

**PRESS RELEASE**

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BEGINS

## **Major employment law changes introduced**

Leading local employment law expert, Robert Hill of solicitors Reynolds Parry Jones is advising businesses to heed the recent changes. “Sweeping changes to employment law, introduced on 6<sup>th</sup> April, have changed the way workplace grievance and disciplinary disputes are handled and it is vital that employers understand the implications of the new Code of Practice or face the potential of costly Tribunal awards” he said.

“The previous three-step statutory grievance and disciplinary procedures, have been replaced by a new Code of Practice from ACAS, (the independent Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) bringing with it an emphasis on finding an early resolution to workplace disputes,” he continued.

“While, it is no longer set in stone that any failure to follow the Code will result in an ‘automatic’ finding of unfair dismissal, Tribunals do have the discretion to increase or decrease an award by up to 25% if they find that either party has ‘unreasonably’ failed to follow the Code. This means that unless you are familiar with it and its principles, you might end up facing even more expensive claims.”

“Full details of the new Code are on the ACAS website, at [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk). However in some instances, such as if the disciplinary or grievance case was started before 6 April 2009, the three-stage statutory procedure will still apply. So it is crucial that businesses understand which process they should be following during this transitional phase” he concluded.

For further information please call Robert Hill on 01494 525941.

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