

Footnotes

¹A TUPE transfer is one where the undertaking for which an employee works, is transferred to a new owner or where the employee's employer has changed as the result of outsourcing, change of contractor or in-sourcing. The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 work to protect the employee's employment when this occurs.

²a partner is the other member of a couple consisting of: either a man and a woman who are living together as husband and wife; or two people of the same sex who are living together as if they were civil partners.

³Note: the omission of grandparents from this list which has received much criticism.

⁴“relative” is defined in Reg 3B Flexible Working (Eligibility, Complaints and Remedies) Regulations 2002.

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Current Awareness

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Review Article on Statute Law Database

Abstract: This article has been written by Janice Sayer, a freelance information manager, who has extensive and unrivalled experience of working on the content of the Westlaw UK legislation database.

Keywords: legislation; legal databases

Introduction

UK legislation has been freely available on the internet since 1996, when HMSO (now OPSI) first started publishing new legislation online. A few years later, legislation dating back to 1988 was added to the website. This was of limited value, as it was published in its original form and users could never be sure whether what they were viewing was still in force or had been amended. What was needed was a database which showed the law in force, with all amendments applied, and also an archive of historical versions of legislation, so that lawyers dealing with long-running cases could refer to legislation as it stood at a particular point in time.

This problem has been solved to a certain extent by the Statute Law Database (SLD), which contains revised versions of UK legislation and is publicly available, free of charge, on the internet. First mooted in 1991, it was finally released to the public at the end of 2006, by which time it was often understandably preceded by the words

“long awaited” whenever it was mentioned. For those interested in the history of its development, there is a detailed article on the Wikipedia website.

In the late 1990s, I was working on the legislation for the Westlaw UK database, so I followed the progress of the SLD with interest and some trepidation. After all, who would subscribe to a commercial service if they could get the official government version of revised legislation for free? Westlaw UK was eventually launched in 1999, but we were still waiting for the SLD to be released, although, from our experiences of the volume and complexity of legislation, we had a good idea why it was taking so long. Eventually, the SLD was made available on the web in December 2006.

Content

The SLD contains primary legislation (Acts and Measures) and secondary legislation (Statutory