

ALMR MATTERS

Published every fortnight, the ALMR's e-zine alert service gives you an early warning of new and emerging issues. Its at-a-glance format, top tips and detailed advice and guidance provide you with vital information you need to run your business effectively. This edition focuses on recent and up and coming changes to **employment law**

- **National Minimum Wage:** the Government has just confirmed the increase in this year's NMW. The rate will increase on **1 October 2007** by just over 3% from £5.35 to **£5.52**. The rate for 18-21 year olds will increase from £4.45 to £4.60 and that for 16-17 year olds will go up to £3.40. This is the first time that the increase has been pegged at average wage rate inflation – a key lobbying point made by the *ALMR* in its evidence to the Low Pay Commission. Since its introduction, the NMW has gone up by 30% more than inflation and has gone from being a mechanism to tackle poverty pay to the average wage rate for bar staff. We will be pressing to ensure that future increases are pegged to average earnings.
- **Maternity Leave:** the law governing maternity leave and payments is being changed from this April, with further new rights being introduced over the course of this parliament. Statutory paid maternity leave is to be extended to 9 months and all mothers – regardless of service – will be eligible for unpaid extended leave. It is the baby's **due date** rather than actual birth date which will determine whether their mothers are entitled to the new rights so you need to carefully check Form MAT B1s submitted by workers in support of their notification of leave. Babies which were due after 1 April but born prematurely will qualify for extended leave entitlement, but those due in March but born late, will not. Check out our detailed [briefing paper](#) for all the facts
- **Annual Paid Leave:** the Government has confirmed that it intends to press ahead with plans to extend the amount of statutory paid leave workers are entitled to from the current 20 days to 28 days (pro rata for part-time staff). The changes will be introduced in two phases, with the first increase taking effect from **October 2007**. Check out our detailed [briefing paper](#) for all the facts
- **Foreign nationals:** the Government has reported a doubling of the number of foreign nationals in the workforce over the past decade – they now make up 6% of the workforce. 662,000 gained national insurance numbers for the first time in 2005/6. With the increase in numbers, it is vitally important that employers ensure that all staff are eligible to work in before employing them. It is the employer who is in the firing line if he gets it wrong. The latest challenge comes from the influx of Romanian and Bulgarian nationals who are now free to reside in any European member state since 1 January 2007. Make sure you know what to look for by reading our [short guide](#) – and help ensure you don't face a £5,000 fine.
- For news and information on these and other issues, see the latest edition of our [political digest](#)

For news and information about campaigns and events visit our website www.almr.org.uk

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