

Employment Law

Going Ahead...

A range of employment law legal changes, that were to be shelved because of the economic crisis, are now likely to go ahead in the New Year. Peter Mandelson announced the proposed legal changes, including the extension of the right to request flexible working for those with children up to age 16. At present, the right to make a request is available where a person has children up to the age of six. The extension is due from April 2009. There may, however, be a postponement of the proposed extension of maternity leave from 39 to 52 weeks and the creation of an extra bank holiday.

Clive Hitchen says "With markets in such turmoil, the Government is seeking to give stability to businesses and it is worth checking with all proposed legislation which aspects of it will now proceed. However, the EU has just announced a consultation on maternity rights which proposes some major changes so, whatever the results of the current UK review, employment law will always remain a fast moving legal field and a minefield for employers.

The proposed EU changes include an extension of paid leave. At present in the UK maternity pay is at 90% of pay for the first six weeks and then at a level around that of sick pay for the rest of the period. The plan is that a much longer period at almost full pay may be given, as well as prohibiting women from working for 6 weeks after ceasing work, although these measures are being vigorously resisted by many. At present in the UK, women if they choose can return to work after 2 weeks (or 4 if they are factory workers).

If you need any advice on employment law changes call Clive Hitchen on 01494 521301.