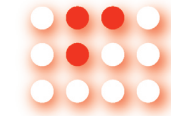


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Real Living Wage rises

At least 150,000 UK workers are set for a pay rise as new rates for the real Living Wage rates have been announced.

The UK rate is to increase by 30p an hour or 3.6% from £8.45 to £8.75, while London mayor Sadiq Khan has announced that the London Living Wage will rise by 45p an hour or 4.6% from £9.75 to £10.20 an hour.

The real Living Wage rates are independently calculated, based on the real cost of living in the UK and London. The 2017 increases have been largely driven by higher inflation feeding through to the basket of goods and services that underpin the rates, with rising private rents and transport costs also having an impact. The real Living Wage rates are much higher than the statutory rates National Living and National Minimum Wage rates which are updated by the government in April.

On another positive note, Heathrow Airport became the first airport to join more than 3,600 Living Wage employers across the UK. Heathrow was just one of over 150 employers, including the National Gallery and Somerset House, receiving Living Wage accreditation in the build up to Living Wage Week.

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said that extending the Living Wage is vital. "Millions of people are living in poverty despite being part of

working households," she said. "These new rates would make a big difference to Britain's lowest paid. And they would help families keep their heads above water.

"But more companies need to sign up. Profits in the UK are at record levels. Yet many bosses are still refusing to invest in their staff. Smart employers know the value of paying the real Living Wage. It reduces staff turnover and boosts productivity levels."

More organisations do need to follow the Living Wage employers' example. The 2017 Living Wage report for KPMG found that one in five people (21%) in the UK are still earning below the real Living Wage, meaning that that an estimated 5.5 million employees are struggling to get out of in-work poverty.

The research, conducted by Markit for KPMG, found that the total number earning below the real Living Wage is down by 100,000 compared to last year, when an estimated 22% of all jobs and 5.6 million roles paid less than the real Living Wage. This is the first reduction in five years, but still leaves the total a million higher than in 2012.

Other key findings in the report include:

- just over one in four (26%) of female employees earn less than the real Living Wage, compared to around one in six (16%) of all males. In numerical terms this equates to 3.4 million female employees versus 2.1 million male employees;
- around 3.1 million part-time employees earn

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less than the real Living Wage, compared with 2.4 million full-time workers;

- job roles where earnings below the Living Wage are most prevalent are in the hospitality sector, particularly bar staff (86%) and waiters and waitresses (83%); and

- on a regional basis, Northern Ireland has the highest proportion of jobs earning below the real Living Wage (26%), followed by the East Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber, Wales and the West Midlands each at around 24%.

www.livingwage.org.uk/news/news-real-living-wage-hourly-rates-increase-%C2%A3875-uk-and-%C2%A31020-london-cost-living-rises

www.livingwage.org.uk/sites/default/files/Flash%20Living%20Wage%20Research%20for%20KPMG%202017.pdf

www.tuc.org.uk/news/more-companies-should-become-living-wage-employers-says-tuc

Work-related stress and ways to tackle it

The levels of ill-health caused by workplace health are laid bare in a new report from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), which shows that, for the second year running, the number of cases reported has crept up.

There are now 526,000 people who are suffering from work-related stress, depression or anxiety and almost half of them (236,000) are new cases.

According to TUC health and safety officer Hugh Robertson, the health problems that stress can cause are often life-changing. Some people are unable to work again, and others find their confidence is shattered for years. It can also have a massive effect on family life and relationships. The statistics also show that during any one year, each person who has a stress-related illness is, on average, likely to be off sick for over a month because of it.

The HSE report shows that women are 61% more likely to suffer from workplace stress than men. This is possibly because they're more likely to work in jobs that deal with the public. They are also found in sectors that have been among the hardest hit by cuts, pay freezes and reorganisations. The sectors with the highest stress rates include nursing, teaching and welfare work. All of those are over 80% female.

According to the HSE, the main cause of work-related stress is being asked to do too much, both in terms of workload or pressure/responsibility, although other factors are a lack of management support and threats of violence and bullying. These

can all be reduced, but instead management are only too often willing to allow their employees to be made seriously ill rather than treat them like human beings.

For 10 years there has been clear guidance from the HSE on what employers must do to tackle stress-related illness by removing the causes. These are the stress management standards and emphasise the importance of risk assessment and risk management. But instead of using them, most employers have done nothing or, at most, focused on supporting workers after they are made ill.

The HSE has launched a campaign that is aimed at making it clear to employers that they have a responsibility to deal with stress by tackling the causes of it. The HSE has also worked with the TUC to produce joint guidance for union health and safety representatives about how they can try to get their employer to tackle stress, and are working with unions in a number of sectors to promote the use of the stress management standards.

This is a very welcome step forward, says Robertson, and unions are eager to work with the HSE, but simply giving guidance to employers is not going to be enough. Employers will continue to make their workers ill if they think they can get away with it because it is cheaper to deal with the sickness absence than tackle the real problems of understaffing, bad management, bullying and harassment.

This will continue until employers are forced to act. That means that those that continue to damage their workforce should face prosecution.

There is no reason at all why the HSE or local authorities should not be taking enforcement action now against employers who do not provide a safe workplace by dealing with stress. Also, as the HSE statistics show, there is an obvious need for simple, clear regulations requiring employers to conduct risk assessments for stress and to take action to remove or manage it, in the same way as they should for other risks such as chemicals.

www.tuc.org.uk/blogs/tackle-workplace-stress-we-need-more-warm-words

Pregnant women and unfair redundancy

The harsh impact of unfair redundancies on pregnant women and new mothers is revealed in a report from Maternity Action.

One in every 20 mothers are made redundant during pregnancy, maternity leave or return to work, the report finds. Some of these redundancies are discriminatory, many are unfair.

