

SUBJECT	LEGAL CHANGE	ACTION REQUIRED
Data Privacy		
General Data Protection Regulation ('GDPR')	<p>The GDPR is due to take effect across Europe on May 25, 2018. It will introduce stricter requirements and obligations for organisations, which process personal data. The aim is to increase the level of protection for individual personal data.</p> <p>Implementing Irish legislation is expected in 2018, which will clarify the changes to be introduced by the GDPR.</p>	<p>(1) Become familiar with the new rules in due course and keep abreast of developments ahead of implementation of GDPR. Take specialist advice on what the impact for your business is.</p> <p>(2) Review existing practices/policies/procedures regarding data protection and update accordingly.</p>
Employment terms		
Zero-hours contracts	<p>A new Bill is currently passing through the Houses of the Oireachtas, which will effectively ban zero-hours contracts (i.e. contracts which do not stipulate a minimum number of working hours for employees). This will be the case except in limited circumstances i.e. where such contracts are necessary for work done in emergency circumstances or for short term relief work to cover routine absences.</p>	<p>(1) Audit your workforce and identify whether zero-hours contracts are being used. If yes, revise the current practice so that they are only used for emergency cover or short term relief work. Seek specialist advice to ensure you comply with the law when making such changes.</p> <p>(2) Keep abreast of the progression of this legislation and any updates in that regard.</p>
Disputes		
Mediation Act	<p>The Mediation Act was passed in 2017 and is expected to be effective soon. It requires lawyers to advise their clients to consider mediation as an alternative to litigation, before issuing legal proceedings.</p> <p>While the Act excludes the Workplace Relations Commission ("WRC") from its ambit, because the WRC already provides for mediation, we assume it will be used for all other employment claims, such as bullying/stress claims.</p> <p>At any time after an appearance has been entered in Court, and before delivering any pleadings, the Act allows a party to ask the Court to adjourn the proceedings to permit mediation, but only where a pre-existing mediation agreement is in place (this can be done by inserting a mediation clause into the employment contract).</p>	<p>(1) Keep track of the date on which the Act becomes effective.</p> <p>(2) Consider incorporating mediation clauses into employment contracts to benefit from the Act. Seek specialist advice on the drafting.</p>