



FOCUS ON ESSENTIALS

In each issue, with the help of some leading names in dentistry, we will focus on essential areas of your business that you should be keeping up-to-date with. In this first issue we focus on:

- HR and resources no manager should be without with Sarah Buxton
- The use of social media in your marketing with Chris Baker
- How software can help you to keep your accounts up to date with Mytten Clarke
- Managing CPD in your practice with Catherine....
- And how the CQC new guideline affect how you should use social media, with Gilly Stubbs.



The TOP 10 HR resources you need to run your dental practice!

Here SARAH BUXTON gives her my top 10 HR resources which no manager should be without in relation to the employees.

1 Employment Contracts

You must provide each employee with terms and conditions of their employment within two months of their start date. Best practice would be to provide the terms and conditions with the offer of employment or on their first day at work.

No two practices are alike and an employment contract can contain any number of bespoke clauses that are specific to your practice. If you fail to provide an employee with terms and conditions within the two month period and the employee makes a claim to the Employment Tribunal, you can be fined up to four weeks gross pay!

2 Staff Handbook

Your handbook should contain as many policies as you require to set out what is required of employees to assist in the running of your practice, and to reduce legal risk by making sure employees and

managers understand their legal rights and responsibilities. There are some policies which are required by law such as disciplinary, grievance, health and safety and whistleblowing. However there are many more which should be included such as Equality and Diversity, Flexible Working, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption leave.

3 Back To Work Form

A really effective way of managing staff and keeping records of their absence is to hold a back to work interview with members of staff who have been absent. Often a back to work interview can reveal if the absence is work related, such as stress or if the member of staff is being bullied.

It is also an opportunity for you to ask if the employee needs any support at work and if any adjustments need to be made such as a reduction in working hours to support their return to work.

4

Appraisal Form

Appraisals give you the opportunity to review past performance and to set targets for improvement. The outcome and targets agreed between you and the employee should be documented in an appraisal form, signed by both parties and reviewed at regular intervals.

5

Amendments to Contract(s) Letter

It is not good use of your time to keep up to date with the frequent changes in Employment Law. This is what lawyers are for! If there is a change which requires a change to your contracts of employment, you do not have to re-write the entire contract, the change can be agreed by a letter setting out the amendments. Provide this letter in duplicate to the employee and ask them to return a signed and dated copy.

6

Acknowledgement of Resignation Letter

Staff come and go and to ensure there is no confusion over the last date of employment or holiday entitlement you should always ask the employee to put their resignation in writing. Upon receipt of this letter you should then respond by acknowledging the resignation stating when their last day at work will be together with their accrued but untaken holiday entitlement (if any).

7

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

This enables you to gather information about your employees in a confidential manner. The information should be in relation to: age, disability, gender re-assignment, race, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, sex, sexual orientation. These characteristics are protected from discrimination.

Your Equality and Diversity Policy, which should be contained in your staff handbook will show your commitment to equality in the work place, and a monitoring form will show that you actively promote equality. This will help you ensure that all members of staff are treated the same and prevent claims in the Employment Tribunal for discrimination, which if successful can run into thousands of pounds as well as being stressful and time consuming.

8

Letter acknowledging Maternity Leave

As soon as you receive notice that an employee is pregnant, you should ask for a copy of their MATB form that they will have obtained from their GP.

This will set out the date of which the employee is due to give birth. From this date, you can work out when the employee's maternity leave dates will arise. You should inform the employee of the dates and set out what they should do should they wish to return to work earlier or later than expected or whether they do not wish to return to work at all. Failing to do this will make it difficult to plan and hence can have an effect on patient care.

9

HR/Personnel Files

Each employee should have their own HR file where important documents such as copies of the contract of employment are kept. It is also good practice to document any important conversations and place these on file for future reference. The equal opportunities monitoring form should be kept separate to the HR file. These files are confidential and should be kept in a locked cupboard so that you are not in breach of confidentiality or data protection.

10

Support

Employment law is constantly changing and developing and support is often needed to help managers deal with HR and employment issues. At FTA Law we offer an Annual Subscription Service where that element of running a practice is outsourced to us. This gives you peace of mind that you can get on with running your practice whilst we deal with these issues for you.

As part of the Service you will receive insurance, which covers the costs of your legal fees plus any out of court settlement of judgment should you receive an Employment Tribunal Claim. We offer a special rate for ADAM members.

To find out more please contact us on 01 13 834 3740 for further information. ■

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Sarah is a Director and Employment & HR Solicitor at FTA Law, who specialise in acting for dentists. The Team at FTA Law advise Dental Principals, Associates and Practice Managers on all of the legal aspects of buying, selling and running dental practices.

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