



*Trust our knowledge and expertise*

## Introduction

Belated new year's greetings! Already the term is underway and the break over Christmas is fading into the distance.

After a year of political uncertainty the Brexit process is starting. While Brexit will no doubt continue to dominate government time, it does mean that we can finally expect to begin to get a better understanding of what the implications will be for us all, including in relation to employment.

There are some changes to employment law that will be implemented over the next few months – the most notable of which is a change to the timescale within which contracts of employment must be issued. We originally flagged this up in the January 2019 newsletter but there is more information about this in this newsletter.

February sees the return of our annual recruitment fair, and you may well have already noticed advertising for it on buses around and about the Borough!

For us in Octavo it is a time of change as we prepare to TUPE into Croydon Council. In terms of the support we offer to you, it will be business as usual and the change will not be affecting our services to you. From the end of January you will be able to purchase annual contracts commencing 1 April 2020 for all services, including HR. We will continue to offer the core and enhanced HR contracts, and if you have any questions about your contract, or would like to know more about how we can support you then please contact us.

We look forward to working with you over the coming term.

*The Schools HR Team*

## Recruitment Event: 15 February 2020

Our annual recruitment event is taking place from 9.00 – 12.00 on 15 February 2020 in the newly refurbished Fairfield Halls.

All the school places have been taken and advertising is already underway. We are advertising on buses for the first time this year, and hopefully you may have seen some of our adverts as you travel around the Borough (and beyond)!

This is a good opportunity for us to work together to promote Croydon as a place to teach, and complements our work attending recruitment fairs at the universities.

Please can you promote the event within your school community – for ideas about how to do this contact Christine Lonsdale, [christine.lonsdale@octavopartnership.org](mailto:christine.lonsdale@octavopartnership.org).

The more widely we can advertise, the more contacts we can make, and the more we can increase interest in our borough and the jobs available in our schools.

## Employment practices: changes in the year ahead

In December 2018, the government issued the “Good Work Plan” which was its agenda for various changes that would affect the workplace. The focus on Brexit in the past year has meant that progress with implementing the Plan has been slower than may have been anticipated, and there was further uncertainty with the General Election in December. However, there has been progress with some of the changes, which schools need to be aware of.

### - Contracts of Employment

From 6 April 2020, all employees and workers must be given a written statement of particulars **on or before** the first day of their engagement. Currently only employees are required to have a written statement of particulars, and this has to be provided within the first two months of employment.

In schools, the written statement of particulars is normally provided via the contract of employment. It is also normal practice for casual staff (who are defined as workers in legislation) to receive casual contracts that will meet the new legislative requirement.

The deadline for issuing contracts has however been brought forwards, and schools will need to ensure that contracts are in place prior to the commencement of employment.

The minimum information required has been expanded to include extra information on variable working hours, paid leave other than sick pay, benefits, probationary periods and training. These elements are already covered in the majority of contracts of employment used by schools, but schools will need to check their template contracts with their HR provider.

#### - Parental Bereavement Leave

The right to parental bereavement leave and pay is expected to come into force in April 2020. The right will allow parents of a child under the age of 18 who has died to take two weeks' leave. It will be available to the birth parents or those with parental responsibility for the child and can be taken within 56 weeks of the child's death, in a block of two weeks, or two blocks of one week. (For example, the bereaved parents may want to take one of the blocks of leave on the anniversary of the child's death).

Employees will be entitled to parental bereavement leave from day one of their employment, but there will be a qualifying period of 26 weeks for entitlement to parental bereavement pay.

The government has not yet published the regulations that will finalise the details for the introduction of parental bereavement leave and pay.

We will provide more advise when the regulations are published. The option to give members of staff who lose a child time off is already possible as it can be given as discretionary leave.

#### - IR35: Intermediaries Legislation (engagement of contractors)

It is expected that the changes with IR35 that were introduced to the public sector in April 2017 will be extended to the private sector in April 2020.

This will mean that there will be a level playing field between the engagement of contractors in both sectors. While the general principles are in place, there is currently a consultation about the finer detail of the legislation. The consultation includes changes to the rules and could affect the public sector and, from the Summer Term, schools will need to be aware of this. Your HR Provider will be able to provide you with advice, and we will provide updates via our termly newsletters.

