



Employment Rights Act 2025

What is changing and when

The Employment Rights Act 2025 is introducing some of the most significant changes to UK employment law in years.

The changes are being introduced in stages throughout 2026 and 2027. To help you prepare, we have created this simple timeline so you can see what has already changed, what is coming next and the key actions employers should consider.

NOW IN FORCE

February - April 2026

What changed:

- Stronger protections for employees taking protected industrial action
- Day-one rights to Paternity Leave and Unpaid Parental Leave
- Statutory Sick Pay from the first qualifying day of sickness, with the Lower Earnings Limit removed
- Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave introduced
- Maximum protective award for failure to collectively consult on redundancy doubled from 90 to 180 days' pay
- Stronger whistleblowing protection relating to sexual harassment
- Simplified trade union recognition rules
- Fair Work Agency established
- Voluntary gender equality and menopause action plans introduced for employers with 250+ employees

Your action:

- Make sure relevant policies and procedures have been updated
- Check payroll processes reflect the new SSP rules
- Make sure managers understand the new family leave rights
- Keep accurate employment and payroll records
- Ensure your HR documentation reflects the current legal position

These measures are confirmed in the Government's current implementation timetable.

25 August 2026

Trade Union Balloting

What changes:

- Electronic and workplace balloting becomes permitted for statutory trade union ballots

Your action:

For most SMEs, no immediate action will be required. Employers should, however, make sure anyone responsible for employee relations understands the changing trade union framework.

COMING NEXT:

1 October 2026

Employment Tribunal Claims

What changes:

- The time limit for bringing most Employment Tribunal claims increases from **3 months to 6 months**

Your action:

- Review any HR guidance that refers to the three-month limit
- Make sure important employee relations decisions are clearly documented
- Keep appropriate records of disciplinary, grievance, performance and redundancy processes
- Continue to address workplace concerns promptly

For breach of employment contract claims in Scotland, this change takes effect on 9 November 2026.

30 October 2026

Harassment & Trade Union Rights

What changes:

- Employers must take **all reasonable steps** to prevent sexual harassment
- New protection against harassment by third parties, such as customers and clients
- Stronger trade union workplace access rights
- New rights and protections for trade union representatives
- Further changes to trade union recognition and derecognition
- Stronger protection from detriment for taking protected industrial action

Your action:

- Review harassment policies and reporting procedures
- Assess where sexual or third-party harassment risks could arise
- Review manager and employee training
- Make sure managers know how to respond to inappropriate behaviour
- Prepare for the new trade union information requirement
- Make sure managers know what to do if approached by a trade union

January 2027

Unfair Dismissal, Further Trade Union Rights & Fire and Rehire

What changes:

- The qualifying period for ordinary unfair dismissal reduces from **2 years to 6 months**
- The statutory cap on the compensatory award for unfair dismissal is removed
- New restrictions on the use of **fire and rehire**
- Employers will have a new duty to provide workers with a written statement informing them of their **right to join a trade union**

Employees who already have six months' service on 1 January 2027 will gain unfair dismissal protection immediately.

Your action:

- Review probation periods and processes
- Make sure managers deal with performance and conduct concerns promptly
- Improve documentation of employment decisions
- Review dismissal procedures
- Take advice before seeking to change contractual terms where employees do not agree
- Prepare for the new trade union information requirement
- Review new starter processes to ensure the required trade union statement is provided
- Consider how the statement will be made available to existing workers and how annual requirements will be managed

Further changes during 2027

What is expected:

- Further flexible working reforms
- Guaranteed hours for qualifying zero and low-hours workers
- Reasonable notice of shifts and certain shift changes
- Compensation for some cancelled, moved or shortened shifts
- Bereavement Leave, including provision for pregnancy loss
- Enhanced dismissal protection during pregnancy and following family leave
- Mandatory gender equality and menopause action plans for employers with 250+ employees
- Further collective redundancy reforms
- Further trade union and blacklisting measures
- Regulation of umbrella companies
- Restrictions on certain non-disclosure agreements relating to harassment and discrimination

Your action:

- Keep contracts, policies and procedures under review
- Review working arrangements where zero or low-hours contracts are used

- Prepare managers for further changes to family and flexible working rights
- Continue to monitor implementation dates and Government guidance

The Government states that future implementation dates remain subject to parliamentary processes and may change.

Preparing for change

The Employment Rights Act is being introduced in phases, so employers do not need to make every change at once.

The important thing is to understand what is changing, when it affects your business and what action you need to take.

HR:4UK will continue to monitor developments and provide practical guidance and resources as each stage approaches.

Already an HR:4UK client?

We will keep you updated as the legislation progresses and let you know what changes we are making to your HR:4UK documentation, along with any practical steps you need to take.

Need Help?

Our HR experts can help you review your HR policies, update documentation, and deliver manager training, HR Surgeries or Q&A's in relation to the Employment Rights Act 2026.



Contact HR:4UK today to stay ahead of the changes and protect your business.



www.hr4uk.com

FINAL NOTE

The Employment Rights Act is being implemented in stages and some future dates and details may change as further regulations and guidance are published. Employers should keep their HR documentation and workplace practices under review as each phase approaches.

Updated September 2026

Disclaimer

This document is intended as general guidance only and does not constitute legal advice. Employment law requirements and their application can vary depending on individual circumstances. If you are unsure how the Employment Rights Act changes affect your business, we recommend seeking advice before taking action.