

A bullet point guide to what's new and what to expect from a Conservative/Liberal Coalition Government (revised to reflect the final coalition agreement – '[The Coalition: our programme for government](#)').

What's new from April 2010?

- ▶ New 'fit note' - doctors can suggest changes – no need to take their advice!
<http://tinyurl.com/356rwm9>
- ▶ Right to request time off for training. Does not apply to less than 250 employee organisations. <http://tinyurl.com/2uem2ao>
- ▶ Tribunals can now pass on 'whistleblowing' information to regulators.
- ▶ Blacklists to deny employment or dismiss employees as a result of their trade union membership or activities are outlawed – mainly a Construction industry thing
- ▶ Maximum fee for a 'no win no fee' lawyer will be 35% of the compensation – may encourage more ET applicants, or it may discourage the lawyers and make litigation more expensive – we shall see

What's already on its way?

- ▶ Bribery Act 2010 introduces corporate offence of failing to prevent bribery. From October 2010 (although this is still subject to confirmation) organisations will need procedures which may include policies, rules and staff training.
<http://tinyurl.com/yegqbr8>
- ▶ Sharing of maternity leave for those giving birth or adopting from 6 April 2010. 26 weeks available for sharing, including 13 weeks of paid leave.
<http://tinyurl.com/33gwopy>
- ▶ Equality Act: - probably to come into force from October 2010, although there has been some doubt about Conservative Party support for the Act's positive discrimination and gender pay reports proposals. Other provisions include outlawing secrecy pay clauses, pay audits, discrimination by association, pre employment medical questionnaire limitations, dual discrimination and other harmonisation measures. <http://tinyurl.com/33koowu>

What are the final Coalition Agreement commitments?

Employment and related intentions include: -

- ▶ cap on numbers of non EU immigrants
- ▶ Default retirement age to be phased out
- ▶ Commitment to maintain 48 hour working week opt out
- ▶ Proposals to tackle unacceptable financial sector bonuses
- ▶ 'Seek' ways to support the creation of more apprenticeships and college places
- ▶ 'one in one out' meaning that one new law equals one removed, but this may only apply to 'business law'
- ▶ Gradual introduction of flexible working rights to all employees

- ▶ Non specific commitment to equal pay
- ▶ Gender equality on company Boards
- ▶ Continuing support for the National Minimum Wage
- ▶ Review of employment and workplace law
- ▶ No more 'gold plating' of EU Directives i.e. no going further than required!
- ▶ Fair pay review to implement the '20 times' (pay gap between lowest and highest paid employee should not exceed 20 times) principle in the public sector.
- ▶ Scaling back of the 'vetting and barring' regulations
- ▶ New protection for whistleblowers – probably, in particular, in the NHS

Given their shared pre election promises, what is missing?

- ▶ More flexibility on maternity/parental leave –allowing fathers to share more paid leave, and introducing 'simultaneous leave', although a commitment to 'a system of flexible parental leave' may cover this.

All reasonable efforts have been taken to ensure that the advice contained in this checklist represents both best practice, and the law as it stands at the time of publication. It should not be relied on as a substitute for taking advice about specific situations.