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Our online training is now available

At Amica HR, we understand that at the heart of every great company is its people. That's why we offer online training seminars to help you get the best out of your workforce. These are available to view at a convenient time to fit around the needs of your business and employees so there's no reason to wait—start building your success story today with Amica HR...

Want to encourage a healthier, more effective workplace?

Maybe a course in [Stress Management](#) would be of help to you or your employees or a [Time Management](#) course that would help in prioritising responsibilities.

[Negotiation Skills](#) may be of use to a business who wants to ensure that employees are happy in the workplace as a preventative measure to stop conflict early.

Want to learn how to promote your business online?

How about trying a [Search Engine Optimisation course](#)? Or maybe [Social Media](#) is more suitable for promoting your business? We also provide specific courses for platforms such as [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#).

Want to build on employer-employee relationships?

You could benefit from a [Leadership Skills](#) course, or possibly [Effective Delegation](#). Depending on your industry, [Project Management](#) or [Customer Service](#) skills might benefit you and your employees too.

Need to familiarise yourself with employment laws?

Make sure that you are protecting yourself, your business and your employees by ensuring you know all the latest employment laws surrounding [Equality, Diversity & Discrimination](#).

(Training article written by Louise Norman)

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STAFF WITH SHORT SERVICE, CAN I JUST FIRE THEM?

The short answer? Yes.

The long answer? Well that's a little bit more complicated.

Whether it's a case of misconduct or a performance issue, an instant resolution can be tempting when an employee just isn't up to standard. After all, everyone knows that an employee must have two years' service before they can claim unfair dismissal—but that doesn't mean an instant

an informed decision. If it's a performance issue, then attempting to performance manage the employee is always recommended before resorting to dismissal.

Beyond that, implementing and utilising a probation period is the best way to avoid the potential problems that arise from dismissal.

Probations can be a fantastic asset to your company, allowing you valuable time to assess the suitability of a new

"The short answer? Yes. The long answer? Well that's a little bit more complicated."

10 STRANGE EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

10. Office Wine Bar

9. Bright Green Converse

8. Lunch Time Surfing

7. In-Office Scooters

6. In-Office Helter Skelter

5. Golden Bobblehead Cow

4. Botox

3. A Lunch Time Chat With

Stephen Fry

2. A Star Wars Themed Castle

1. Cryopreservation

dismissal is a good idea.

You might think you're protected by the length of service and in some ways, you are, but dismissing someone without following the set procedure can open your company up to other forms of challenges.

There are numerous types of dismissal that are automatically unfair, regardless of how long your employee has been with the company, for example if the reason for their dismissal could be associated with a protected characteristic under the Equality Act (2010).

There's also the chance that the dismissed employee could claim a breach of contract if you fail to follow procedure, so it's always a good idea to keep in line with your policies and legislation. If it's a case of misconduct, go through the disciplinary procedure. Investigate the allegations thoroughly and make

an informed decision. If it's a performance issue, then attempting to performance manage the employee is always recommended before resorting to dismissal.

Give the employee a clear set of targets and expectations from the get go, if they fail to meet them then extending the probation can give you further protection.

You should still collect evidence of poor performance to discuss with the employee but if you are confident that the dismissal could not be construed as automatically unfair, then you only need to fulfil your obligations regarding the notice period before their employment is ended.

If you're unsure, the best course of action is always to ask for HR advice.



INDIRECT DISCRIMINATION:

HOW TO COMPLY WITH THE EQUALITY ACT (2010)

Most companies know they need to comply with the Equality Act, but – as this case shows – avoiding discrimination may not be as straight forward as it seems. So how do you protect yourself and your employees from issues of discrimination?

The easiest way to avoid unintentionally treating someone unfairly is to make sure you're informed and up to date with relevant legislation. Always ask – will your actions impact a certain protected group more than those who are not protected?

This applies to more than just recruitment! Make sure you consider this in all aspects, including promotions, training, redundancy, dress codes, etc. This will help you to foresee, and hopefully avoid, any potential complaints of discrimination.

Take a look at your recruitment policies and procedures. Ensuring these comply can avoid any indirect discrimination. For example, interviewers need to be aware you shouldn't ask questions about any disability until they have been offered the job outright or on a conditional basis.

Creating an open, trusting relationship between the company and its employees can go a long way when issues do arise. If your employees feel they can talk to you candidly, you can create a sincere dialogue about discrimination throughout the workplace and help to not only raise a general awareness, but also encourage a better relationship.

And finally, it's better to be safe than sorry. If you're unsure whether your recruitment process complies with the Equality Act, always use human resources. Whether you have in-house HR, or use a consultancy, this is the best way to keep yourself in line with legislation.

