



Republic of Labour Law – Irish HR Updates in April

By Dónall Breen - 30 April 2020

Welcome to our April edition of Republic of Labour Law, a monthly newsletter in which we distil the most important Irish legal and HR updates from the last month in 500 words or less.

If you do business in Ireland, this should be your one stop shop for what you need to know.

This week in the Republic of Labour Law:

- The Temporary Covid-Wage Subsidy Scheme
- Data protection and video calls
- Bizarre cases of the month

Unsurprisingly, Covid-19 continues to dominate the news. For those of you availing of the Covid-Wage Subsidy Scheme there are a few points you should be aware of:

It is different to the UK scheme in a number of ways, so don't confuse the two:

- In Ireland you can claim assistance for paying wages whilst the employee is still working.
- The subsidy only covers certain employers who meet a minimum threshold of disruption – not every company is eligible.
- Finally, the subsidy does not apply equally to all employees. It is a stepped system where those earning above €76,000 per annum are largely ineligible.

The scheme is currently running until 18 June 2020. However, the government is publishing its plan for reopening the economy on 5 May 2020 so look out for any further updates then.

Finally, the government has tweaked the system lately so that lower earners are not worse off by continuing to go to work (even though some anomalies remain). Therefore, if you have costed the system on the information a few weeks ago, it may be worth revisiting this now.



Separately, the Irish Data Protection Commissioner (DPC) has published an article called [Data Protection Tips for Video-Conferencing](#). It's actually quite useful and worth a read if you are (like everyone else) now doing a lot of your work online. Most companies will experience a breach at some stage (small or large), so it's worth having your 'ducks in a row' - being able to show you were as compliant as the DPC suggests!

In a welcomed break from Covid-19 news, I also managed to track down some weird and wonderful cases from the Irish courts:

- One involves a publican/retailer/post office operator being ordered to pay his ex-wife €9,500 for her unfair dismissal from the family-run business. That can't have helped to heal old wounds.
- In another, a security officer who phoned RTE's Liveline to alert Joe Duffy about a co-worker making creepy videos has lost out in a whistleblowing case against his employer. For those of you who don't get the context, Liveline is a long running talk show where people can phone in to talk (complain) about any aspect of their life. It is a staple of Irish dinner time. Apparently it is now a must-listen for employment lawyers too.
- Finally, a major bus company has unsurprisingly won its case against an employee who sued for unfair dismissal. Why was this bus driver sacked? He was convicted of careless driving and had a four-year driving ban imposed. The tribunal agreed that the contract was frustrated and threw the case out. It is a wonder the case even made it to the court.

That's all for this month. In the meantime, stay safe and stay in.