

Gender pay gap continues to decline across UK

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has published new data analysing the gender pay gap in the UK. We look at the key points for employers.

- The latest statistics show that the gender pay gap has continued to decline; over the last decade it has fallen by around a quarter for full-time employees, standing at 7.7% in April 2023.
- The figures reveal a large difference in the gender pay gap between those 40 and over and the under 40s, suggesting efforts to reduce the gap have been most successful for younger workers.
- The gender pay gap among full-time employees is higher across all regions of England when compared to Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- The gender pay gap measures the difference between the average hourly earnings of men and women as a proportion of men's average hourly earnings (not including overtime). These ONS statistics are calculated from an Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings that includes samples from all employee jobs in all sizes of company, which means it is not based on compulsory gender pay gap reporting data (which only applies to larger organisations employing 250 or more employees).
- Employers including the Samaritans, TripAdvisor and Women in Sport have pledged not to ask candidates about their salary history to help address the gender pay gap. Over a hundred employers have signed the pledge as part of a campaign by Fawcett East London. Research from the Fawcett Society found that 90% of people feel salary history is an unfair way for pay to be decided and instead salaries should be decided on skills and experience.

Managing conflicting beliefs in the workplace

This week we mark the end of the Great War and the service of those who have given their lives whilst defending the UK with Remembrance Sunday. Poppies are sold and worn to raise money to support service people, and to show individual respect for them. However, some employers may have to deal with conflicting beliefs or opinions in the workplace. Any issues that do arise should be handled fairly and consistently; early resolution is key to avoid matters escalating.

Did you know?

The tribunal has previously found that it did not amount to discrimination on the grounds of his philosophical belief when a claimant was prevented from wearing a poppy during the period around Remembrance Sunday.

Supporting financial wellbeing this Talk Money Week

Talk Money Week, which runs from 6 – 10 November 2023, is an annual campaign that encourages people to have conversations about money, be more open about this subject with friends and family and to reach out to experts when needed. According to research by MoneyHelper, 1 in 3 people say thinking about their financial situation makes them worried. It is important for employers to recognise the significant detrimental impact this can have on employees' personal and professional lives.

Did you know?

A financial wellbeing policy can provide signposts to those inside and outside the business who can offer expert practical help to employees who may find themselves worrying about money.

Disciplinary after allergic reaction was discrimination

A claimant had an allergic reaction which resulted in hospitalisation. The respondent's sickness absence policy stated that employees must inform the company by 9:30am on the first day of absence. On his return, a disciplinary meeting was held, and he was dismissed, without notice, on the basis that he had failed to provide a medical certificate and had not responded to the company's enquiries. His claims for notice pay and discrimination arising from a disability succeeded.

Did you know?

The tribunal said that it was not disproportionate to ask for a medical certificate, but he had been treated unfavourably when he was invited to the disciplinary hearing at short notice.

Display screen equipment considerations

Here are some of the considerations when completing your DSE assessments: you should provide training and instruction to employees who use DSE, specifically on the hazards associated with using the equipment. The employee should use a fully adjustable chair and be able to adopt a comfortable seating position. The screen should be stable, free of glare and adjustable. The work surface should be large enough for the job.

Did you know?

Many employers use display screen equipment, but did you know if you use it for one-hour continuous use per day you need to do a display screen equipment assessment (DSE) for every employee?

Taking steps to close an organisation's gender pay gap can improve staff retention and engagement. Contact our 24-hour Advisory Service for up-to-date guidance on this and more.

Please contact the 24 hour advice service for advice on your specific situation before acting on the information in this publication.