



Your feedback to these newsletters is an enormous help. As a direct result, we have an input to the Environment Agency to improve its whole approach to resource efficiency, as well as problems like flooding.

Your comments enable us to keep attention on issues like Late Payment, which we know are still a problem. Your case studies put fresh light on them by bringing them up to date. Many thanks for taking the trouble to e-mail [Vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk](mailto:Vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk). It really helps.

And the contents for April are:-

**Sexual harassment – duty of employer to protect staff from customers**

**Enterprise and Business in Schools**

**Possible threat to work permits**

**Regulation**

**Save Money – improve your use of resources**

**Get the best out of your IT**

**Late payment – bad practice coming back?**

**Rural Businesses – have you found the gateway?**

**Is WEEE giving you a headache?**

**Sexual harassment – duty of employer to protect staff from customers**

New rules, which came in on 6 April, impose a duty of care on employers to protect employees from sexual harassment by customers and suppliers.

However, the regulations were only laid down in Parliament on 14 March via a statutory instrument which did not require debate among MPs. The rules' introduction have also received very little publicity. As a result, small businesses have had limited time to prepare.

The government itself admits that it will cost small firms £10m to comply with the rules so, while we acknowledge that staff should be protected from sexual harassment, we urge the government to delay implementation of the regulations until at least October so businesses don't end up falling foul of the law for no fault of their own.

It would be really helpful if you can get in touch if you think it is going to be difficult to comply with the legislation – drop me a message at – [vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk](mailto:vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk)

**Enterprise and Business in Schools**

As someone running a business, do you like what your local school is doing about 'enterprise'?

The FSB both locally and nationally is concerned about the way 'enterprise' is presented in our schools. There are some brilliant examples of superb work and it is these we are looking for. We

want to develop case studies of good practice so members who are unhappy with their local school can tell them about the work of other schools.

And how do they relate to you as a business?

Again we want to hear about those who are doing things RIGHT!

Tell [Vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk](mailto:Vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk) all about it.

### **Possible threat to work permits**

Does your business employ workers under the work permit system?

If you do, then you will be affected by the new Points Based Immigration policy. And the effect could be to make it harder for you to get staff.

There is a consultation out on this at the moment and Policy Advisor Lynsey Groom needs your help to tell it how it is!

Contact Lynsey [lynsey.groom@fsb.org.uk](mailto:lynsey.groom@fsb.org.uk) before April 23rd

### **Regulation**

Better Regulation Executive would like to arrange meetings with various FSB branches to discuss examples from business of problem legislation. Please contact Nyree at the London Office if you would like to participate. Email: [Nyree.connell@fsb.org.uk](mailto:Nyree.connell@fsb.org.uk)

### **Save Money – improve your use of resources**

A new free, online indicator from Envirowise is helping companies to understand how they save money by improving their use of resources, reducing their carbon footprint at the same time.

<http://www.envirowise.gov.uk/indicator>

As always, any comments would be much appreciated.

### **Get the best out of your IT**

The Business IT Guide for the South West is an online tool designed to help smaller businesses in using ICT to improve efficiency and productivity. The Guide enables businesses to access a wide range of high quality independent advice to help them get the best out of their IT.

So if you think you could be working smarter, more profitably or just making the most of what you have, go to [Business IT Guide](#) . It should provide you with all the information you need to make IT decisions that are right for your business.

Or cut and paste this link - <http://www.businessitguide.com/self-help/home/>

Topics covered include:

- > Hardware
- > Software
- > Networking

- > Security
- > The web
- > Email
- > Smarter working
- > General ICT support
- > Finding suppliers

SWRDA has purchased an annual licence for the [Guide](#) which means every business in the region has free unlimited access to it. As always, your feedback would be appreciated.

### **Late payment – bad practice coming back?**

From your comments, we know that late payment issues are getting worse again.

A recent study by transactions company BACS has found that SMEs in the UK are owed an average of £30,000 and spend 17 working days a year chasing up late payments. The European Commission's online consultation seeks to examine the costs and benefits of 16 proposals to support the objectives of an EU Directive on combating late payment. Here's the link:

<http://www.zapsurvey.com/Survey.aspx?id=04b19e38-fd55-461c-a4b5-0c1a0f2a8da4>

And any specific case studies would be welcome at [Vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk](mailto:Vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk)

### **Rural Businesses – have you found the gateway?**

Members are often concerned that businesses in rural areas get less support than colleagues in the cities. So it is a real pleasure to pass on information about the Rural Enterprise Gateway. It provides information and links to support especially for businesses in rural areas – the link is below.

<http://www.regsw.org.uk/content/industryreports/viewitem.aspx?artID=5126>

As always, I would appreciate your feedback.

### **Is WEEE giving you a headache?**

The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations rules which came into force last year have hit small businesses hard. We are using the upcoming review of the rules to lobby for an exemption for small businesses.

So guess what – we need your case studies about the impact of WEEE on your business. This is what one member said:-

A householder buys a new TV. Under WEEE they can take it to civic amenity site, paid for by the retailers and manufacturers. Our member's business exists because he offers a better service. He had been used to taking the equipment away for the customer. To do this now, he has to take it to a designated site which can be some distance away. And storing goods to make the trip worthwhile brings its own problems. As a result, the customer, especially the elderly, gets a poorer service and small businesses lose a key part of their service which enabled them to compete.

And it is not just things like TVs, there are now issues around central heating control units etc.

Please let me have details of your experiences, so they can help with our lobbying. Information to [Vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk](mailto:Vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk) please.

Vivienne Rayner  
17<sup>th</sup> April 2008