

22 February 2024

Changes in employment law which may benefit women

Rebecca Hunter provides an overview of changes in employment law to mark International Women's Day.

In celebration of International Women's Day, PCS would like to make you aware of changes to employment law taking effect from April 2024 that may benefit women. PCS is in discussion with the Cabinet Office in respect of changes to relevant procedures, but the law will apply regardless of procedural changes.

Statutory Carers' Leave

Employees with any length of service, who care for anyone with a disability, will have the right to take one week of unpaid carer's leave per year. Crucially, and in contradiction with the current special leave policy, the employer cannot decline the request, but can postpone requested leave for up to one month.

Flexible Working Requests

Employees with any length of service have a right to request flexible working and are entitled to make two requests each year (instead of one). The change doesn't make flexible working a right, so requests can be refused, but employers must respond to the request within two months.

Additional redundancy protection during pregnancy, maternity, adoption, and shared parental leave

During redundancies, employees who are pregnant, on maternity leave, adoption leave, shared parental leave or have returned from the leave within 18 months, must be offered suitable alternative employment where it exists in priority to anyone else who is provisionally selected for redundancy.

As with most maternity and related leave issues, the legal provision can be confusing and complex, however the protection is a positive change.

Changes expected in 2024/2025:

- Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Bill means the employer must take reasonable steps and proactive measures to prevent

sexual harassment of employees.

- Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023. If a baby under 28 days old is in hospital for a least a week, the parents will be able to claim paid leave in addition to other parental leave.