



Ambulance Trusts: Our Employment Service

What we can do for you

About Capsticks

We are the country's leading dedicated health and social care firm, with over 200 lawyers and 30 years of experience in the sector. We have offices in London, Birmingham, Leeds and Winchester, working for a range of health and social care organisations (including several ambulance trusts).

We have been recognised as leaders in our field, winning the following awards over the past 3 years: "Legal advisors of the year – public" (HealthInvestor), "Best Legal Team" (Independent Healthcare Association) and Niche Firm of the Year (The Lawyer). We are ranked top for healthcare in independent legal directories and Chambers 2013 states: "Their understanding of the NHS is second to none".

We are proud of our achievements, but know we will only maintain our leading position if we continue to work hard to provide a comprehensive, responsive and pragmatic service. We recognise that there are many similarities between healthcare organisations, but also that each sector and organisation is unique in the challenges that it faces. We are committed to helping you meet and overcome these.

Your unique challenges

- The provision of ambulance services presents its own unique employment issues:
- Many employees have significant autonomy and work independently, underlining the importance of trust and confidence. Staff engagement is central to ensuring that service models work effectively.
- With a relentless rise in demand for emergency ambulances, services have to be provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week whilst ensuring staff receive appropriate support and rest breaks.
- In a highly unionised environment, the relationship with your unions is particularly important, as is dealing carefully with any collective grievances and threatened industrial action.

- In a time of unprecedented financial pressure, ambulance trusts need to balance carefully how to make efficiency savings whilst maintaining a safe and sustainable emergency service.
- Developing new staffing structures and reconfiguring services to meet demand: from rota changes and staffing ratios to the closing of ambulance stations and the creation of central hubs.
- Winning and retaining contracts for services (such as patient transport and 111) is an important commercial consideration for you, particularly in the new NHS landscape.
- The Francis Report shows the need to develop the Trust's values, to recruit and retain staff who are caring and compassionate and to create a culture where staff are able to speak out on patient safety concerns.
- The need to tackle sickness absence proactively and effectively, in order to enable employees to return to work quickly or to enable the Trust to take action under its sickness absence procedures.
- There is an emphasis on meeting the many official targets and measures applied to ambulance trusts.

The healthcare business inside out

We have a "very strong employment law group with unrivalled expertise in the health sector" (Legal 500). If you would like to speak to any of our clients about our services, we are happy to put you in touch with them. We have a strategic alliance with NHS Employers, which gives us unrivalled knowledge of potential national changes and initiatives.

We have a national team of 50 employment lawyers, supported by two professional support lawyers (PSLs), all of whom are specialists in giving commercial advice in the healthcare setting. We give you clear, definitive advice and a recommended pathway for you to achieve your aim.

We will probably have advised before on most employment challenges that you face, so we can hit the ground running. We will work collaboratively, efficiently and cost-effectively with your internal team from day one. We also work regularly with our colleagues in other departments on issues that involve specialist input from more than one area, such as data protection and public consultation.

- When handling disputes with your unions, we appreciate the importance of doing so robustly but in a way that will not lead to escalation of the issue. We have provided advice to several clients in order to head off threatened industrial action or to ensure that such action is managed in a way that will minimise disruption.
- We advise regularly (regionally and locally) on how to achieve productivity savings and the processes to follow in order to achieve changes to terms and conditions quickly and effectively. We have advised on the legal and wider implications of moving away from Agenda for Change.
- As well as advising on the implementation of large service reconfigurations, we have successfully defended resulting Tribunal claims.
- Whether winning or losing contracts, we can help you to plan proactively for TUPE transfers in order to fully protect your interests, drawing on our specialist team of TUPE experts.
- We know that your routine employment law work is very important to you and we never lose sight of the importance of providing an excellent service across all areas, whether it is Tribunal work, organisational change, redundancy, policy advice, contractual queries, TUPE or advice on internal hearings.
- Capsticks' breadth of experience across the healthcare sector enables us to advise on the healthcare-specific issues that you face, such as DPA/FOIA obligations, governance/regulatory implications and potential Treasury/Monitor approval processes.
- We have run a number of national training sessions for clients on the implications of the Francis Report and how to ensure that staff feel empowered to speak out.

Our unique added value

We recognise that to advise your business we need to know and understand your business. We will invest time getting to know your organisation inside out, so that our advice is always given in context and practical. We can add value in a number of ways, including:

- Our 20-minute free "hotline" advice service.
- Four free half-day training sessions per year.
- A tailored programme of client care visits, usually at least every quarter, in order to keep the service under continual review.
- Access to our HR Advisory and Consultancy services if you need help with specific projects or investigations.
- Tailored financial arrangements, including global fixed-fees and fixed-fees for specific pieces of work.



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