

PEOPLE INSIGHTS NEWSLETTER

October 2025

WELCOME TO OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER!

With Halloween around the corner, it feels fitting to shine a light on some of the scarier HR issues that can come back to haunt employers if left unchecked. From compliance gaps to tricky tribunal cases, this month's newsletter is all about spotting the warning signs before they turn into real nightmares.

It's been a year since the Worker Protection Act came into force, yet many employers are still not meeting their obligations. We'll look at what's going wrong and how to make sure your business isn't caught out.

October is also Menopause Awareness Month, a timely reminder of the importance of understanding and supporting those experiencing menopause in the workplace.

We dive into a recent tribunal case where an employee's dismissal for online shopping during work hours was found to be unfair. It's a cautionary tale about why following fair process and considering the bigger picture really matters.

And finally, we answer some commonly asked HR questions.

So, grab a pumpkin-spiced coffee, settle in, and let's make sure none of these HR horrors creep into your business.

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TOP NEWS

**Worker Protection Act
(Preventing Sexual
Harassment)**

**Menopause Awareness
Month**

**Employment Tribunal case:
Unfair Dismissal**

Questions & Answers



LATEST NEWS

Worker Protection Act: almost half neglecting duties one year on

One year on from the introduction of the Worker Protection Act (on 26 October 2024), many UK employers are still not fully compliant.

A survey by Worknest* found that:

- 41% of employers have not carried out a sexual harassment risk assessment
 - 22% are unsure whether they even have a valid risk assessment in place
 - 54% of employers admit they are concerned they have not done enough to comply
 - Just 45% have provided sexual harassment training for all staff and managers; about one third of organisations have not provided any training since the duty began.

Risk assessments and training are key to compliance and failing to embed these actions may leave employers exposed to tribunal claims, reputational damage, or financial penalties. Under the Act, a failure to comply can trigger a 25% uplift in tribunal compensation awards.

Employers are urged to use this first anniversary milestone as a prompt to review their policies, ensure training is delivered, and foster a culture where harassment is actively prevented, not just reacted to.

Need help with ensuring your business is meeting its obligations? Get in touch to discover more about our **Preventing Sexual Harassment Toolkit** for employers.

*<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/worker-protection-act-duties-survey/>

Supporting Menopause in the Workplace

This month marks **World Menopause Awareness Month**, a reminder that menopause can have a real impact on wellbeing and performance at work — and that employers have an important role to play in providing the right support.

In this month's feature article, I explore how businesses can create a more supportive environment for employees experiencing menopause symptoms, and outline the key UK legal obligations to keep in mind.

You can read the full article on our website here:

<https://www.siarahpeoplesolutions.co.uk/supporting-menopause-in-the-workplace-why-it-matters-and-what-employers-need-to-know>



Employment Tribunal Case - Online shopping dismissal ruled unfair

A recent tribunal has reminded employers that dismissals must always be fair and procedurally sound — regardless of an employee's length of service.

In this case, an accountancy firm dismissed an employee for browsing shopping and property websites at work, assuming that her less than two years' service would prevent a claim. However, the tribunal found that the dismissal had been pre-decided, no proper investigation was carried out, and the company had failed to communicate clear rules around personal use of computers. The employee was awarded £14,100, including a 20% uplift for failure to follow the ACAS Code of Practice.

Key lessons for employers:

- Do not rely on length of service as a safeguard against claims
- Ensure conduct issues are properly documented and investigated
- Communicate workplace policies clearly and consistently
- Apply proportionate sanctions rather than rushing to dismissal
- Always follow the ACAS Code of Practice

<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/employee-who-shopped-online-at-work-wins-unfair-dismissal-claim/>

Q&A



I run a business and employ members of my family. Do they need employment contracts?

Yes! Anyone legally classed as an employee has the right to a 'written statement of employment particulars' or an employment contract. As a business owner you can hire who you like, including family, but providing a contract will ensure consistency and fairness, and could provide you with protection if a dispute arises, rather than simply relying on good faith or loyalty.

Can I employ someone on a casual basis if they're under 16?

Children between the ages of 13-16 can take on 'light work' if it doesn't affect their health and safety or interfere with their education. If you want to do this, you normally need to have a permit from the local council's education department or education welfare service. There are also several restrictions on where, when and how they can work, depending on their age.

Do you have a burning people issue in your business?

You know just how important it is to get confidential and responsive HR support. That's what we do and we're taking on new clients. Get in touch to see how we can help you.



Set up a 30 minute exploratory call at <https://calendly.com/siarahps>