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3HR Legal Weekly

Employment

Managing your employees during the European Football Championship 2016

Euro 2016 will start on 10th June 2016 and will run for the next month through to the final on 10th July 2016.



Kick-off times will vary between 2.00pm, 5.00pm and 8.00pm, and the early games may well see increased requests for annual leave, increased sickness absence, or unauthorised use of social media and the internet.

With many firms having a very cosmopolitan workforce and with many employees being football fans it is highly likely that some staff will be seeking the opportunity to watch those matches live.

This could have implications on staffing levels and productivity and so employers are advised to plan ahead. It is important to adopt a clear and consistent stance on what you expect from your employees during this period in order to operate efficiently and to service your customers and clients.

It is of course fairly easy to manage official absence, where employees request leave, but it is the unofficial absence or lack of focus whilst in the office that needs a careful and considered approach. The choice is to insist upon a strict observance of the rules (which may of course be extremely disappointing for some), or to adopt a more relaxed approach.

It is worth considering setting some parameters to ensure that managers have clear guidelines to be applied consistently to all employees during this event. It is worth considering that there other sporting events coming up this summer, including Wimbledon and the Olympics. You should bear in mind that not all employees are interested in sport.

At a minimum, any guidelines should cover requests for leave, flexible working and time off in lieu, running sweepstakes or gambling in the office, watching or listening to games at work, or watching games in the pub during breaks and the return to work, possibly after having a drink. It might also include behaviour during or after the matches (not just in the office), and the consequences for non-compliance, including possible disciplinary action. You might want to have a degree of flexibility where possible, and consider allowing employees to work flexibly and make up their hours at other times so that they can watch the matches whilst still maintaining productivity. If employees do not follow these guidelines, or existing policies relating to absence and use of social media or the internet whilst at work, then you should deal with these cases fairly and consistently in accordance with those policies and related procedures.

If you require any specific advice please do not hesitate to contact Mel Northfield, Director- HR Services on 0207 1948132 or mel.northfield@3hracs.com.

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