

EMPLOYMENT UPDATE

EMPLOYMENT LAW CHANGES TO TAKE EFFECT IN OCTOBER 2010

Some legislative changes that come into effect on **1 October 2010** include:

- **Increase in national minimum wage** – the new hourly rates will be:
 - for workers aged over 21 (previously over 22): **£5.93** (rising from £5.80);
 - for workers aged between 18 and 20: **£4.92** (rising from £4.83);
 - for workers aged under 18 but over the compulsory school age who are not apprentices: **£3.64** (rising from £3.57).

A new minimum wage for apprentices will also be introduced of **£2.50** per hour. This will apply to apprentices under 19 years of age or those aged 19 and over but in the first year of their apprenticeship.

- **Equality Act 2010** – will come into force. The Act replaces all existing discrimination legislation but it covers the same grounds. The basic framework of protection against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation is also covered. However, there are some key changes (as set out in our previous employment update). Employers are therefore advised to:
 - review all equality and diversity documents to ensure that they comply with the new legislation;
 - take advice on the use of pre-employment questionnaires;
 - review current practices and policies relating to illness and absence in light of the new "discrimination arising from disability"; and
 - check contracts of employment and policies for pay secrecy clauses.

Other forthcoming developments that employers should be aware of include:

- **Default retirement age to be phased out** – the Government has announced details of how it will phase out the default retirement age of 65 from April 2011.
- **Right to request training** – the Government will review whether it will extend this right to all employees in April 2011.
- **Bribery Act 2010** – comes into force in April 2011.

If you would like to receive further information on this update or if you would like to unsubscribe, please contact Elizabeth Pollock by email at eep@brookenorth.co.uk or by telephone on 0113 297 9000.
You should not act upon the matters referred to in these updates without first seeking specific advice.