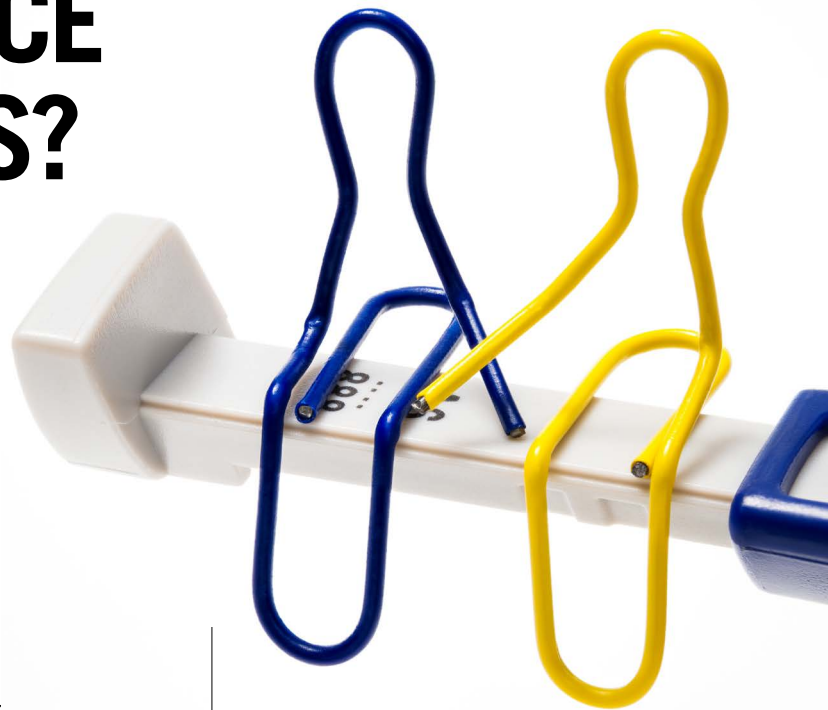


SHOULD YOU BAN WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS?

To mark Valentine's Day, we take a look at the taboo topic of workplace relationships and how employers navigate the legalities of imposing restrictions on them.



A recent survey revealed an incredible 58% of employees have engaged in a romantic relationship with a colleague. This should be a wake-up call for employers to manage workplace attraction and ensure an acceptable policy is in place.

"A policy on workplace relationships which is clearly communicated to staff could save an employer a lot of stress and financial risk in the long run" says HR Team Director, Breda Cullen.

Almost half (41%) of employees did not know their company's policy regarding office romance.

Many companies have strict policies against workplace relationships. For example, McDonald's has adopted a zero-tolerance relationship policy regarding the romance between senior management and employees. The company's CEO, Steve Easterbrook, was previously dismissed for having a consensual relationship with

an employee. A statement by McDonald's said the Easterbrook had "violated company policy" and "shown poor judgement".

WHY RESTRICT A WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIP?

Potential litigation issues or conflicts of interest if a relationship turns sour are becoming an increasing risk for companies in light of the 'Me Too' movement.

Other factors to consider about romantic relationships between employees may be that staff are distracted – they may have more interest in each other than their work. For this reason, productivity can be affected.

Workplace relationships could also prompt concerns over accusations of favouritism to maintaining a professional and comfortable environment and avoiding possible disruption to that – especially in the event of a breakup. However, employees can perceive restrictions as an invasion of privacy. Completely banning workplace relationships may also encourage employees to be dishonest and conceal the relationship. Employers must also be careful of discrimination claims, in particular, where same sex individuals are involved.



BREDA CULLEN'S EMPLOYMENT LAW TIPS

MANAGING EMPLOYEE DISMISSALS

Employers must be able to prove that they have a fair reason for the dismissal of an employee. There are currently five appropriate reasons for dismissals:

1. Employee conduct.
2. Capability, e.g. performance or sickness.
3. Redundancy purposes.
4. Illegal actions from the employee.
5. Another substantial reason.

It is important to note that retirement is no longer a fair reason for dismissal. You must show that you followed a fair procedure – refer to the company's disciplinary process.

Employees must have one years' service to qualify for unfair dismissal. However, no qualifying service is required where a dismissal is because of a discriminatory factor (such as age, sex, race, disability etc.) or because of health and safety reasons, trade union involvement, pregnancy or whistleblowing.



