

Gravitate **HR** Newsletter

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Spring 2016

The (National) Living Wage

As of 1st April 2016, [all employees and workers](#) aged 25 and over are entitled to £7.20 per hour which is a 50p per hour increase to the current [National Minimum Wage](#) which will remain in place at current levels for those below 25. Employers would be well placed to carry out a review of their salaries and their employee's ages if they have not already done so at this point.

The National Living Wage (NLW) is the term being used by the Government which has been somewhat hi-jacked from the pre-existing [Living Wage Foundation](#) (LWF) who campaign for employers to pay their staff a higher amount.

The LWF's voluntary rate (£8.25 per hour or £9.40 per hour in London), which is calculated independently, already ahead of the new NLW. Already this is causing confusion for employers and employees in terms of entitlements and furthermore clouds the work that the Living Wage Foundation have been carrying out for well over a decade.

For more information on the National Living Wage, please click [here](#).

"You can have the best strategy and the best building in the world, but if you don't have the hearts and minds of the people who work with you, none of it comes to life."

- Renee West



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Mental Health in the Workplace

Gravitate HR recently hosted a lunch time seminar on tackling mental health in the workplace, in conjunction with Sara Maude of [The Mind Solution](#). As a result of this Gravitate thought it might be useful to highlight some of the key discussion points from the session.

Attendees of the seminar ranged from Directors and Managers within SME organisations in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Fife to Sole Traders and Consultants within the healthcare industry. All guests had a keen interest in learning more about this topic which is an important one for employers and employees alike.

The main areas Sara covered were, understanding the term, the impact on the business and the individual and how we can create a mentally healthy workforce.

The seminar proved to be a thought-provoking one with delegates leaving reflecting on how they might implement some of the learnings within their own organisation. We thank Sara for speaking at our seminar. We look forward to our next lunchtime seminar – details to follow.

To find out more about this article, [see our blog](#).



Employment Law Updates

1. The compulsory National Living Wage (NLW) for workers aged 25 and above, will be set at £7.20 from 1st April 2016, for workers under 25, the National Minimum Wage will still apply but is set to increase from October 2016.
2. Salary requirement for tier 2 workers introduced: skilled migrant workers who apply to settle in the UK from April 2016 under the tier 2 general and sportsperson categories of the points-based system are required to earn at least £35,000 (or the appropriate amount for their job, if higher).
3. Caste to be included as a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, the date for application is yet to be determined



Try our HR quiz

1. To which age group does the recently introduced National Living Wage apply, and how much will they be entitled to as a minimum amount per hour?

- a) Ages 21 or older / £6.70 per hour
- b) Ages 25 or older / £7.20 per hour
- c) Ages 21 or older / £7.20 per hour

2. In the UK, how many weeks are pregnant employees statutorily entitled to maternity pay over-all?

- a) 12 weeks
- b) 26 weeks, provided the employee's company has stated this in their contract of employment
- c) 39 weeks

3. From January 11th 2016, what can employers no longer include in a Zero Hour Contract?

- a) An exclusivity clause
- b) Information surrounding pension entitlements
- c) Details surrounding an employee's holiday entitlement

Answers:

1. b. 2. c. 3. a



Maternity Leave and Pay

Where does the UK fall in comparison with countries across the globe for the provision of maternity leave and pay? Paid leave for working mothers is guaranteed in at least 178 countries around the world and over 50 countries provide some form of paid leave or wage benefits for fathers.

In the UK, pregnant employees are entitled to up to 52 weeks of maternity leave, of which 39 weeks are paid. In relation to maternity pay, employees get 90% of their salary for the first 6 weeks and the remaining 33 weeks are paid at either 90% of the salary or the current statutory rate of £139.58 per week (whichever is lower).

Some of the top countries include, Bulgaria who offer up to 410 days at 90% salary during that period, whereas in America for instance, only organisations with more than 50 employees provide 12 weeks there is no guarantee of paid maternity leave. Although, US companies with more than 50 employees must provide 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave following childbirth.

For more on a country by country comparison on Maternity Leave and Pay rate entitlements, please [click here](#).

An Update on Zero Hour Contracts

From 11th January 2016, employers cannot include an exclusivity clause in a zero hours employment contract (where an employee cannot seek employment elsewhere for the aim of securing an income).

Employees can now raise a claim for unfair dismissal where they: are dismissed because they are employed elsewhere; seek employment elsewhere or; are subject to detrimental treatment as a result of their employment elsewhere, as opposed to the usual 2 years' service required to raise a claim.

Furthermore, compensation that could be awarded, will be at the discretion of the tribunal, determined by what is deemed to be just and equitable in the circumstances.

Please click [this link](#) to learn more about the recent update regarding Zero Hour Contracts.



Team Update

Spring has finally sprung with the pitter-patter of tiny feet at Gravitare when Jess gave birth to a baby boy in March. The Gravitare team were delighted to meet baby Rory and look forward to Jess returning to work late Summer.

Sara Murphy joined Gravitare as an HR Account Manager in February 2016 and very quickly established herself with clients and the Gravitare HR team. Before joining Gravitare, Sara provided in-house HR support, advice and guidance within the financial, manufacturing and care sectors.

Laura Wiegatz joined the team in March 2016 as HR Account Manager. Laura provided in-house HR support across the public, charity, education and private sector. Her experience has already been of value to the personalised service we offer.

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our services and support we can provide.

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