CASE STUDY:

In the recent case of Chief Constable of Norfolk V. Coffey, the EAT ruled it was unlawful to reject a job applicant because the employer thinks they have a condition that may become a disability in the future.

When Lisa Coffey, a police constable at the Wiltshire Constabulary, applied for a transfer to Norfolk, she disclosed that she suffered from upper-range hearing loss but had successfully passed a functionality test at her previous employment.

Norfolk Constabulary invited Mrs. Coffey to a pre-employment medical assessment and was recommended for further testing after her hearing was found to be below the usual recruitment standard.

Norfolk Constabulary then sought the opinion of a separate medical adviser, who noted that her hearing had not deteriorated since 2011 and she would pass a practical test.

Despite these recommendations, the decision was made to reject Mrs. Coffey's transfer request as she did not meet the published medical requirements of a Police Constable.

Mrs. Coffey then decided to take the case to employment tribunal, where she was successful in her claims of discrimination.



MEET OUR TEAM

DAVID GRECH (MSC HRM,
ASSOC CIPD)

DIRECTOR OF AMICA HR

David is results oriented professional, energised by challenge, with a number of years of progressive human resource management and leadership experience supporting management teams and employees through rapid change and growth.

During his career, David has been managing a full spectrum of human resources programmes, services and functions across private and public organisations.

David has a strong command of employment law, compliance issues and benefit plans, within a union and non-union environment.

60 MINUTE SEMINARS: EMPLOYMENT LAW

Amica HR is running a workshop aimed to bring you up to date with the recent changes in employment legislation and the potential impact it could have on your organisation. It will involve real life examples that will enable you to apply employment law regulations within workplace scenarios. The workshop will then end with a short Q&A, to help embed your learning.

Attendance is free for members of the Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce, and

£6+VAT for non-members.

To book your place on the workshop, or for more information, please [click here](#).



GENDER PAY GAP DEADLINE

When the Government announced the requirement for every business with more than 250 employees to create a gender pay gap report last year, it created quite a buzz amongst the giants of the business world. To meet requirements, each qualifying company must publish the report on their public website by the 30st March for public sector and 4th April for businesses and charities. Enforcing the gender pay gap report is the Government's first step in an attempt to close the UK's gender pay gap to add £150 billion to the economy.

ARE YOU GDPR READY?

There's always a degree of anxiety in the air when a new piece of legislation comes in. Companies spend months preparing, so why is there such confusion surrounding the GDPR?

For starters, it's not just one thing. It's regulations are pulled from different places, like European Law, the old data protection and some pieces of new legislation.

At it's core, the GDPR is designed to give people greater control over their own data. The main function of the bill is to better implement 'the right to be forgotten'. The new powers will mean people can ask for their personal data held by companies to be erased and make it easier for individuals to view their data. Also, more explicit consent will be required to process sensitive personal data and allow parents/guardians to give consent for a child's data to be used.

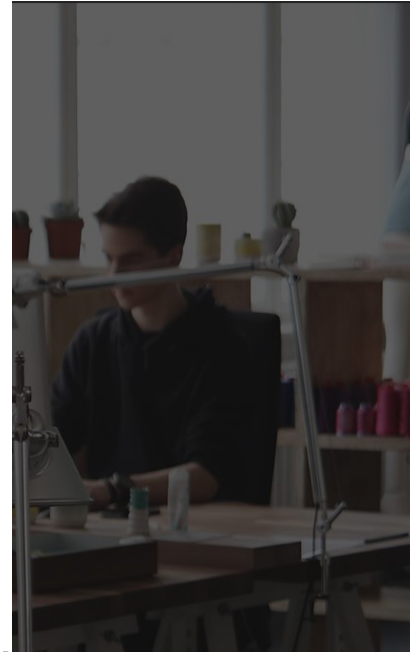
If you require any guidance or information, please contact us.

STAFF APPRAISAL WORKSHOP, 20TH MARCH 2018 AT 10AM

Did you know just 55% of employees feel as though their current performance management appraisals are effective?

Amica HR are offering a 3-hour workshop to help you get the most out of your appraisals. This interactive training session will explore the importance of the Performance Management process and give practical steps to maximise effectiveness. Our seminar will be free for our retained clients and just £9.95 for members of the Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce. The event will take place at our premises at the Think Tank on Ruston Way. We would be grateful if you could confirm your attendance by emailing info@amicahr.co.uk or calling 01522 370190, by 15th March 2018. Tea and Coffee will be available on arrival.

For more information, please visit our [website](#)



“Did you know that business owners can spend up to 40% of each working day on HR?”

