

Mark Ridley corrects misconception of flexible working rule



Mark Ridley, head Solicitor of our Employment Department, says –

It has been widely reported that the right to flexible working is to be extended to include a further 4-5 million parents of children aged up to 16, amid concerns that it could damage small businesses.

According to Mark, however, the new right is to ‘request’ flexible working – a very different proposition.

“There appears to be some misunderstanding about this forthcoming legislation, says Mark. “While workers have the right to request more flexible working conditions, employers also have the right to refuse them and to work with employees to develop a solution that works for both parties.”

“The right to make such a request is already available to people whose children are aged six and under or disabled. Employers approved over 90% of such requests last year, which strongly implies that they saw little or no likelihood that carefully tailored, flexible contracts would damage their businesses.”

In fact, there is much evidence to suggest that flexible working is good for business, largely through this creation of a happier and more productive workforce. “There are some possible drawbacks, continues Mark, “for example, employees without children can feel that they are at a disadvantage in negotiating the working conditions they would like – it is then down to the employer to ensure that everybody is treated fairly.”

“Our employment law experts can help small businesses review the contracts they draw up with their staff, both to ensure its compliance with existing and forthcoming legislation and to enable fairness for all.

For any advice on Employment law issues do not hesitate to contact our Employment Department’s PA, Sue Mace, either by telephone 024 7663 2121 or email Sue on sue.mace@bandhatton.co.uk.