



Hello and welcome to the Dundas & Wilson Vox, our monthly podcast looking at some of the more interesting recent developments in the world of employment law.

In July's Dundas & Wilson Vox we take a look at:

- [Interns Demand a Fair Day's Wages for a Fair Day's Work](#)
- [Are there Changes Ahead for Industrial Action Balloting Requirements?](#)
- [Employment Contract - Have You Read Yours?](#)
- [The Bald Truth in Recruitment](#)

So first,

[Summer students - to pay or not to pay?](#)

According to a recent CIPD report 37% of internships are unpaid. Critics argue that unpaid internships hamper social mobility, as only children of the more affluent in society can afford to work for free. In recent years there has been a significant increase in summer student placements, or interns, as employers have started to recognise the benefits for them, by using the placement to vet potential graduate recruits. The CIPD is now urging the government to introduce a new 'training wage' for interns of £2.50 an hour.

According to the CIPD, employers have reported confusion over the correct approach under current law, with concerns that they may be breaking the law by failing to pay interns. Interns don't fall under the definition of work and are therefore not required to be paid the minimum wage. The CIPD claims the introduction of a 'training wage' would not only help to clarify the position, but also create fairer conditions for interns in the workplace.

[Are changes ahead for industrial action balloting requirements?](#)

Hot on the heels of the recent CBI report recommending that 40% of the balloted workforce must support a strike before it is lawful, comes a report in the Times that the government plan to "beef up" industrial action legislation.

The CBI's report recommends changes to the current balloting requirements where a simple union majority vote – regardless of voter turnout - can result in lawful strike action. The CBI is advocating the introduction of a statutory threshold of 40% support across the balloted workforce in addition to the simple majority rule. This threshold arrangement already exists where a union seeks statutory recognition from the Central Arbitration Committee, so there is some precedent for this type of voting system.

The Times article suggests that the government's reforms will depend on the unions' actions over the coming months, as the effects of spending cuts start to take effect.

[Employment contract - have you read yours?](#)

A survey conducted by Which? Legal Service has revealed that over five million British employees haven't read their employment contracts.

Peter Vicary-Smith, the Which? chief executive, said: "Our research shows that many people fail to take the time to read their employment contracts properly, which means they have no idea what they've signed up to and could be in for a shock in the future."

Twenty-six per cent of the four thousand members of the public surveyed admitted they only skim read their contracts, whereas six per cent confessed to never having read their employment contracts at all.

And finally the bald truth in recruitment

An aspiring police officer who was barred from entering the police force because of his baldness has been reinstated after raising proceedings in the High Court of Northern Ireland. It is understood that he had reached an advanced stage of the recruitment process when his progress was halted because he was unable to supply the 3cm long hairs required for a mandatory drugs test. When his application to join the police was rejected on this basis, he challenged the outcome for being "irrational and discriminatory". On the first day of the hearing, lawyers representing the Police Force advised the judge that he would be reinstated and their procedures changed.

And that's all for this month's Vox.

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