

Key dates for small businesses in 2018

January



Small Business Commissioner

The government has launched the Small Business Commissioner complaints handling scheme. It aims to assist small businesses (broadly speaking those with a staff headcount of less than 50) to resolve payment disputes with larger businesses.



Ban on consumer surcharges

BEIS has updated its guidance on the Consumer Rights (Payment Surcharges) Regulations 2012 due to changes made to them by the Payment Services Regulations 2017.

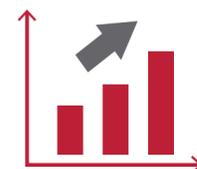
The Regulations ban traders from imposing any surcharges in retail transactions with consumers in addition to the advertised price of a transaction, where the consumer is using the following methods of payment: consumer credit cards, debit cards, not card-based payment i.e. mobile phone-based payments or electronic payments such as PayPal.

April



Energy efficiency rules private rented property both domestic and non-domestic

The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 are designed to tackle the least energy-efficient properties in England and Wales. From April 2018, landlords of privately rented domestic and non-domestic property in England or Wales must ensure that their properties reach at least an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of E before granting a new tenancy to new or existing tenants.



Business rates

From April 2018, business rates will rise in line with the lower Consumer Prices Index (CPI) measure of inflation, not the Retail Prices Index (RPI).

The government has also announced that it's to scrap the so-called 'staircase tax' and would refund any extra money paid out by businesses as a result of this tax.

May



New data protection rules

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) replaces the Data Protection Act (DPA) from 25 May 2018.

It brings about several changes; the most notable is likely to be the increase in fines that the Information Commissioners Office can issue for breaches of the data protection rules. This will increase from the maximum of £500k under the DPA to a maximum of €20 million or 4% of global turnover whichever is higher under GDPR.



E-privacy rules (TBC)

We expect the introduction of new e-privacy rules around the same time as the introduction of the GDPR. The regulation is likely to introduce changes to the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy in electronic communications.

June



Trade Secrets Directive

The Directive harmonises the definition of trade secrets and aims to standardise the national laws in EU countries against the unlawful acquisition, disclosure and use of trade secrets.

Markel Law
5th Floor, The Observatory, Chapel Walks, Manchester M2 1HL
Tel: +44 (0)345 351 0025
enquiries@markellaw.co.uk
www.markellaw.co.uk

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