



## *This week in Employment Law*

### **Celebrating Pride Month in the workplace**

**The month of June is dedicated to acceptance, equality, and celebration of the work of LGBTQ+ people. Pride Month is also about recognising and commemorating LGBTQ+ people and rights.**

- Celebrating Pride Month in the workplace can be a great way for employers to highlight LGBTQ+ issues and the support available in their organisation, although it is important to ensure that this is part of a wider inclusion strategy that will continue after the celebrations have ended.
- Raising awareness, providing training and offering specific support are all steps employers can take towards creating a truly inclusive workplace. Diversity training can help staff become aware of their own assumptions and prejudices. It stresses the importance of equality and diversity, and can also help you to boost awareness, build staff morale and stay legally compliant.
- Learning about LGBTQ+ employment rights and having a clear zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, bullying and harassment can help to ensure that employees are protected and treated fairly.
- This can also be a good time for employers to review their policies and procedures to ensure there are no barriers to inclusion and that the language used is fully inclusive too, such as using neutral pronouns (they/them).
- It is important to avoid non-inclusive communication in the workplace, such as gendered greetings - 'hey guys, ladies, gentlemen' - this excludes people who don't fall into a gender binary. It's better to say 'hi all/folks/friends/everyone'.

### **Campaigners call for 4-day week to become law**

The 4 Day Week Campaign is calling for the maximum working week to be reduced from 48 hours to 32 hours by 2030 and for any hours worked over this to be paid at an overtime rate. They are also advocating for the government to include the right for workers to request a 4-day, 32-hour week with no loss of pay in its official flexible working guidance. It is hoped that these changes will improve wellbeing and productivity.

#### *Did you know?*

This follows the success for most participants of last year's 4-day week pilot, which resulted in most businesses that took part continuing with a 4-day week after the end of the trial.

### **Petition for new protected characteristic**

A petition has been lodged with No. 10 Downing Street to make 'care experience' a protected characteristic covered by the Equality Act 2010. If it were given legal protection, it would mean that less favourable treatment because of having been in care would be unlawful. The petition is supported by a group of people who have been in care who say that their access to jobs has been stifled once they mention they were in care.

#### *Did you know?*

As of June 2023, 31 councils across England and Scotland have passed a motion to treat 'care experience' as a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

### **Rejecting a complaint was sexual harassment**

A female employee alleged that her colleague had subjected her to unwanted sexual conduct, whilst they were working together alone in a warehouse. The employee appealed a finding that there was insufficient evidence to continue to a disciplinary hearing. The appeal chair, however, dealt with the matter in a way that suggested she was of the view that "this is what happens to women, get used to it".

#### *Did you know?*

The tribunal found that the appeal chair's belief that all women experienced harassment influenced her decision not to uphold the grievance. As such, the claim for sexual harassment was upheld.