



ActifHR

Where people matter..

March 2025 Update

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

In this Edition we report on:

- The do's and don'ts of contacting an absent employee
- Ethnicity and Pay Gap reporting
- Online meeting anxiety

The do's and don'ts of contacting an absent employee

Employers and employees should agree on how to stay in touch during absence and how much contact is reasonable. There are some types of absence where keeping in touch is not usually needed - such as if an employee is on sabbatical leave.

However, for many types of absence (such as maternity leave), it is wise to plan out how much contact to have.

When deciding on the contact bear the following in mind:

- who will contact the employee - this might be their line manager or an HR manager?
- how to contact each other, for example by phone, email or face to face?
- how often to be in contact - this depends on the employee's individual circumstances and the reason for absence.

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Keeping in contact is a good chance to check on the employee's wellbeing and see if they need any support.

Employers: should also keep an employee updated while they are off work about promotions, redundancies and changes that might affect their job.

Contact us: we can support your business.

Ethnicity and Pay Gap reporting

In July 2024, the Government announced the Equality (Race and Disability) Bill, introducing a requirement for large employers (those with 250 or more employees) to report on ethnicity and disability pay gaps.

The proposals are to use the same set of pay gap measures for ethnicity and disability as are currently in place for gender pay gap reporting, with the addition of data relating to:

- the overall breakdown of their workforce by ethnicity and disability;
- the percentage of employees who did not disclose their personal data on their ethnicity and disability.

For ethnicity pay gap reporting, it is proposed that there should be a minimum of 10 employees in any ethnic group that is being analysed. It is acknowledged that this may involve grouping ethnic groups together to meet the threshold.

For disability pay gap reporting, it is proposed that measuring the disability pay gap is done by comparing the pay of disabled employees with non-disabled employees. Again, there should be a minimum of 10 employees in each group being compared.

A consultation has been launched seeking views on how it should be implemented until 10 June 2025.

Employers: although these reporting rules are for large employers many smaller employers may be asked by employees to disclose similar data.

Contact us: we can assist with compliance with equality legislation.

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Online meeting anxiety

A survey of 2,000 remote and hybrid workers found that most employees feel that too much time is spent in meetings. According to the report, it seems there is an alarming number of respondents who stated they experience meeting anxiety.

Excessive meetings can have both immediate and long-term repercussions, including decreased day-to-day productivity to increased sick leave, burnout and higher turnover rates.

The challenge for management is how to balance productivity with the right level of meetings, while not impacting on wellbeing and engagement. If a meeting is found to be ineffective, this inevitably causes unnecessary anxiety, with work pressures building as a result of time wasted.

More than a third of respondents said they received no value from their most recent meeting. While 72 per cent said that at least one of the meetings they attended in the last two weeks could have been communicated via email instead.

A meeting without a clear purpose, agenda, action points or the right people in attendance is useless. Time is precious, and so often people pop meetings in the calendar without thinking of other methods of communication that could work better.

Some managers use meetings to make sure their employees are OK, perhaps overcompensating for the lack of face-to-face time. If employees are working remotely they key is to build trust by fostering open communication and developing strong relationships within their teams.

To help reduce the number of hours spent in meetings each week, three quarters of respondents feel that sharing written updates and important information would be helpful.

Employers: this is an important discussion to be had by the manager with his team.

Contact us: for further advice.



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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