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AUTUMN 2020 NEWSLETTER – EMPLOYER NEWSLETTER



TRACK AND TRACE CREATE AND DISPLAY A QR CODE

Businesses are now required to create and display a QR code so that visitors who have downloaded the NHS Covid-19 app can scan the QR code when they enter your premises. If you have more than one site you need to create a separate QR code for each location. You will need your email address and the address of your business. If you have more than one location, you will need the address, email address and phone number for the manager or point of contact for each location. You will receive your QR code poster(s) by email soon after you have submitted your information. When you receive your QR code poster, you need to print and display the poster somewhere visitors can see it and scan it when they arrive, e.g. by the entrance. You then need to ask visitors to scan the QR code when they arrive, using the NHS COVID-19 app. Display as many posters as you need to in order to avoid queues forming. Go to www.gov.uk/create-coronavirus-qr-poster to create your poster(s).

STAFF ROOMS – ENSURE STAFF SAFETY



Employers should make sure they monitor how many of their staff gather in staff rooms as this is another way that the virus can spread. Try and ensure that no more than 6 people are in the staff room at any one time and that masks are worn when possible. The latest guidance issued by the Government for working safely in the workplace can be found at:
<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5eb97e7686650c278d4496ea/working-safely-during-covid-19-offices-contact-centres-230920.pdf>



NATIONAL LIVING WAGE/MINIMUM WAGE – CURRENT RATES

National Minimum Wage rates (effective from April 2020) are as follows:

- Workers aged 25 and over £8.72 per hour
- Workers aged 21 to 24 £8.20 per hour
- Workers aged 18-20 £6.45 per hour
- Workers aged 16-17 £4.55 per hour
- Apprenticeship rate **£4.15 per hour

** The Apprenticeship rate is effective for all apprentices under 19, or 19 and over and in the first year of their apprenticeship. Learners who are over 19 and in the second year of their apprenticeship have to be paid the relevant minimum wage.

More guidance at: www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates

Please remember that learners who are (or who become) 19 in their second year of training must, by law, be paid the National Minimum Wage for their age group.

If an employer dismisses an employee because their rate of pay increases, this would result in a claim for unfair dismissal – unless the employer can show other grounds for the dismissal.

DO YOU HAVE A VACANCY FOR A TRAINEE OR APPRENTICE?

Call our recruitment team on 0800 783 2901 – we will arrange for one of our learners to attend an interview with you.



INCENTIVE PAYMENTS FOR EMPLOYERS HIRING A NEW APPRENTICE

Employers who hire a new apprentice between 1st August 2020 and 31st January 2021 will receive a payment of £2,000 for apprentices aged between 16 and 24 or £1,500 for apprentices aged 25 or over. These payments are in addition to the £1,000 that employers already receive for hiring an apprentice aged 16 to 18 or someone who is under 25 with an education, health and care plan or who has been in the care of the local authority.

You can apply for an incentive payment if you recruit apprentices who have been made redundant as long as they are new to your organisation and they were hired between 1st August 2020 and 31st January 2021.

Payments will be made in two equal instalments. 50% after the apprentice completes 90 days of their apprenticeship and the remaining 50% after the apprentice completes 365 days. The apprenticeship must last for at least one year.

To claim incentive payments, employers must have set up their digital account. The account is used to obtain apprenticeship funding, find and save apprenticeships and to recruit apprentices.

Central can help you add apprentices to your account, but you will need to log into your account to claim any incentives.

For more information about the incentive scheme, go to www.gov.uk/guidance/incentive-payments-for-hiring-a-new-apprentice

For more information on how to set up a digital account, go to https://accounts.manage-apprenticeships.service.gov.uk/service/index



JOB SUPPORT SCHEME

The Job Support Scheme is being introduced to protect viable jobs in businesses that are facing lower demand over the winter months due to Covid-19. Employers will continue to pay employees for time worked but payment for any hours not worked will be split between the employer and the Government. This will ensure that employees keep their jobs. The Government will pay a third of hours not worked up to a cap, with the employer also contributing a third. This will ensure that employees earn a minimum of 77% of their normal wages. Employers using the Job Support Scheme will also be able to claim the Job Retention Bonus if they meet the eligibility criteria.

To qualify for this support, employees must be on an employer's PAYE payroll on or before 23rd September 2020. Employees on this scheme cannot be made redundant or put on notice of redundancy during the period within which the employer is claiming the grant.

Employers must agree the new short-time working arrangements with staff, make any changes to the employment contract by agreement and notify employees in writing. Agreements must be made available to HMRC on request. The scheme will open on 1st November 2020 and run for 6 months until 30th April 2021. Read the factsheet at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/921389/Job_Support_Scheme_Factsheet.pdf



FLEXIBILITY TO PAY BACK LOANS

The Chancellor has announced a new Pay as You Grow flexible repayment scheme for any employers who took out a Bounce Back Loan.

