

Task three - Guidance document (legislation and employment relations)

1. Work-life balance refers to the equilibrium between an individual's work responsibilities and their personal life. Achieving this balance within employment is critical for many important reasons, the first being wellbeing. A balanced work-life dynamic helps promote mental and physical health. It can also help reduce stress and prevents a burnout. A survey by the Mental Health Foundation revealed that poor work-life balance leaves 27% of employees feeling depressed and 34% feeling anxious when working long hours (Beneden Health, 2024) When employees can commit to personal hobbies and their families alongside work their overall satisfaction and resilience will increase. Employees who are not overworked tend to be more productive, creative and motivated. Creating an environment which there's less work-life balance will create staff with lower efficiency, absenteeism, which means mistakes will be made. A good work-life balance will sustain a high performance within a workforce. Organisations that support a healthy work-life balance will more likely see a higher retention within their staff. The Workplace Wellbeing Report 2024 by Great Place to Work indicated that employees who experience high levels of wellbeing are 3 times more likely to stay with their employer and go above and beyond for their employer as they feel (Workplace Wellbeing Report 2024)
 - The WTR implements the EU working time directive into UK law, setting out rest periods, working hours and annual leave entitlements. The Working Time Regulations 1988 sets out rules and regulations around annual leave, night work, breaks and working hours. The maximum amount workers can be required to work is 48 hours per week, which can be averaged out over 17-week reference period. An opt-out agreement is where workers may voluntarily agree in writing to work more than 48 hours per week but can withdraw this agreement at any time. Rest periods are mainly applicable for long haul drivers and their daily rest needs to be at least 11 consecutive hours in every 24-hour period. Their weekly rest should be 24 hours uninterrupted hours in each 7-day period. If the working day exceeds 6 hours a 20-minute rest break is necessary, and applicable to all workers.
2. Wellbeing in the workplace refers to the overall mental, physical, emotional and social health of employees within their workplace environment. Workplace wellbeing typically includes; Mental wellbeing, physical wellbeing, social wellbeing and emotional wellbeing. According to the CIPD employee health and wellbeing should be integral to any HR strategy and embedded in organizational operations. In the UK, work related ill health led to 35.2 million working days lost in 2022-2023 with stress, anxiety and depression accounting for nearly 24 million of these days. (CIPD, 2025) Employees who feel supported and valued are more engaged and productive. Gallup's research indicates that employees who strongly agree their employer cares about their overall wellbeing are 3x more likely to be engaged at work, 69% less likely to actively search for a new job and 71% less likely to experiencing a burnout. (Gallup, 2024)

3. The discrimination legislation in the UK is primarily governed by the 2010 Equality Act which strengthens anti-discrimination laws. This act is to ensure individuals don't get unfairly treated and to promote a fair and equal society. The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination based on the following 9 protected characteristics: Age, Gender, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual orientation. The law recognises many types of discrimination such as direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and discrimination by association or perception. The Equality Act of 2010 applies to employment, education, public services, and goods and services. Employers and service providers must make reasonable adjustments for disabled individuals to ensure they are not disadvantaged. In some cases, positive action is allowed to help groups who are at a disadvantage or underrepresented as long as it's proportionate and not the same as positive discrimination – which is unlawful.
4. According to CIPD's People Practice textbook, diversity does refer to the visible and non-visible differences that exist between people. These differences are the 9 protected characteristics which include ethnic background, age, sex and religious beliefs. The People Practice book refers to inclusion as creating an environment where everyone feels welcome, supported and respected. It ensures that systems and processes are fair and accessible to all. Diversity and inclusion are important by bringing a range of social benefits.

Firstly, Improved organisational benefits. Inclusive organisations are more likely to create a team which will outperform less diverse organisations. This is due to the fact that diverse teams will broaden their search while recruiting and hire individuals with a broad range of ideas and experiences which will lead to innovation and better decision making. There will also be greater employee retention if an employee feels valued in their role. If an individual feels included and heard they are more likely to be engaged and stay with the organisation. In the UK the Equality Act 2010 makes it illegal to discriminate based on the protected characteristics. Organisations must take fair and diverse steps in order to ensure equality within their business. Job adverts should include unconscious bias, such as age, and also use inclusive language.

5. A fair dismissal is where a dismissal is for a legally valid reason and the employer follows a fair and reasonable procedure. Whereas an unfair dismissal is when the employer does not have a valid reason and doesn't follow a fair procedure. Fair reasons for dismissal include conduct, capability, redundancy, statutory restriction or some other substantial reason. Being dismissed because of conduct is because of employee misconduct which includes theft, capability, fraud, insubordination or repeated lateness/bad punctuality. For example, for Inter Luxe Hotels and many other hotels if an employee was caught stealing money out of the till, there would be a disciplinary and can be dismissed due to gross misconduct. Employers may dismiss someone for

capability due to their poor performance or inability to properly do the job. For example, if an employee continuously fails to meet their targets/does not complete essential training. Automatically unfair reasons can include pregnancy or maternity related circumstances, taking family leave, being a member of the trade union, whistleblowing and asserting statutory rights. For example, if an employee is dismissed for reporting Health and Safety violations which were a risk to staff and potential customers this would be classed as automatic unfair dismissal under the Public Interest Disclosure 1998. Employee's generally must have 2 years continuous service to bring a claim. Whereas no minimum service needed for automatic unfair dismissal claims. According to MFMac's Legal expertise the total number of unfair claims has increased from 86,000 to 97,000 which is an increase of nearly 13% within the 23/24 reporting period. (MFMac, 2024)

References:

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