5 BENEFITS OF USING A HR CONSULTANCY

Outsourcing to a consultancy is becoming an increasingly popular method of handling the HR tasks that come with running a business, and at just a fraction of the price, it's a much more sustainable method than in-house departments – but, as we all know, cheap is not always cheerful, so what can you expect from outsourcing your HR?

1. Un-biased advice.

Personal relationships can play a huge part in judgement, using external HR can take away that bias and ensure fairness.

2. Time efficiency.

As soon as you become a client, HR consultancies can begin working on your behalf, meaning you can shift your focus from that new GDP-Arggh policy and towards growing your business.

3. Improved HR-employee relations.

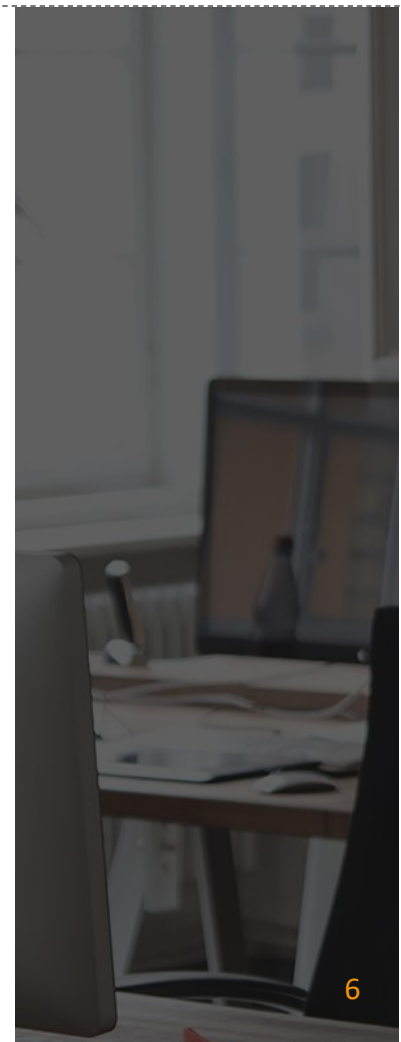
Employees can sometimes be a little hesitant to voice problems to HR, worrying about confidentiality or repercussions, but external HR provide the perfect sounding board for any issues precisely because they're external.

4. Tailor-made service.

Whether you need full-time support, or just a helpful phone call now and again, HR consultants have all kinds of packages, ensuring you can find the one that suits your business needs.

5. Expert advice.

Never underestimate the importance of variety. An in-house department will only ever deal with your HR problems, but an external company will have the benefit of a wide range of experience. No matter the issue, the chances are they will have dealt with it before.



AMICA HR LTD

Do you ever wonder how you can free up more of your time to concentrate on growing / developing your business? We would like to help you drive your company forward by giving you peace of mind and ensuring your workforce is in good hands.

With over 40 years of combined experience, we can provide HR support when required, be that on a regular or intermittent basis, whatever best suits your company's needs. For a more detailed overview of the types of services we offer, please have a look at our website www.amicahr.co.uk or call us on 01522 370190 for further details.



“TO GET A JOB, YOU NEED EXPERIENCE”?

Yes, that old chestnut...there's a glaring problem with it. To get a job, you need experience but to get experience, you need a job. So how do you get around it? Internships act as a loophole, so to find out just how effective internships are, we're looking at two graduates, Emily and Nathan, to see how internships helped them.

36% of students like Emily apply for an internship or work experience during their studies. *“I started applying for internships a few months before I graduated. A lot of businesses seem to be hesitant to take on interns, maybe they think it's a waste of time.”*

Emily isn't alone in feeling a hesitation from businesses about interns. Offering internships can feel like a risk to your organisation but helping graduates find their way in the world of employment can have unexpected benefits.

When Nathan graduated from university, he wasn't sure what his next move should be. *“I was qualified but I didn't have any experience so I knew the chances of me getting a job were slim. I took on an internship and ended up loving an area of work that I wouldn't have tried otherwise”*

For many companies, internships can act as a trial period – allowing the intern to prove their potential without the binding nature of a contract. It can also give you a chance to see how they fit within the businesses culture, an extra benefit that regular recruitment doesn't always allow for.

Internships can still be a daunting process, after all no one can really know what to expect from it. Emily recalls feeling a little overwhelmed. *“I was a little nervous when I started. I wasn't used to such a professional environment, but I quickly found that everyone was friendly and willing to help me settle in. It's given me invaluable knowledge of the job role”.*

Just a few weeks of work experience can dramatically change a young person's view of the workplace. For Emily and Nathan, it was a chance to explore what was out there for graduates and gain some real knowledge and skills in a valuable business sector. Nathan is now studying to gain a Masters degree in HR, utilising the valuable knowledge he gained during his internship. Meanwhile, Emily is now employed as a copywriter and has had her articles featured in several publications.

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