ADVICE FOR EMPLOYERS ON WORKERS' MENTAL HEALTH

At any one time, one in six adults will be experiencing a mental health condition. Employers must play a part in supporting job retention and return to work for people in such situations. Simple and cost-effective workplace adjustments can make a big difference in many cases.

Eight tips employers and managers can use to promote good mental health in the workplace:

1

Promote a work life balance.

2

Discuss mental health in the workplace.

3

Offer free screening tools.

4

Talk about employee benefits.

5

Make wellness a priority.

6

Provide in-service events such as stress management or self-care.

7

Support employees' efforts to get help.

8

Reduce the stigma surrounding mental health.

HR AND EMPLOYMENT LAW WEBINAR

MANAGING EMPLOYEE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS



The pandemic has shone a spotlight on the topic of mental health for employers and employees alike. Many of us have experienced first-hand how living with high levels of uncertainty, constant change and traumatic events can lead to feelings of anxiety, stress, depression and other mental health problems. As well as dealing with issues in their personal lives, employees have also had to cope with massive changes in the workplace, including being furloughed, working from home for long periods, or having to work longer shifts to cover for absent team members. All of these experiences are likely to have taken their toll on the mental health and wellbeing of our workforce.

Even before the Covid-19, employers had a growing awareness of the organisational costs of poor employee mental health. Pre-pandemic research from the Healthy Ireland framework identified that employee mental health problems were costing Irish businesses €11 billion each year, much of which was being attributed to a loss of productivity.

While the full repercussions of the pandemic on the workforce's mental health are, unfortunately, yet to be realised, it is clear that employers should make tackling mental health at work a strategic priority.

Whilst an increase in awareness amongst employers is welcome, it is not enough. Many business owners and managers still don't understand the causes of mental health problems or feel confident enough to have conversations with employees about their mental health. They are also often not clear on the types of organisational interventions that can positively impact their employees' wellbeing.

This webinar will provide an overview of mental health problems and how the workplace can reduce or exacerbate their impact. It will also offer some practical ways in which employers can support the mental health and wellbeing of their workforce.

WEBINAR OVERVIEW

- What is good mental health?
- The facts about mental health at work and in society pre and post-Covid.
- Mental health and stigma.
- Overview of mental health conditions, with a focus on stress, anxiety and depression.
- Recognising the signs that someone may be struggling with a mental health problem.
- How to have conversations with your staff about mental health.
- Strategies for managing employee mental health and wellbeing.

WHAT WILL YOU LEARN FROM THE WEBINAR?

This webinar will equip managers and leaders to recognise and respond supportively to staff experiencing mental health challenges in the workplace. You will also gain an insight into how to effect change at an organisational level in order to improve the overall wellbeing and engagement levels of your workforce, which will bring additional success to your business.

After attending, participants will be better equipped to:

- Link employee mental health and wellbeing to productivity and business success
- Recognise signs of mental wellbeing and mental distress in the workplace.
- Understand what people with mental health challenges are experiencing.
- Know how to provide appropriate support to staff experiencing mental distress.
- Be aware of the steps employers can take to manage and improve wellbeing in the workplace

About the facilitator:

The webinar will be facilitated by Nicole Squires, MA MCIPD, MBACP.

Nicole is HR and Employment Law Consultant at HR Team. As well as having almost 20 years' strategic HR management and consultancy experience, Nicole is also a fully qualified and practicing counsellor/psychotherapist.

WHEN IS THE WEBINAR?

Date: Tuesday, February 22, 2022

Time: 10.00am – 11.00am

Cost: £85/€100

Cost for retained clients: FREE

To register, please click [here](#)



UPCOMING HR TEAM WEBINARS IN 2022

Tuesday, February 22

Mental Health and Wellbeing of Employees

[Register Now](#)

Tuesday, March 29

Effective Performance Appraisals

[Register Now](#)

Tuesday, April 26

Sickness Absence Management

[Register Now](#)

Tuesday, May 24

How to Conduct a Disciplinary Investigation

[Register Now](#)

Tuesday, June 28

How to Compliantly Handle a Grievance

[Register Now](#)

Tuesday, September 27

Effective Recruitment and Selection

[Register Now](#)

Tuesday, October 25

How to Manage Social Media in the Workplace

[Register Now](#)

Tuesday, November 29

Using the Probationary Period Effectively and Compliantly

[Register Now](#)

Tuesday, December 13

Measuring Employee Performance

[Register Now](#)

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Alternatively, contact us via email: hello@hrteamgroup.com



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