

## DID YOU KNOW?

Recently, the Met Office launched Hazard Forecast, a new type of forecast alert designed specifically for retailers and suppliers. The weather alert offers guidance on the ideal times to transport goods safely and on schedule. Business owners can tailor the tool to their specific locations, delivery routes and destinations. If your business is interested in Hazard Forecast or any of the other retail-specific tools that Met Office has to offer, visit [www.metoffice.gov.uk/services/industry/retail](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/services/industry/retail).

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## Corporate Manslaughter Fines May Be Increasing Soon

The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 (Act) was composed and put into force to prevent health and safety violations resulting from management failures. However, due to the structure of the original sentencing guidelines and proposed fines, the Act has been largely ineffective in persuading organisations to adopt more stringent health and safety practices.

To more effectively hold organisations accountable for their actions and the quality of their health and safety practices, the Sentencing Council has proposed new guidelines for the Act. These guidelines introduce more stringent penalties that would range from £450,000 to £20 million, depending on the organisation's turnover. The higher proposed fines are intended to have a potentially substantial economic impact on the organisation in order to iterate the importance of providing a

safe working environment for employees.

The new proposed guidelines may come into force as early as next month, but it is more likely that they will be introduced sometime in early 2016. Although the new guidelines are not yet in effect, it would be prudent to begin scrutinising your organisation's health and safety management programme now in an effort to lessen your corporate manslaughter liability.



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## Govt. Introduces Enterprise Bill

On 17th September, the government introduced the Enterprise Bill, which aims to provide support for businesses through job creation, economic security and growth. In order to achieve those goals, the bill introduces these three main measures:

1. A Small Business Commissioner will be appointed to help balance the bargaining power between SMEs and larger organisations. One of the most prominent issues the commissioner will address is payment disputes with larger organisations, which currently costs SMEs an estimated £26.8 billion annually. In addition, the commissioner will act as a signpost for SMEs and will provide beneficial guidance on where they can find helpful services, such as sector ombudsmen or regulators.

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# Employment Law Forecast 2016: What Will Next Year Bring?

Even though it is not quite the New Year yet, your organisation should begin familiarising itself with some of the forthcoming 2016 employment law changes. While this is not a comprehensive list of all the reforms that are to be introduced in 2016, it should provide an overview of those which will have the most prevalent or significant impact on businesses:

- **The National Living Wage (April 2016):** A new minimum 'living wage' of £7.20 per hour will be introduced for all workers who are at least 25 years of age.
- **Employer NICs abolished for apprentices under the age of 25 (6th April 2016):** Employers will no longer have to pay Class 1 national insurance contributions (NICs) on earnings up to the upper earnings limit for apprentices younger than 25 years old.
- **State Pension Regulations 2015 (6th April 2016):** A single-tier, flat-rate will affect people who reach State Pension age (67) from 6th April 2016 onwards who have contributed at least 35 qualifying years of national insurance contributions.
- **Compulsory gender pay reporting (2016):** Employers—including private companies and voluntary sector organisations that employ at least 250 individuals—will be required to publish information showing whether or not there are differences in gender pay.
- **Childcare Payments Act 2014 (2016):** The new benefit scheme would allow working parents to claim 20 per cent of their childcare costs (up to a maximum of £2,000 per child) annually.
- **Childcare Bill (April 2016):** This bill would allow parents (one of whom must be employed) up to 30 hours of free childcare a week for their 3- to 4-year-old children.
- **Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 (April 2016):** All organisations will be required to maintain and keep open for public inspection a register listing of persons having significant control (PSC). Individuals that are identified as PSCs will be required to provide relevant information to the company.
- **Salary requirement for Tier 2 workers (6th April 2016):** UK migrant workers who apply to settle here under the Tier 2 general and sportsperson categories will be required to earn at least £35,000.
- **Immigration Bill (April 2016):** This bill intends to introduce new penalties for illegal workers and employers that knowingly hire illegal workers. Additionally, measures will be put into place to bar illegal migrants from accessing housing, driving licences and bank accounts.

## Govt. Introduces Enterprise Bill

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2. Deregulation targets will be extended to include regulators (even national ones) and will require them to assess the economic impacts any changes to regulatory policies have on businesses. Deregulation targets are meant to reduce regulatory burdens on businesses, and extending those targets should supplement the government's ambitious goal of cutting £10 billion in unnecessary spending over the next five years.
3. Incentivise insurers to pay claims to businesses as promptly as is reasonable, since late insurance payments are such a major problem for businesses. Any unnecessary delay in payment can have significant, lasting effects on a business' success. The Enterprise Bill introduces measures to expedite insurance payments and specifies the 'reasonable time' for payment.

While these are the three main measures that the bill aims to introduce, other associated measures are also included.

To learn more about what the bill aims to accomplish, visit

[www.gov.uk/government/news/business-backed-by-new-enterprise-bill](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/business-backed-by-new-enterprise-bill).