

# Employers told to keep up with new legislation

**EMPLOYERS** need to get clued up on some big changes coming in 2007 if they want to avoid costly mistakes.

That is the new year resolution that is being recommended by employment specialist Helena Derbyshire, from the national law firm Shoosmiths', which has offices at Basing View in Basingstoke.

She is recommending that, at the very least, employers add the following key dates to their diaries to ensure that they are meeting their legislative responsibilities as the legislation calendar unfolds.

First, in February, the maximum award for unfair dismissal will rise from £58,400 to £60,600 as will the statutory redundancy payment from its current £8,700 to £9,300.

In April, a raft of regulations will be extended. These include the right to maternity and adoption leave and pay, and the right for those

By **Richard Garfield**

e-mail: richard.garfield@basingstokegazette.co.uk  
website: www.basingstokegazette.co.uk

qualified as carers to request flexible working arrangements. Statutory maternity/adoption/paternity pay will also increase to £112.75 per week.

The summer is set to bring the biggest changes of all, with the arrival of a ban on smoking in most work and public places just around the corner.

Mrs Derbyshire said: "The guidance giving the detail of the application of the Health Bill is rolling off the presses, but employers who have not already banned smoking in their premises would do well to turn their attention to the issues this raises sooner rather than later."

Finalising the legislative line-up is the

anticipated arrival in October of an increase in statutory holiday entitlement to 28 days.

"Employment legislation remains the area of most rapid changes for businesses to adapt to," said Mrs Derbyshire.

"Organisations have already had to adapt to a raft of regulations in recent years, including discrimination laws which now give employees the right to bring claims on the grounds of sex, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation and age.

"It's an area which should be of particular focus for managers. Employment tribunal statistics demonstrate that claims increased by 15 per cent in the last year in an area where, if the application is successful, the compensation available is unlimited.

"Embracing legislative changes in advance is something all businesses would be well advised to do."

## Fitness chief on healthy eating crusade

**MAREK** Doyle is a man on a mission – to spread the word about healthy eating.

The fitness and nutrition consultant, who runs the business Blueprint Fitness, hopes to share his advice with young people because he is concerned about the lack of nutritional education offered in schools.

Kick-starting his crusade, the Muay Thai kickboxer paid a visit to Costello Technology College, Crossborough Hill, Basingstoke, where he spoke to Year 9 students with the aim of arming them with knowledge that will allow them to make informed food

choices for the benefit of their own health.

He said: "I've spent a long time moaning about the lack of nutrition teaching in schools – so rather than continue to moan, I thought I'd do something about it."

Mr Doyle said he has been encouraged by the response from students at the school and plans to visit other secondary schools in the area. He is not charging for the service he is providing to schools.

Summing up the main message he wanted to get across to the students, Mr Doyle said: "If you

eat as nature intended then you are going to look, perform and feel as nature intended.

"So, basically eat like a cave-man, because they ate a diet high in meat, supplemented with vegetables and fruit, berries and nuts. That's the mainstay of it.

"Only in the last few years have we started adding things that aren't so natural."

Most of Mr Doyle's work at Blueprint Fitness involves personal training, but he recently started to become involved with local clinics to offer nutrition consultancy and allergy therapy after finding that many of his

clients suffer from issues such as food intolerance.

Head of PE Howell Reed said Mr Doyle's presentation complemented the college's Year 9 Fitness Project.

"It fits in nicely with the type of work we are doing, where we are looking more at the exercise side of things, and Marek came in and gave a nutrition talk.

"I think it was well received by the kids and they got a lot out of it. We've had very positive feedback from them."

To find out more about Blueprint Fitness, visit [www.blueprintfitness.co.uk](http://www.blueprintfitness.co.uk)

● **LEFT:** Marek Doyle, from Blueprint Fitness, talks to students from Costello Technology College about fitness and nutrition  
*Pic by Richard Garfield*

## Chamber lunch

THE first North Hampshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry networking lunch takes place next Tuesday, at The Red Lion Hotel, in Basingstoke, at 12.15pm.

The lunch costs £17.63 for members and guests and £29.38 for non-members.

Non-members are allowed to attend three lunches, to see the chamber in action, before deciding whether to join.

To book a place at next week's lunch, call NHCCI on 01256 479391.

## Basingstoke Town Centre Management

Basingstoke Town Centre Management Ltd

### Membership benefits

BASINGSTOKE Town Centre Management has covered a lot of ground over the two years since it was founded.

There isn't space to list BTCM's achievements in this article. However, a quick look at our new website, a trip home on the night bus, or a visit from the Crime Reduction Manager are all things that wouldn't be possible without BTCM.

It's BTCM's remit to work for the good of our town as a whole, but within that is the opportunity for businesses to benefit individually from the newly-announced membership scheme. There's an attractive package of benefits open to members ranging from help in marketing, crime reduction measures and a real voice in what's going on in town.

Members get access to CCTV footage of known criminals, participation in the Shop Kop scheme and advice from our Crime Reduction Manager. So, membership can be said to help you stop losing money because of crime, save you money in special members' offers and help you to generate more money in attracting customers to your door.

Membership of BTCM is open to all businesses trading within Basingstoke town centre. If you are interested in getting your business involved in the membership scheme, contact Kaye Cousins on 01256 461167, e-mail [kaye@btcm.co.uk](mailto:kaye@btcm.co.uk) or log on to [www.basingstoke-towncentre.co.uk](http://www.basingstoke-towncentre.co.uk)

## In brief

### In administration

UP TO 17 jobs are in the balance at Card Warehouse and Cardfair shops in Basingstoke as the owner of the discount greetings card chain has gone into administration.

The Peterborough-based Greeting Card Group, which runs Card Warehouse at The Malls Shopping Centre, and another in Chineham Shopping Centre, along with a Cardfair store in Wote Street, Basingstoke, called in administrators from PricewaterhouseCoopers last week.

The company, which employs more than 2,500 staff and trades from around 470 UK stores, reported a turnover of £70million last June.

According to PricewaterhouseCoopers, the firm is in talks with potential buyers and the stores will remain open for the foreseeable future.

### Workshops for women

ENTERPRISING women are being invited to an event organised by Finance South East next Wednesday.

The subsidiary of the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) will be offering workshops run by women for women looking into ways of funding businesses, from 9.30am to 1.30pm followed by a networking lunch.

To find out more, call Caroline Salmon on 01306 712042 or e-mail [caroline.salmon@financesoutheast.co.uk](mailto:caroline.salmon@financesoutheast.co.uk)



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