

## Factsheet: HR: Preparing your business for upcoming events

This factsheet can be used while preparing your business for events countrywide or local, to aid you as a check list for impact assessment. Use it for plan and action to reduce negative effects and to enhance the positive effects to ensure your business is at its fittest for success throughout!

### **HR Checklist:**

Communicate with employees (as simple as a quick email) to find out if anyone is a volunteer or intends to have tickets for the event

Collate information on holiday requests for the event period (including how long and when) to confirm if there may be any times where staff shortage may be an issue

Put into action any cross-training, temporary recruitment or movement of staff from other premises.  
Consider overtime to cover temporary staff shortages

Make any changes to policies to cover the adjustments from the normal running of your business (for example adding a policy to cover overtime or adjusting the unauthorised absence policy for better effect)

Communicate the changes in policies to all employees and where necessary reaffirm policies such as those for holiday requests and unauthorised absence. The importance of communicating clear policies and processes to all involved in advance is crucial. Employees need to know what is expected of them and the sooner they know the sooner any problems can be raised and addressed

### **HR Impacts to address:**

More holiday requests than the business is used to handling in a short space of time for participation either as volunteers or spectators

Change from normal staffing hours required to deal with a reduction or increase in footfall that may require consideration of overtime and/or flexible working

Increased chances of unauthorised absences, not only from staff forgetting to register a holiday day and then hoping the day off will be overlooked but also from post celebration malaise

Difficulty in travel arrangements due to increased traffic or closed/restricted access.

Chances of lost productivity as employees attempt to sneak glimpses of the event when not being overseen, and consideration for those that don't want to be involved and resent others having special privileges.

### **Information by policy:**

- ◆ **Holiday requests** - Policy on holiday requests can be as simple as on a first come, first served basis. However you deal with the policy, it is important to ensure that it is as fair as possible and that the policy is communicated as soon as possible to avoid grievances.
- ◆ **Volunteers** – There is no legal requirement for employees to be given holiday time off to volunteer so normal holiday requests and volunteering requests can be treated with the same value. Also there is no legal requirement for employers to pay their employees while they are volunteering. However, many employers recognise volunteering as a way for their employees to gain new skills and so some offer special paid leave for their employees (typically two days a year).

- ◆ **Overtime, temporary recruitment** –Remember when calling on staff to do extra working hours or taking on temporary staff to cover absence – that you may need to update your policies to cover these actions.
- ◆ **Unauthorised absence** – If an employee thinks that all unauthorised absences will not be overlooked and that an enquiry will follow they are less likely to take time off without a proper cause. If your policy doesn't include the regular use of 'return to work' interviews you may wish to consider adding them. Return to work interviews are a good tool for deterring unauthorised absence as well as detecting problems in your business that may be causing absence.
- ◆ Temporary **flexible hours** for events – Being more flexible with working hours for employees. Early start for early finish or longer lunches to allow participation in events can reduce the loss of productivity from employees during their working hours and may reduce the time they require off from work. However, it is important to get your HR policies regarding flexitime right so as not to appear to be showing favouritism.
- ◆ Changes in Internet/TV/Radio usage policy – You need to be clear on any changes to policy or re-affirm a strict no usage policy for watching events to ensure all employees know what is expected of them during work. It may be worthwhile considering allowing event coverage to be watched at certain times (maybe for larger ceremonies) as this may have three positive effects: decreasing the need for staff to take time off for the event, decreasing the tendency of employees to drift away to catch some highlights whenever they are not being overseen and to bring the positivity of the events into your business.

#### **Action to take - starting now:**

- ◆ What is your policy going to be – standard rules apply, or changes to support the event; flexible working times; temporary cover; screening of events; unauthorised absence & return to work interviews; planning holiday requests; don't forget the lead up to the main event.
- ◆ Send an email to all employees reminding them that the event is fast approaching and ask what plans they have for it. Remind them to get holiday requests in now to ensure their request can be considered. Also inform them of any enhanced support you are going to give such as event screening or flexible working times.
- ◆ Once requests for absence have been received collate the information, allocate the time off and make plans for cover. Can you cover absences in-house via overtime or flexible hours, or is temporary cover going to be needed. Make arrangements now for how you are going to handle this.
- ◆ Nearer the event re-email all staff to confirm the arrangements, and to re-affirm policies such as unauthorised absence; use of internet/TV/radios etc; flexible working.
- ◆ Monitor the policies during the event to ensure things are working smoothly and everyone is working together to make sure the impact on the company is minimised.

#### **Read more at ACAS on:**

- ◆ [Dealing with holiday requests](#)
- ◆ [Volunteer working](#)
- ◆ [Absence policy](#)
- ◆ [Overtime and flexi-time](#)
- ◆ [Dealing with performance issues](#)

Holges Consulting provide support and advice for HR and Health & Safety. For assistance on this factsheet and other HR or H&S matters please contact: [amanda@holgesconsulting.co.uk](mailto:amanda@holgesconsulting.co.uk)