

Key Employment Law Changes – October 2014

The national minimum wage:

The national minimum wage for all workers has increased as of 01 October 2014. There are four categories of worker, each with a different minimum hourly rate for the period from 01 October 2014 – 30 September 2015:

- **Standard adult rate** (for workers age 21 and over): £6.50
- **Development rate** (for workers aged between 18-20 inclusive): £5.13
- **Young workers' rate** (for workers under the age of 18 but above the compulsory school age): £3.79
- **Apprenticeship rate** (apprentices under 19 years old or 19 and over but in their first year of their apprenticeship): £2.73

If an employer provides a worker with free accommodation, the employer can deduct a maximum of £5.08 per day from the national minimum wage paid to the worker.

Equal Payments:

Employment tribunals now have the power in certain circumstances to order employers found in breach of equal pay law to carry out **equal pay audits**.

Unfair Dismissal and Reserve Forces:

Where a worker who is also a member of the Reserve Forces is unfairly dismissed after 01 October 2014, and the dismissal is connected to the worker's membership of the Reserve Forces, the **statutory qualifying service period** before a worker can claim unfair dismissal – currently 2 years – has been removed. This does not mean that the dismissal is automatically unfair; it is simply a relaxation of the requirement that a worker must have 2 years' qualifying service before being able to claim for unfair dismissal.

Others Entitled to Attend Antenatal Appointments:

Employees and agency workers who have a 'qualifying relationship' with a pregnant woman or her expected child are, from 01 October 2014, entitled to take time off during their working hours to accompany the woman to her **antenatal appointments**. There is no qualifying period of employment. The worker may accompany the woman on up to two occasions lasting no more than 6.5 hours each.

If you would like to discuss any of the matters raised in this newsletter or other employment law matters, please contact:

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The information in this newsletter is not meant as a substitute for advice on particular issues and is written in general terms. You should seek specific advice before taking any action based on the information in this newsletter.

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