## - Increase in the holiday pay reference period from 12 weeks to 52 weeks

The reference period for the purpose of calculating holiday pay for workers with irregular hours will change from 12 to 52 weeks. From 6 April 2020, employers will need to look back over the past 52 weeks, discarding any weeks in which a worker did not earn pay, to calculate their average weekly pay.

## Brexit and employment of overseas workers

Now that the withdrawal agreement has passed the vote in the House of Commons and Brexit is due to go ahead on 31 January 2020, there is slightly less uncertainty for European Economic Area (EEA) nationals and their employers. Following Brexit, there will be a transition period until 31 December 2020, during which EEA nationals will still be able to come and work in the UK.

Schools should ensure that all their EEA workers obtain settled or pre-settled status, to enable them to stay at the end of the transition period. The current position is that EEA nationals who are resident in the UK by 31 December 2020 have until 30 June 2021 to make an application. (Note, this is the current position and if the process of negotiations in the transition period does not lead to a deal, the deadline will be brought forward to 31 December 2020 and there could in any case be further changes. Schools should encourage affected staff to make the necessary applications at an early date. See <https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families/applying-for-settled-status> for further details.)

A new immigration system will be in place after the transition period. The Migration Advisory Commission is expected to report in January 2020, having considered options for a new points-based system, and we can expect to have more detail after that.

## Queen's Speech and proposed Employment Bill

In the Queen's speech on 19 December 2019, the government announced that there will be an Employment Bill, and this will affect employment practice in schools in the future. We will keep you updated about changes, and as with all new legislation, it will take time for them to be implemented. The key elements that were included in the Queen's Speech and apply to schools are:

- Creation of a new, single enforcement body, offering greater protections for workers;
- Introduction of a new right for all workers to request a more predictable contract (this will affect casual staff);

- Extension of redundancy protections to prevent pregnancy and maternity discrimination;
- Allowing parents to take extended leave for neonatal care; and introduction of an entitlement to one week's leave for unpaid carers;
- Subject to consultation, making flexible working the default unless employers have good reason not to.

### Conversations: a few tips

Effective conversations with staff are the foundation of good people management. It is through conversation that positive feedback is provided, support offered and challenge given. The quality of these interactions will affect staff wellbeing and their mental health at work.

While managers can find the need to have 'difficult conversations' worrying, the principles of good communication apply to all types of conversation. Below are 5 simple steps that will help managers when they need to speak to staff

- **Prepare**

Take time to prepare. Be clear about what it is you want to say, and what your overall aim is for the conversation

- **Communicate**

Make sure you say what it is you need to say. It can sometimes seem easier to refer to something obliquely, but that will lead to uncertainty. Be precise about what you are talking about: you will have spent time preparing for the meeting, and it may be obvious to you what needs to be said, but the same will not be true for the person you are speaking to.

- **Listen**

Give the other person time to explain their point of view, or what it is that is worrying them. If you rush someone you will not get the whole picture.

- **Explore**

Having communicated your perspective, and heard what the other person's perspective is, take time to explore the way forwards. The aim is to find a mutually agreeable solution, and most of the time this will be possible.

- **Agree next steps**

At the end of the conversation be clear about what is going to happen next.

One of the courses we run is about 'Difficult Conversations' and the course is designed to explore the principles of good communication. It is not part of our central programme this term, but can always be offered as bespoke in school training.

## Training

The training programme for this term is:

### **Safeguarding – Safer Recruitment**

There is a statutory requirement for one person on every recruitment panel for school staff to have completed safer recruitment training.

**Outline:** Our day long Safer Recruitment Course is the nationally recognised Safer Recruitment Consortium training and is delivered by accredited trainers.

**Description:** This training is designed to:

- Identify the key features of staff recruitment that help deter or prevent the appointment of unsuitable people
- Consider policies and practice that minimise opportunities for abuse or ensure its prompt reporting
- Help participants begin to review their policies and practice in recruitment with a view to creating a safer culture

**Audience:** All those involved in recruitment in schools

**Date:** Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2020 (9.30am to 16.30pm)

**Venue:** This training event will take place in the Octavo Training Room.

**Cost:** £220 per person

Please note there is recommended pre-course reading for this event that can be accessed by logging into the portal once you have confirmed your booking.

