and disciplinaries



Caroline has a wealth of experience supporting business clients with practical hands on HR and Employment Law advice. Caroline's pragmatic approach helps businesses of all sizes deal with complex HR situations. She qualified as a Solicitor in 1999 and now acts as a specialist Human Resource / employment Law Consultant to business.

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