

Non-COVID-19 related employment essentials

Understandably, the world has been increasingly focused in the last few weeks on coronavirus related issues. Employers have been faced with new provisions in the law, and unique employee queries and challenges and have had little to no time to focus on anything else.

We've pulled together some information about non-COVID-19 related employment matters which may have passed under your radar recently.

Are the IR35 changes still happening in April?	No. The rules currently in place for the self-employed operating in the public sector were due to be extended to the private sector in April. These have now been postponed until 2021 in light of the Coronavirus pandemic.
Do we still need to complete our gender pay gap reporting this year?	No. The Government Equalities Office (GEO) has confirmed that it has suspended enforcement of the gender pay gap deadlines this year in the wake of the challenges presented to employers by coronavirus, meaning it will not investigate any employers failing to report their pay gap. The CIPD has encouraged all businesses that are able to still submit their data.
Are employment tribunal hearings still taking place?	Not exactly. All full merits hearings listed to start on or before 26 June 2020 have been converted to telephone "or other electronic means" case management hearings in order to discuss how best to manage the case going forward in light of the current crisis. This will undoubtedly result in delays in full merit hearings being held, particularly as hearing listed for 29 June onwards remain listed normally for the time being.
Is parental bereavement leave still coming into force this year?	Yes. With effect from 6 April 2020 a parent who loses a child under the age of 18, or suffers a stillbirth from 24 weeks of pregnancy, irrespective of how long they have worked for their employer, will be entitled to take 2 weeks bereavement leave. Employees with at least 26 weeks' service will also be entitled to statutory bereavement leave pay and this will be at the same level as statutory paternity leave (currently the lower of £148.68 or 90% of average weekly earnings). Parents will be able to take the leave as either a single block of two weeks, or as two separate blocks of one week each, in either case within 56 weeks of the death of the child. The Act also extends this right to those with parental responsibility, such as adoptive parents and legal guardians.
Are the changes to written statements of employment still happening in April?	Yes. With effect from 6 April 2020 any worker engaged is entitled to a written statement containing certain particulars from day 1. It is unlikely any business will be engaging new workers however if you are, do ensure you know what the new requirements are as they are different to what is currently in place.
What's happening with Brexit?	We are still in the transition period and the plan currently remains to have in place a new immigration system effective from 1 January 2021. Any EU nationals resident in the UK should therefore make sure they apply for settled status if they haven't already – bearing in mind that, naturally, decisions may be delayed at the moment.