### **Sickness Management and Discretionary Leave –**

**Outline:** The cost of sickness can be very high and whilst it is true that nobody can help being unwell, the robust management of sickness absence can help to significantly reduce absence and therefore lower the cost to schools. However, whenever you have a trigger-based sickness scheme it is important to also have a process (i.e. Discretionary Leave) that allows you to consider requests for leave in other circumstances.

**Description:** A 3 hour interactive training session, led by an experienced HR Consultant, that is designed to provide managers in school settings with the tools and skills needed in order to manage the sickness procedure effectively and how to manage requests for discretionary leave efficiently.

The session is designed to increase confidence in your ability to manage sickness absence and discretionary leave requests, and will include:

- > Group discussions
- > Case studies

**Audience:** All levels of manager, from line managers to Senior Leadership Team, within a school setting.

**Date:** Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020 (9.30am to 12.30pm)

**Venue:** This training event will take place in the Octavo Training Room.

**Cost:** £136 per delegate.

### **Disciplinary Processes and Investigation Skills**

Having to deal with a disciplinary matter or carry out an investigation are the sort of things that no one ever wants to do, but the sad reality is that you never know what is awaiting you around the next corner.

**Outline:** Increased confidence in your ability to investigate or manage a disciplinary case successfully. Knowledge of the legal framework within which to carry out investigations and disciplinaries to enable you to be compliant.

**Description:** Senior managers are increasingly involved in disciplinary cases and as a result more and more schools are calling upon middle managers to carry out investigations and present their findings at a disciplinary hearing. It is for this reason that we are offering training on the disciplinary processes and investigation skills. The training is a half-day session, designed specifically for schools.

**Audience:** All levels of manager within a school setting, from line managers to members of the Extended Leadership Team

**Date:** Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020 (9.30am to 12.30pm)

**Venue:** This training event will take place in the Octavo Training Room.

**Cost:** £136 per person

### **How to Book for a training event**

Places can be booked via our website at <http://www.octavopartnership.org/courses>

### **Bespoke training**

If you would one of these courses, or any other training (e.g. Holding Effective Conversations, Performance Management and Appraisal) to be delivered in your school (perhaps to a wider audience such as all staff) then we would be happy to work with you to understand your needs and then provide you with a quote of this customised training. All you need to do is email [hrservices@octavopartnership.org](mailto:hrservices@octavopartnership.org).

## Octavo HR: Contact Details

Advice Line: 020 8241 5483 [hrservices@octavopartnership.org](mailto:hrservices@octavopartnership.org)

Cathy Brearley – Head of HR - [catherine.brearley@octavopartnership.org](mailto:catherine.brearley@octavopartnership.org)  
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## Croydon Council Services: Contact Details

David Wiggs – HR & Finance Service Centre Support Officer -  
[croydonschools@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:croydonschools@croydon.gov.uk) or; [david.wiggs@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:david.wiggs@croydon.gov.uk) 020 8604 7251

Recruitment Queries:

- Teach in Croydon website: [www.croydoneducationjobs.org](http://www.croydoneducationjobs.org).
- Adverts on Croydon Council website: 020 8667 8337; [vacancies@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:vacancies@croydon.gov.uk)

DBS Queries: 020 8667 8337; [schoolsdb@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:schoolsdb@croydon.gov.uk)

Occupational Health: Ritika Singh - [Ritika.Singh@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:Ritika.Singh@croydon.gov.uk)

Teachers Pensions: Vicki Langston – 020 8604 7190; Julia McDougall – 0208 604 7383;  
[teacherspensionsteam@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:teacherspensionsteam@croydon.gov.uk)

Local Government Pension Scheme: 020 8760 5768 x 62892; [pensions@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:pensions@croydon.gov.uk)

## **Liberata Payroll**

All payroll data should be sent to: [liberataschoolspayroll@liberata.com](mailto:liberataschoolspayroll@liberata.com)

Technical support: [LiberataSchoolsTechnicalSupport@liberata.com](mailto:LiberataSchoolsTechnicalSupport@liberata.com)

### Team:

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