

Employment Law Changes- April 2022

2022 is the year when lockdown fully eased in England. With everyone focusing on the remaining restrictions easing, companies could easily miss the big employment law changes coming into force in less than a month's time.

April is always a busy time for employment law, so don't get caught unaware when it comes around.

April 2022 Changes

Increase to the minimum wage and other statutory rates

The government has confirmed that minimum wage rates will increase from April 2022. The rates are to change as follows:

- National Living Wage (23+) £8.91 £9.50
- 21-22 Year Old Rate £8.36 £9.18
- 18-20 Year Old Rate £6.56 £6.83
- 16-17 Year Old Rate £4.62 £4.81
- Apprentice Rate £4.30 £4.81
- Accommodation Offset £8.36 £8.70

Family friendly leave rates are also changing. This includes maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental, and parental bereavement leave. This will go from £151.97 to £156.66 per week.

Statutory sick pay (SSP) is also set to change from £96.35 per week to £99.35 per week.

The lower earnings limit, through which entitlement to family leave and sick pay is calculated, will rise to £123 per week.

Gender pay gap reporting

If you have at least 250 members of staff, that means you've had to publish annual gender pay gap reports since 2018. The Government paused the compulsory production of gender pay gap reports in 2020. However, they brought it back in 2021, and it remains a legal requirement today.

Your report should outline the differences in the average earnings between men and women in your company. To do this you should take a snapshot of your company's pay data on a specific date. For 2022 this 'snapshot date' will be 30 March 2021 for public sector companies. If you are a private company, then the 5 April 2020 is your snapshot date.

Last year, the reporting deadlines were delayed. However, in 2022, the deadlines have reverted back to their normal slot:

- 30th March 2022 for public sector employers
- 4th April 2022 for private sector employers and voluntary organisations.

COVID-related changes

- From the 1st April the current guidance on voluntary COVID-status certification in domestic settings will be removed. Also, the government will no longer recommend that certain venues use the NHS COVID Pass.

Other upcoming changes

2022 could turn into an incredibly busy year for HR, with a number of changes set to be put in motion without a concrete date. This includes:

- Flexible working – following a consultation, the government is considering the option to allow employees to request flexible working from day one of employment.
- Ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting – 2022 could see the first real step towards standardising this type of report.
- Data protection – the ICO is due to issue updated employment practice guidance on data this year.
- Sexual harassment – A new duty for employers to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace is expected to come into force this year.
- Right-to-work checks – The scheme became digital as a result of the pandemic, and was met with overwhelming positive feedback. As a result, the government is set to make the change permanent later this year.

- Modern Slavery – Reforms to the Modern Slavery Act are expected late this year. When this happens, you may need to review your anti-slavery statements.

Call our experienced employment law advisors

If you're concerned about any of the upcoming changes in April, or beyond, speak to one of our experts today for confidential, professional advice on **0844 561 8133** and quote **33708**.