



**hethertons**  
SOLICITORS

# Why are employment lawyers such killjoys?

*By David Scott, Head of Employment Law*

It may be the season to be jolly but as an employment lawyer, I am far more likely to be accused of being a Scrooge than a Santa. Why is that? I always buy my fair share of presents and always take the whole of Christmas Day off work. It is most likely to be that as we approach the Work Christmas Party season, I advise caution.

Whilst these parties take place outside working hours and away from the workplace, employers can still be responsible for their employees' conduct.

The scope of what an employer could be liable for at work events ranges from drunken physical assaults to various forms of harassment. Don't shoot the messenger but maybe that free bar doesn't look as appealing after all...

However, there are ways of balancing the looming fears of the Ghost of Christmas Party Lawsuits yet to Come. You can still celebrate, but make sure your employees are aware that any inappropriate behaviour at the party will be dealt with under the company's disciplinary policy.

Don't forget social media. The internet is forever, not just for Christmas. It won't fade even if your memory of the party does. Company and individual's reputations can be damaged. The UK GDPR continues to apply even if that photo of the CEO asleep in his Christmas Pudding is the funniest thing you have ever seen. Make sure you have a Social Media Policy and everyone knows it applies even when the drinks are flowing.

Remember - Party hard but party smart!

If all goes wrong, the employment Scrooges lawyers at Hethertons will be here to help on **01904 528200**.

