

Right to Request Training – Guidance Published

The Government has published guidance for employers on the new right of employees to request time off work for training, which is set to be introduced on 6 April 2010.

The right to request time to train was included in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act, which received Royal Assent in November 2009. The introduction of the right will be phased. From April 2010, it will be made available to employees in organisations with 250 or more employees before being extended to all employees from April 2011. This will give smaller organisations and businesses more time to prepare for its introduction.

To make a request for time to train, an individual must be an employee and have worked continuously for their employer for at least 26 weeks on the date on which the request is made.

Employees' requests can be to undertake accredited training programmes that will lead to a qualification or for unaccredited training that will assist them to develop specific skills relevant to their job, workplace or business. Whilst employee requests may involve agreeing time away from their workplace duties, the primary focus of the new right is on agreeing relevant training with your staff.

Employers will be required to consider any requests and respond within a set timeframe. A request may be turned down if there is a good business reason for doing so, which includes where the employer does not believe the training will help improve business performance.

The way in which the new right will operate closely follows the model used for handling requests for flexible working arrangements.

The guidance for employers is available through the Business Link website at <http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/timetotrain>.

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