

# **Business course : Focus on Discipline 20 August 2014**

Following a series of expensive unfair dismissal cases being reported in the media this year, HR and health and safety experts Law At Work (LAW) are calling on business leaders to focus more attention on their disciplinary procedures.

The Edinburgh based firm has revealed that the highest number of calls (80%) to their legal managers are related to staff conduct issues as companies strive to set out clear and concise directives when conducting disciplinary proceedings. Such is the demand for advice, LAW is hosting a seminar aimed at providing HR professionals, senior management and business owners with guidance through the minefield of disciplinary procedures.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) produced a 2011 report on Conflict Management confirming that “the scale of workplace conflict is remarkable and has increased in the recession”. The report found that almost half of those surveyed say that their organisation has increased its use of disciplinary action (49.5%), grievance procedures (47.7%) and mediation (49.4%). Almost 62% of employers had reported increasing instances of training line managers to handle difficult conversations and two in three respondents (65.3%) quoted that troubleshooting by HR departments has gone up.

Donald MacKinnon, Director of Legal Services at LAW explained that employers need to take discipline procedures seriously and protect themselves from potentially damaging situations. He said:

“Effective management of workplace grievances and disciplinary procedures must be viewed as an important fabric of any business. It can often be a daunting and tricky area for

companies to handle themselves and can be an expensive mistake if mismanaged.”

“There are a number of basic steps that businesses must be prepared for in order to undertake successful and well managed investigations or disciplinary procedures. Our experience demonstrates that employers can frequently turn a potentially fair dismissal into an unfair one by failing to apply basic procedural steps or using outdated policies and procedures, which in turn could leave them exposed to costly tribunals and damaging claims.”

The seminar will cover practical elements including investigating disciplinary hearings and grievances, how best to interview and manage witnesses, making decisions on suspension or dismissal and what to do if criminal investigations are required.

The interactive “Focus On” seminar takes place in Edinburgh on Wednesday 20th August from 9.30am-12.30pm, HSBC, 80 Hanover Street, Edinburgh, EH2 1EL. Places are priced at £60 + VAT for LAW clients and £120 + VAT for non-clients.

To find out more about LAW’s training schedule and to request your place, please visit:

<http://www.lawatwork.co.uk/focus-on/disciplinary-dilemmas-edin>

Submitted by [Katie Burnett](#)