2024 employment law changes summary

* **Flexible working** – employees now have a day 1 right to make a flexible working request, and up to 2 can be made in a 12-month period. Employers will also have to explain the reasons for denying any request, and employees no longer have to explain the impact of their request. However, the list of reasons employers can use to deny requests is remaining the same, including factors such as cost to the business or impact on quality, performance or ability to meet customer demand.
* **Carer’s leave** – employees are now entitled to take one week of unpaid leave a year if they have caring responsibilities. This applies to any employees who are caring for a spouse, civil partner, child, parent or other dependant who needs care because of a disability, old age or any illness or injury likely to require at least three months of care. The leave entitlement is available from the first day of employment with no qualifying period.
* **Increased redundancy protection** – employees taking certain types of parental leave now have protection from redundancy for at least 18 months. This protection means that if their role is made redundant their employer must give them first refusal of any other vacancies; however, they can still be made redundant if no appropriate vacancy is available. Previously, employees only had this protection during their period of maternity, adoption or shared parental leave.  Protection now begins on the day the employer is first notified of the employee’s pregnancy and ends 18 months after the date of the child’s birth. These protections also now extend to 18 months after the date of adoption for parents taking adoption leave or 18 months after the child’s birth in cases where a parent is taking at least six weeks of shared parental leave.
* **Paternity leave** – employees taking statutory paternity leave (and pay, if they are eligible) can now split their two weeks’ entitlement into two separate one-week blocks, rather than having to take them both together. They can also take their two weeks at any time within the first year after their child’s birth, rather than within only the first eight weeks after birth as previously required. Employees now have to give employers 28 days’ notice for each week of leave, down from 15-weeks’ notice previously, before taking leave. However, they still need to give notice of their upcoming entitlement 15 weeks before the expected date of birth.