This will include extending the length of the loan from six years to ten years, cutting monthly repayments by nearly 50%. Interest-only periods of up to 6 months and payment holidays will also be available to businesses.

Employers who have taken out a Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan will also be given the opportunity to extend the length of the loan from a maximum of 6 years to 10 years if it will help businesses to repay the loan.

Information from:

www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-outlines-winter-economy-plan

VAT CUT AND NEW PAYMENT SCHEME



The Government has announced that the temporary 15% VAT cut for the tourism and hospitality sectors is to be extended until the end of March 2021.

Additionally, any business who deferred their VAT bill will be given more breathing space via the New Payment Scheme which gives employers the option to pay back in smaller instalments. Instead of paying a lump sum in full at the end of March 2021, businesses can opt to make 11 smaller interest-free payments during the 20/21 financial year.

Self-assessment taxpayers will also be able to benefit from a separate additional 12-month extension from HMRC on the Time to Pay self-service facility, meaning payments deferred from July 2020 and payments due in January 2021 will now not need to be paid until January 2022.

Information from:

www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-outlines-winter-economy-plan



REDUNDANCY PAY

Regulations are now in force requiring employers to calculate statutory redundancy pay based on the redundant employee's normal pay rather than their reduced pay under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. The regulations also apply to other statutory requirements associated with dismissal such as compensation for unfair dismissal, notice pay, etc.

More information at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-law-to-ensure-furloughed-employees-receive-full-redundancy-payments>

CHANGES TO THE DISCLOSURE AND BARRING RULES



The Government has announced that there is to be an amendment to the rules on standard and enhanced criminal records certificates issued by the Disclosure and Barring service.

The new regulation will stop the automatic disclosure to employers of youth cautions, reprimands and warnings and of all convictions where somebody has more than one. The change is expected to come into effect later this year.

The Supreme Court directed the government to make the change last year after it ruled in favour of three people who claimed their lives had been blighted by past minor criminal convictions.

See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-plan-new-changes-to-criminal-records-disclosure-regime>



UPDATED GUIDANCE ON SAFETY RULES FOR COVID-19 (as at 30th September 2020)

Current guidelines (issued by the Government on 22nd September) are as follows:

When we are with people we do not live with, we all need to avoid physical contact, being close and face-to-face, shouting or singing near people. We also need to avoid crowded areas with lots of people and touching things that other people have touched.

We should ideally stay 2 metres apart (but at least 1 metre apart), wear a face covering on public transport and in shops (unless you are exempt), move outdoors where it is safer and there is more space, and make sure indoor rooms are well ventilated by keeping windows and doors open.

When seeing friends and family we are only permitted to meet in groups of 6 or less and maintain social distancing rules. Meet people outdoors where possible and limit how many different people you see socially over a short period of time. The police have powers to issue fixed penalty fines of £200 (doubling for further breaches up to a maximum of £6,400).

Exceptions to the '6 people' rule include:

- Registered childcare, education or training
- Work or the provision of voluntary or charitable groups
- When supervising activities provided for children
- When providing support for a vulnerable person
- When providing emergency assistance and to avoid injury or illness or to escape risk of harm
- Arrangements where children do not live in the same household as both parents
- Attending court or jury service
- Elite sporting competition and training
- Wedding and civil partnership ceremonies and receptions (up to 15 people permitted)
- Funerals (up to 30 people permitted) but this does not include wakes.
- Exercise classes, organised outdoor sport or licensed outdoor physical activity, supervised sporting activity for the under 18's
- Support groups (up to 15 permitted)
- Protests if organised in compliance with COVID-19, providing individuals are socially distanced.

A tradesperson going into a household of 6 peoples is not breaching the limit, providing they are there for work.

Office workers who can work effectively from home are required to do so over the winter. Anyone who cannot work effectively from home should continue going to work.

Most businesses selling food and drink must be closed between 10 pm and 5 am. This includes take-aways but deliveries can continue after 10 pm.

- In licensed premises, food and drink must be ordered from, and served at, a table.
- Customers must eat and drink at a table in any premises selling food and drink to consume on site.
- Businesses must display the NHS QR code poster so customers can check in (as an alternative to providing their contact details).
- Businesses face stricter rules to ensure their premises are COVID secure. Employers must not knowingly require or encourage someone who is being required to self-isolate to come to work and businesses must remind people to wear face coverings.

Full guidance can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-covid-19-what-has-changed-22-september>

Please note: Central Training Group accept no liability for any information provided in this Newsletter or advice given over the telephone. Information provided is for general guidance only and you should seek professional advice and guidance in specific and individual cases.