

CIPD Calls for Flexibility in Potential Right to Switch Off Legislation

11 months ago



The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), the UK's professional body for HR and people development, has weighed in on the potential introduction of a "Right to Switch Off" law in the UK.

The CIPD acknowledges the importance of employees having clear boundaries between work and personal life for their well-being and productivity. However, they emphasize the need for flexibility in any potential legislation to accommodate the diverse needs of businesses and employees.

Ben Willmott, Head of Public Policy at the CIPD, comments: "It's important that any new 'right to switch off' is introduced with sufficient flexibility to enable employers to contact employees outside normal working hours where unforeseen circumstances require this, for example due to sickness absence.

"It seems most likely the government will introduce this new right through a code of practice, which should allow employers to develop approaches which work for both them and their staff. There will be different demands for this type of flexibility depending on the sector and the nature of people's jobs, which would need to be recognised in the code of practice. Developed in the right way, in consultation with employers, such a code can help promote what is already adopted as good practice in many organisations and support workers' work-life balance and wellbeing.

"Employers will need to ensure they have clear policies which are aligned to any new code, clarifying the circumstances where managers can and cannot contact staff outside their usual working hours."

The CIPD suggests considering factors like:

- Flexible working arrangements: Many employees already rely on flexible hours or remote work

options. Legislation should not hinder these established practices.

- Unforeseen circumstances: Certain industries and roles may necessitate occasional after-hours work for legitimate business reasons.
- Employee autonomy: Empowering employees to manage their workloads and prioritize tasks can contribute to achieving a healthy work-life balance.