

# Employment Law The Basics

Overview

1. Provide written contracts of employment to all employees (tailor them to levels of seniority) and ensure your policies and procedures are contained in a staff handbook. Make sure both are regularly reviewed.
2. Have a social media policy with clear guidelines in place as to what you consider to be acceptable behaviour, both in terms of usage and content. Make it clear that unacceptable use of social media (whether professional or personal) could result in disciplinary action.
3. Proactively manage sickness absence. Keep detailed absence records and conduct return to work interviews after any period of absence. Consider whether the employee may be disabled.
4. Keep up to date with new employment laws and/or changes. You can do this by regularly checking the ACAS (the Advisory, Conciliation & Arbitration Service) website [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk).
5. Never hold a meeting with an employee (for whatever reason), without taking detailed notes of the conversation. Keep written records of any personnel matter.
6. Ensure employee appraisals/reviews are carried out and that they are accurate. It is easy to avoid difficult conversations about poor performance, but this only creates problems down the line. A fair performance management procedure should be implemented, and should it become necessary, will assist with dismissal procedures further down the line.
7. Follow the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures, again found at [www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2174](http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2174). Any compensatory award made against you by the Employment Tribunal could be increased by **25% if you do not**.
8. Understand what discrimination means and how to avoid it. Appreciate that this does not just apply to employees. Be aware of actions throughout the recruitment process and that you could be held responsible for the actions of third parties.
9. Do not initiate a without prejudice discussion or protected conversation with any employee without taking legal advice first.
10. Always seek legal advice if you are unsure. The right legal advice at the right time could prevent a hefty legal bill if you leave it too late.
11. Signup to receive our regular employment law updates from Karen Cole [www.riabarkergillette.com/uk/employment-newsletter-signup-form](http://www.riabarkergillette.com/uk/employment-newsletter-signup-form).



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*Note: This note does not constitute legal advice and is intended for information purposes only. Before taking any course of action, always consult a solicitor.*