

Being a good employer

When do I become an employer?

You become an employer as soon as you offer a job to somebody and they accept it.

How do I manage employing people?

Employing and managing staff can be very rewarding as it puts you in control of what you need someone to do for you. By spending time designing the job and making sure your employees understand exactly what you want them to do you can avoid problems that may arise. Making sure your staff know how they should conduct themselves and what rules they should be working to helps to develop a clear relationship between you and your employee.

Managing staff means that you also need to listen to your staff's needs and support them to understand what you want them to do. It needs to be a two-way relationship where you are communicating with each other so that ideas can be discussed, and any concerns can be raised by either of you before the issues become too big.

There are accredited providers that offer ongoing employment support packages that provide you with employment advice and support in relation to your responsibilities as an employer. Please call Equal Lives on 01508 491210 for more information about who can support you and what they can offer.

What are my responsibilities?

As an employer you have certain responsibilities. Below is a list of some of the responsibilities you will have:

- References and checks – You should make checks on your employees before they start work with you, such as a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, taking up references from previous employers and checking documents to ensure that they are legally entitled to work in the UK.

- Employment Documents – When someone accepts a job with you this becomes a contract of employment between you and the employee. A contract includes the terms and conditions that you have offered and agreed with your employee, as well as the things that the law says you must provide. So that you and your employee know what these terms and conditions are, you are legally obliged to provide a statement of particulars to any new member of staff within eight weeks of them starting work with you. It is good practice to provide a job description and review this regularly.

Equal Lives can provide you with more information regarding who can offer support with employment documents call 01508 491210. Alternatively Equal Lives have created a factsheet called 'Offering the job' which covers statement of particulars and you can obtain a template for these online at www.acas.org.uk.

- Changing Employment Documents – There may be times when you wish to change your employee's terms and conditions for example if their working hours change. Any changes to terms and conditions must be by mutual agreement and provided in writing to employees within four weeks of the change. Equal Lives have created a factsheet called 'Changing an employee's terms and conditions' which explains about how you would change these if required.
- Tax and National Insurance – You are responsible for paying your employees, providing them with a payslip and making the correct deductions from their wages for tax and national insurance, paying any employers' national insurance, as well as reporting this information in Real Time to HMRC and there are a number of payroll packages you can use to do this. You can register as an employer with HMRC (Inland Revenue) and set up a PAYE scheme.

If you don't want to run your own payroll there is an accredited list of providers that offer this service. Equal Lives can provide you more information on who can offer this support please call 01508 491210 for further information.

- **Minimum Wage** – You will need to pay your employees at least the National Minimum Wage. Any changes to the minimum wage are usually implemented in October, and it is your responsibility to ensure that you keep up to date with, and apply any changes as appropriate. You can get more information by calling the pay and work rights helpline on 0800 917 2368.
- **Statutory Payments** – You have a responsibility to pay things such as statutory sick pay, statutory maternity / paternity or adoption pay, if they are due. Equal Lives have created factsheets that cover this in more detail; these are ‘Managing Sickness and Statutory Sick Pay’, ‘Managing Maternity’ and ‘Holiday Calculations’. You can also obtain further information regarding this from www.acas.org.uk or www.gov.uk.
- **Annual Leave** – All employees are currently entitled to 5.6 weeks paid holiday per year. For more information regarding annual leave please see the factsheet Equal Lives have created called ‘Annual Leave and Working Time Regulations’.
- **Working Hours** – You cannot insist that your employee works more than 48 hours on average per week. You must also allow your employees to take adequate rest breaks. For more details on working hours Equal Lives have created a factsheet called ‘Annual Leave and Working Time Regulations’. Alternatively, you can go online to www.gov.uk.
- **Induction** – You should plan an induction for your staff to show them where equipment is, run through codes of conduct, swap emergency telephone numbers and any other important information.
- **Health and Safety** – You must make sure that your employees are working in a safe environment. To do this, you would normally carry out a risk assessment. For more information about this Equal Lives have created a factsheet called ‘Health and Safety’ or you can contact the Health and Safety Executive on 0300 003 1747 or go online to www.hse.gov.uk.

- Training – As part of your risk assessment you should make sure your employees are properly trained for the tasks you ask them to carry out. For example, if you require them to use a hoist or other equipment, you may wish to send your employees on a suitable training course.

If you do not ensure your employees are properly trained then this may affect your Employer's Liability Insurance in the event of a claim. You can get free advice on training, and support to look for funding from an organisation called Norfolk and Suffolk Care Support Ltd. You can contact them on 01603 629211.

- Reviews and appraisals – You should consider having regular reviews and appraisals with your employees to discuss their work, so that any issues can be raised and resolved.
- Insurance – You will need to have insurance in place to protect you as an employer: Employers and Public Liability Insurance. You can find out more information regarding this in the Equal Lives factsheet called 'Employers Liability Insurance'.
- Equality – You have a responsibility to treat all of your employees fairly and equally. For example part-time workers have a right not to be treated less favourably than full-time employees. Equal Lives have created a factsheet called 'Ensuring you don't discriminate' which you may find useful.
- Confidentiality – You will need to know some personal information about your employees. Your employees need to know that you are keeping this information and you should not pass this on to anyone else without your employee's permission. Equal Lives have created a factsheet called 'Keeping Records' which you may find useful.
- Keeping up to date – As an employer, you will need to be aware of any changes in employment law that will affect you and your employees. Changes usually take place every April and October and you can find out more online at www.acas.org.uk or www.gov.uk.

How do I deal with any problems?

If you become unhappy with your employees work you should tell them as soon as this happens. By explaining how you would prefer the task done, any problems can normally be resolved informally.

Many problems are simply due to a misunderstanding. However, if the problem persists you may need to take more formal steps to find a resolution. Equal Lives have created a factsheet called 'Disciplinary Procedure' which can support you in taking the appropriate action in regards to your employee and another factsheet called 'Gross Misconduct' which may apply in certain employment situations. If you require further support with employment you can contact Equal Lives on 01508 491210 or ACAS on 0300 123 1100.

If you require further information or would like this factsheet in an alternative format you can contact us by calling: 01508 491210, by emailing: info@equallives.org.uk, or by writing to: Equal Lives, 15 Manor Farm Barns, Fox Road, Framingham Pigot, Norwich, Norfolk, NR14 7PZ