The report examines the experiences of the women who call the charity's advice line, seeking help with problems at work and found that many redundancies are not genuine, merely labelled "redundancy" in an attempt to avoid discrimination claims.

The study found that pregnant women were forced to take part in stressful selection processes in late pregnancy and that women on return to work were facing shock redundancies. Even women on maternity leave, who have additional protections, were losing their jobs.

Maternity Action has called on the government to urgently act on its commitment to review redundancy protection, which it made in January of this year, but has yet to act on.

The charity recommends that the UK adopt the German model of redundancy protection. Under this approach, women must not be made redundant from notification of pregnancy through to six months after return from work, with some limited exceptions.

The report also calls for improvements in guidance for employers, information for women and support for advice services. And it wants employers to start reporting on maternity retention rates alongside gender pay gap reporting.

Maternity Action is the UK's leading charity committed to ending inequality and improving the health and well-being of pregnant women, their partners and children and also convenes the Alliance for Maternity Rights, a group that includes trade unions and parents' organisations, and which works together to make policy recommendations aimed at eliminating pregnancy and maternity discrimination and achieving fairness for pregnant women and new mothers.

www.maternityactioncampaigns.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/RedundancyReportFinal.compressed.pdf

Short-sighted approach to training

Just one in three workers (33%) say their employer offers regular training opportunities, according to the TUC. And one in four workers (24%) say that no

training is offered at their workplace at all apart from a new starters' induction.

The TUC poll, of more than 3,000 working adults, shows the problem is worst in the service sector, where just one in four get training opportunities.

White collar workers (social grades A and B) are twice as likely (40% versus 21%) to get training opportunities than in those in blue collar roles (grades D and E). And young workers (18- to 24 year-olds) miss out on training the most.

The TUC says employers not helping its workers get new skills is a key factor behind Britain's productivity crisis. EU employers spend double the amount UK employers do on improving workforce skills and typically have much higher productivity levels.

The OECD market economy think tank warned last month that Britain's poor skills record was holding down productivity.

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said: "Too many people are stuck in jobs where there's no chance to get on in life.

"It's about time managers started to wake up, invest in their workers' skills and listen to their workers' opinions.

"Companies that train and listen to their workforces perform better and hold on to talented staff.

"The short-sighted approach of too many employers has blighted the UK for years. And it is stifling productivity as we head towards Brexit."

www.tuc.org.uk/news/just-one-three-get-chance-train-work-tuc-poll-finds

Bogus self-employment in road transport

The use of sham and bogus employment practices and agency worker abuses in the road transport industry is going to be tested at an employment tribunal.

The Unite general union has filed a claim on behalf of Gary Sharrock, a driver from St Helens, against ADR Network Limited, the Co-op's preferred agency, and PPF Limited.

Sharrock is claiming holiday pay under the 1998 *Working Time Regulations*; a claim for the unlawful

deduction from wages under the 1996 *Employment Rights Act*; and a claim for pay parity under the *Agency Workers Regulations 2010*.

The crux of the case is that Gary Sharrock had to set up his own company, while the work he did driving across the north of England was the same as those employed on a Pay As You Earn (PAYE) basis.

Unite Legal Services said that Mr Sharrock did not want to work on these terms, "but was not offered, or advised he could undertake, work on any other basis". The union claims that ADR and PPF do "engage employers on a PAYE basis", but that he "was not afforded that option".

Sharrock drives exclusively for ADR and PPF on a contract run by Wincanton PLC on behalf of the Co-operative Services Ltd from the Lea Green depot on Merseyside. He transports goods to Co-op stores across the region.

He set up Sharrock Transport Ltd. However, he does not own his own truck or have any form of public liability insurance. The responsibility for the maintenance, insurance and fuel of the truck lies elsewhere. He is required to wear the same uniform as those employed by ADR and PPF on a PAYE basis.

He requested holiday to be taken in July this year and this was refused. He argues that he is entitled to be paid for statutory annual leave since he started work in September 2016.

Unite assistant general secretary for legal services Howard Beckett, said: "Not only are we challenging the agency's use of bogus self-employment to avoid the basic right to holiday pay – this also has implications for our member's right to sick pay and a pension – and it is a brazen attempt to circumvent the *Agency Worker Regulations 2010*.

"The *Agency Worker Regulations* require agencies to pay workers the same rates as the client's employed workforce, in this case Wincanton but,

at other Co-op depots, directly employing Co-op drivers.

"Failing to do so not only fleeces workers who are forced to undertake precarious agency work, but it undermines and undercuts the employed workforce.

"This is unacceptable for any employer, but for one that claims to be an 'ethical' employer [in this case the Co-op] is even more troubling."

www.unitetheunion.org/news/bogus-self-employment-in-the-road-haulage-industry-to-come-under-spotlight-at-employment-tribunal/

Vital statistics on health and safety

The overall number of workers fatally injured at work in Great Britain fell last year.

The number of workers fatally injured at work in the year to March 2017 fell to 137, against 147 the year before. It is the second lowest annual figure on record after 2013-14, according to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Other data released by the HSE reveals that the number of deaths in 2015 from asbestos-related disease totalled over 3,000, with 2,542 deaths from mesothelioma and 467 deaths from asbestosis.

The HSE also published a breakdown of deaths from mesothelioma on a regional basis and by occupation.

There were 1.3 million work-related ill health cases in 2016-17, 0.6 million self-reported injuries at work and 31.2 million days lost due to work-related ill health and injuries at work. The annual cost of work-related ill health cases and injuries was estimated by the HSE to be £14.9 billion in 2015-16.

www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/index.htm

www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/asbestos.htm

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