



ActifHR

Where people matter..

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## April 2024 Update

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

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In this Edition we report on:

- Don't forget about the new legislation
- Flowchart: the new holiday pay changes
- Pulling a "sickie"

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## Don't' forget about the new legislation

### **Carers leave:**

The Carer's Leave Act 2023 is now law, introducing a statutory entitlement to take a week of unpaid leave per year to provide care.

### **Flexible working**

This is now a day one right, with changes to the way employers deal with flexible working requests.

### **Paternity leave**

The changes apply in all cases where the expected week of childbirth falls on or after 6 April 2024. The regulations allow paternity leave to be split into two blocks of one week, at any point in the first year after the birth or adoption of their child.

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**Employer:** make sure your policies build in the new changes once they have come into force.

**Contact us:** we can provide a carer's leave flow chart for £50.

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### Flowchart: the new holiday pay rules

As you probably know, new rules on holiday pay for casual and part-year workers have come into force for leave years starting on or after 1 April 2024.

If the leave year applies, employers can choose to use rolled up holiday pay for irregular hours workers and part-year workers only.

We have put together a flowchart explaining how the new holiday pay rules work for casual and part-year workers.

**Employers:** make sure you have updated your processes to calculate holiday pay correctly for casual / part-year workers.

**Contact us:** we can provide a holiday pay flow chart for £50.

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### Pulling a 'sickie'

According to CIPD data in October 2023, employees are now averaging 7.8 days of sickness absence per year, the highest level in a decade.

A recent LinkedIn poll found that almost a third (31%) of the 1185 people who responded admitted to 'pulling a sickie' at work despite feeling healthy.

On the face of it, the results might not seem that worrying. But when you drill down further and find out the main reasons – burnout, needing a break from work, other family commitments – perhaps it's time for employers to open up better channels of communication with their employees.

But if the results of this poll are true and some employees are suffering from burnout, then there's always a chance that this could lead to bigger problems.

Taking the time now to find out what is at the root of these behaviours is crucial.

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Employee burnout is usually characterised by emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It can lead to a lack of engagement, decreased levels of motivation and a decline in productivity.

The survey revealed that almost a quarter (23%) of employees took time off to attend a necessary appointment, while one in six (17%) cited an emergency childcare issue and 15% had to care for a relative.

Furthermore, often if employers know about healthcare issues, or family problems, in advance, they can make allowances and juggle things around to make it work. But this calls for a flexible and inclusive workplace environment and culture where employees feel they can be honest and won't be penalised for what they say.

Perhaps, the most disturbing part of the survey was how many people pulled sickies to avoid ongoing work issues, to miss a dealing/avoid doing a piece of work, or to get out of a meeting or pitch.

This is probably more difficult to understand. That's why fostering an open culture for employees who might need to offload some of their worries and anxieties about how they manage busy times, difficult projects and what help and support they need is essential.

**Employers:** who trust their people to manage their time benefit from higher staff retention and improved productivity.

**Contact us:** make sure your policies are up to date to build in the new changes.

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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.

**Caroline Robertson, Director**

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