

Employment Law Update

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On 1 October 2014 several key employment law changes will come into force, including national minimum wage increases, the power for Tribunals to order equal pay audits and the right for fathers to take unpaid time off to attend their partner's antenatal appointments. There are also new rights for Reserve Forces members and their employers.

National Minimum Wage

The national minimum wage rates for all workers will increase under the National Minimum Wage (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2014 which were made on 14th September 2014. The standard adult rate (for workers over 21 years of age) will rise by 3% to £6.50 an hour (up 19p from £6.31).



Power to Order Equal Pay Audits

Under the Equality Act 2010 (Equal Pay Audits) Regulations 2014, which were made on 22nd September 2014, Employment Tribunals will have the power to order Employers, found to have been in breach of equally pay law, to carry out equal pay audits in certain circumstances.

Reserve Forces Reform

The Defence Reform Act 2014 (Commencement No. 2) Order 2014 will bring Section 48 of the Defence Reform Act 2014 into force. This removed the statutory qualifying period for unfair dismissal where an Employee's dismissal is connected with their membership of the Reserve Forces. The Order also brings into force Section 46 and Schedule 7 of the Defence Reform Act 2014, which amend the Reserve Forces Act 1996 to make provision for payments to small and medium-sized Employer's of reservists who are called out for service. The Reserve Forces (Payments to Employers and Partners) Regulations 2014 set out how these payments will be circulated. The statutory qualifying period for unfair dismissal will be removed where the dismissal is connected with the Employee's membership of the Reserve Forces. Small and medium-sized Employers will be entitled to claim monthly payments from the Ministry of Defence for period when the reservist Employees are absent on military service.



Time Off to Accompany Partner to Antenatal Appointments



Employees and agency workers will have a right to take unpaid time off to accompany a pregnant woman with whom they have a "qualifying relationship" to up to two antenatal appointments, up to a maximum of six and a half hours for each appointment. Fathers and partners will be able to take unpaid time off to attend up to two antenatal appointments and will be protected from detriment and dismissal as a result of exercising those rights.

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