

# be connected newsletter for higher education - February 2022

In this edition we provide you with the latest in legal updates, news and insight from the higher education sector.

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Welcome to be connected our quarterly update for Higher Education Institutions.

We aim to provide content that offers you real value and relevant, useful information from our national team of legal and HR experts.

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## Legal updates

### Implications of the amended public procurement thresholds

The recent review of the public procurement threshold figures included changes to the VAT position.

Procurement specialist Anja Beriro sets out clearly what this means for organisations that need to comply with the regulations.

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### Fire safety - looking back and looking forward

Fire safety regulation is undergoing a period of evolution and, as 2021 drew to a close, now is a good opportunity to take stock and take a forward look to what the year ahead may hold.

In this article, health and safety expert Steph McGarry reflects on the year gone by and looks at what we can expect in 2022.

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### Employment Law in 2022

For much of 2020 and 2021, employers across the country from all sectors have had to adjust quickly to restrictions, new safety procedures, and different working environments. As we move into 2022, we take a look below at what developments may be on the cards for the coming year.

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### National Security and Investment Act – key points you need to know

The National Security and Investment Act 2021 came into force on 4 January 2022. It brings in a new regime allowing for Government intervention in transactions on national security grounds, as well as requiring mandatory notifications by acquirers in some instances.

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#### Digitising the student experience

It is probably fair to say that, as a sector, higher education has lagged behind in terms of digital evolution, largely because traditional teaching formats historically in place (such as in-person classroom and lecture-based learning) were not impacted by digitalisation in any fundamental way. However, when the Covid pandemic hit in 2020, HE institutions (HEIs) were suddenly faced with the urgent and critical problem of delivering continuity of teaching against a backdrop of remote learning in order to adhere to Government guidelines.

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#### How will HSE's focus on occupational health affect UK HE institutions?

The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) decision to prioritise occupational health has put certain key occupations in HSE's crosshairs for inspection and potential enforcement actions. With a new 10-year strategy in the pipeline, will this focus continue, and what is this likely to mean for HSE inspection and enforcement activities for HEIs?

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#### Exclusion grounds under the new procurement regime

The Government Response to the public consultation on its Green Paper, Transforming Public Procurement was published in December 2021. One of the key considerations of the Green Paper was the grounds for excluding bidders from a procurement process.

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