

Coronavirus weekly roundup

Welcome to our Coronavirus weekly round up, highlighting a selection of our key insights issued this week.

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Techno stress and the risk management aspects of working from home

Techno stress is stress caused by an inability to cope with new technologies, particularly computers, in a healthy manner, the stress produced varying from inability to concentrate, irritability and a feeling of loss of control up to and including psychiatric injury. In our experience, a sizable proportion of the workforce do not react well to change, including being asked to do the job they have done for some years in a different way.

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SEND duties continue despite COVID-19

In January, the Minister for Children and Families, Vicky Ford, issued an [open letter](#) to children, young people, and families highlighting that Special Educational Provision (“SEP”) remains available to children and young people during lockdown and she helpfully signposted all of the guidance that is in place to support schools, health authorities and local authorities to achieve this.

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No jab, no job” – A viable approach for employers or a recipe for litigation?

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused upheaval for employers nationwide, be it through forced shutdowns, social distancing measures, staff members self-isolating/reporting sick, or a mixture of all three. Understandably, many employers are keen for their operations to return to a state of normality and it is hoped that workplace testing and the continued roll-out of the national vaccination programme will be helpful in achieving this. Increasingly, employers are looking to find ways to enhance the “COVID-security” of their premises and working environments in order to accelerate the transition back to some form of normality. One of those employers is Pimlico Plumbers who have been widely reported in the national Press as having said that they will introduce ‘no jab, no job’ policy, requiring all workers to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

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Employment tribunals and remote hearings – avoiding embarrassing profile pictures and other top tips

Many employers and employees alike will have seen various articles in the press relating to the difficulties facing the employment tribunals at the present time, including a significant backlog of claims and the expectation that some hearings will not be heard until at least 12 months after claims are presented. In some cases, the delay can be much longer. We are also seeing delays in dealing with various applications. The tribunals are incredibly busy and only have limited resource. This means that it can take longer for applications to be considered which can impact upon case preparation. We must do the best we can in the circumstances.

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Possession orders: no enforcement against residential tenants now extended until 31 March 2021

The previous ban on bailiff activity was due to end on 21 February 2021. However, in accordance with recent lockdown measures, the Government has announced that the ban on evictions in England will be extended for a further six weeks, until 31 March 2021, with measures to be kept under review. This was announced in the press release published on 14 February 2021, by the Ministry of Housing and Robert Jenrick MP, within which Robert Jenrick stated that these measures “strike the right balance between protecting tenants and enabling landlords to exercise their right to justice”.

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HSE spot checks during COVID-19 pandemic

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) continues to advertise through social media and its website that spot checks and inspections are being carried out across the country, and clients report to us experience of both. What does this mean? HSE inspectors and local authority environmental health officers (EHOs) may call or visit premises to check on systems and paperwork designed to ensure the workplace is COVID secure in accordance with government guidelines. They may wish to talk to workers and their representatives. A failure to participate in any HSE inspection may result in enforcement action being taken.

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