

# HR Brief

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## Can You Sack Staff for Criticising Their Job on Social Media?

Social media has made it incredibly easy for employees to voice their frustrations and grievances outside of the workplace. Yet, the internet does not provide perfect anonymity, and if your employees were to criticise their workplace on social media, you may be legally justified in disciplining them for their comments. However, before you decide whether they should be dismissed, review the following guidance:

- Clearly communicate to employees your organisation's social media policy, which should include how they are expected to conduct themselves online and what the consequences would be for noncompliance.
- Provide your employees with training on what constitutes cyber bullying and explain the procedure if an employee is bullying someone else at the company online.

- Explain to your employees what channels of communication and mediation are available to them at your organisation in an effort to discourage them from posting bitter, scathing comments.

However, if employees disregard your organisation's social media policy and post inflammatory comments, you may decide to discipline them. If you do, you should adhere to the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures, which requires that you do the following:

- Send a letter to the employee to explain the disciplinary allegations and the potential sanctions.
- Set up a meeting with the employee to give him or her an opportunity to explain the post.
- Inform the employee of your final decision.
- Give the employee an opportunity to appeal the final decision.

## DID YOU KNOW?

According to a survey from workplace consultants, Peldon Rose, 44 per cent of employees believe that winter has a negative impact on their mental health while 30 per cent believe that it damages their productivity.

To ensure that your employees are not suffering from the winter blues, consider implementing these three strategies:

1. Provide quiet areas where employees can work alone or relax.
2. Introduce more natural light into the workplace by reconfiguring seating arrangements or removing obstacles blocking sunlight.
3. Make communal areas more social by bringing in comfortable seating and encouraging social breaks.

## Survey: 90% of Staff Work When Sick

Presenteeism, or coming to work while sick, is a prevalent problem in workplaces across the United Kingdom, as 90 per cent of employees have admitted to coming to work despite feeling unwell, according to Canada Life Group Insurance. Twenty-eight per cent of the polled employees said they had to come into work because they felt that their workload was too high for them to call in sick. What's more, is that 80 per cent of employees have said that they would not take time off work for stress or other mental health illnesses.

Your organisation should not support an unhealthy workplace where employees feel obligated to come in despite their well-being. Instead, you should encourage a healthy work-life balance. This can increase productivity, reduce employee turnover and bolster employee loyalty. To establish such an environment, consider implementing these four practices:

1. Offer employees flexible or alternative hours.
2. Allow employees to occasionally work from home.
3. Provide your employees with child and pet care options.
4. Organise employee family events.

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