
Attention: News Editors, Business and industrial correspondents

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Extending right to request flexible working is 'good news for employers'

Commenting on new Government legislation which comes into force today (Monday), including extending the right to request flexible working and increasing paid holiday entitlement, Midlands TUC Regional Secretary **Roger McKenzie** said:

"This is extremely welcome news. Extending the right to request flexible working to parents of children up to the age of 16 can only be good news for employers.

"Companies whose workers enjoy the benefits of flexible working are likely to feel less stressed and less anxious about balancing their lives at home and work, which means they are more committed and productive while at work.

"I hope all employers who receive flexibility requests consider them seriously and do all they can to make flexible working a reality.

"The TUC is also pleased to see the increase in the minimum legal entitlement to paid holiday from 4.8 to 5.6 weeks per year. This is an increase of 24 to 28 days for a full-time worker on a five day week, with pro-rata increases for part-timers.

"We estimate that this will benefit two million employees, many of whom will be low-paid women, working part-time here in the midlands.

"At the other end of the scale, this extra holiday entitlement will help to address our long hours working culture, which is stopping many people from enjoying a proper work/life balance."

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- The legislation includes:
- the right to request flexible working extended to parents of children up to the age of 16;
- Employment Act 2008 provisions come into force – it strengthens, simplifies and clarifies key aspects of UK employment law, including strengthened enforcement of the national minimum wage;
- the weekly rate of statutory sick pay (SSP) increases from £75.40 to £79.15;
- pension credit increase;
- Health in Pregnancy Grant (a one-off payment of £190 for every expectant mother who is at least 25 weeks pregnant).
- On Wednesday (1 April 2009) the minimum legal entitlement to paid holiday was increased from 4.8 to 5.6 weeks per year, an increase of 24 to 28 days for a full-time worker on a five day week, with pro-rata increases for part-timers.

- The right to request flexible working was introduced in 2003 for parents of children aged up to six and disabled children aged up to 18. It was extended to carers of adults in 2007. Six million parents and carers already have the right to request flexible working from their employers, 4.5 million gain the right from today (Monday) with this extension to parents of children aged 16 and under).

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