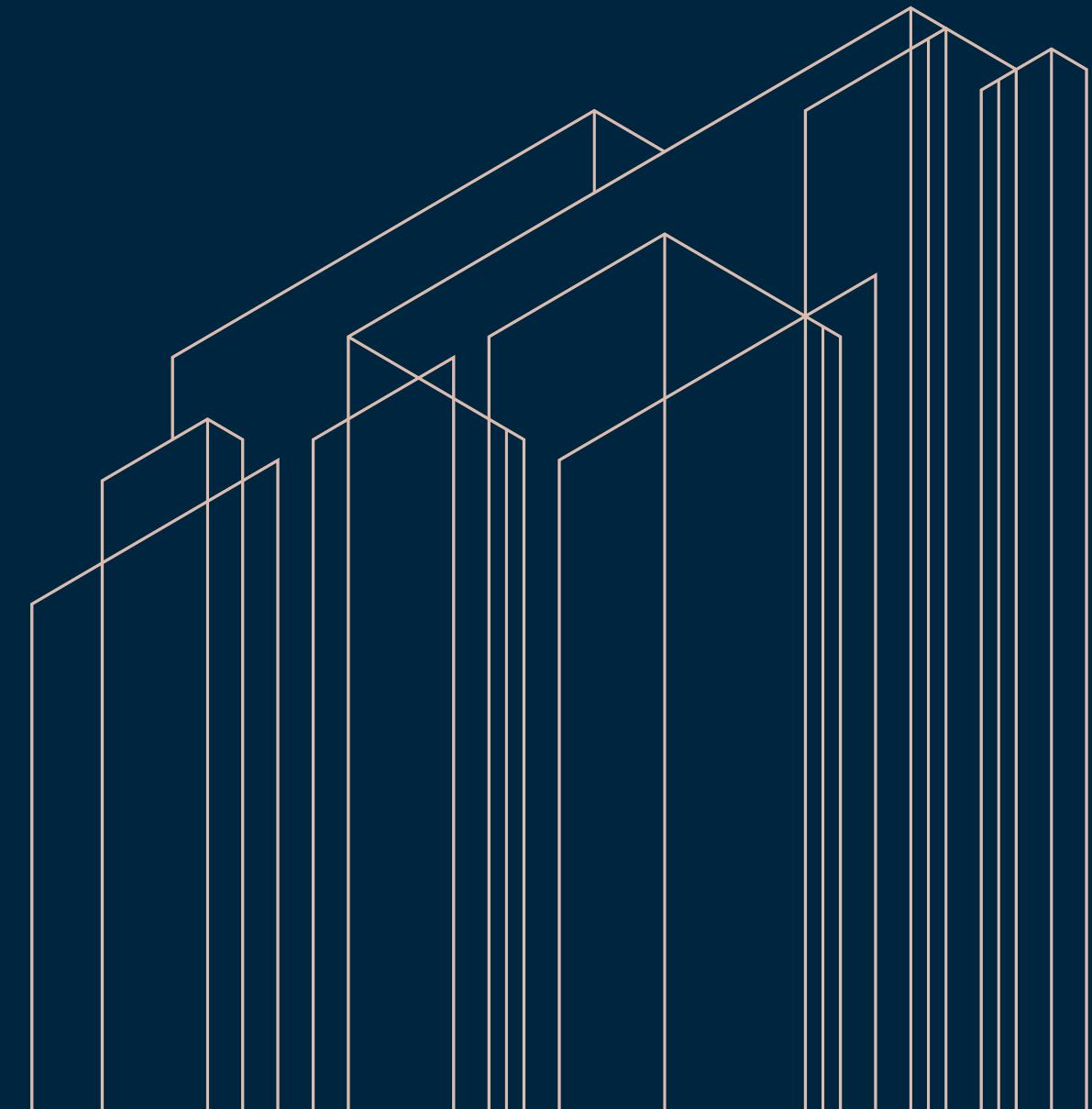


Knights

Employment Rights Act

Everything you need to know



What's in the Employment Rights Act?

The Employment Rights Act 2025 is widely regarded as the biggest set of changes to employment law in a generation.

This will affect all employers in some way. Our unrivalled nationwide team of employment specialists is here to help you prepare.

Now that the Act has been agreed in Parliament, a series of changes will take place over the next couple of years. These will include:

- A new single employment law regulator: the 'Fair Work Agency'
- Changes to thresholds and penalties associated with collective redundancy consultation
- Additional reporting obligations on equality issues
- Strengthened family rights
- Restrictions on fire-and-rehire practices
- Strengthened employee rights to request flexible working
- Additional anti-harassment requirements
- Greater rights for Trade Unions
- Unfair dismissal rights for employees after 6 months
- Mandatory requirements to provide more stable work for low hours workers

Expert views

Our employment experts are across all areas of the Act. Here's what they have to say.

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This has really arisen as a result of a number of factors that we've seen over the past five or ten years – there have been different pressures around flexible working and zero-hours contracts.



John Wood on why the changes are coming in.

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The evidence shows that the parental leave system is just not working. The current measures haven't done the job of encouraging new dads to take more time off.



Jackie Turner on parental leave changes.

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Employers are going to have to be much more careful and selective about who they're bringing into the organisation.



Julie Temple on changes to allow employees to claim for 'ordinary' unfair dismissal from six months.

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Now would be the time to carry out an audit, and make sure your existing contracts and employee handbooks say exactly what they should say.



Clive Day on plans to clamp down on 'fire-and-rehire' practices.

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Sectors that maybe haven't had to cope with trade unions quite as much will also have to get to grips with this.



Jim Wright on plans to strengthen trade union rights.

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There could be unintended changes across the board.



Aleesha Amjad on a new obligation on employers to take all reasonable steps to prevent workplace harassment.

Key dates

The Employment Rights Act will usher in a series of significant changes over the next couple of years.

Now is the time to get to grips with the proposed legislation and timeline for implementation so you're prepared for the first major changes to affect all employers, which come into effect in April 2026.

Key aims of the legislation

- Balancing out one-sided flexibility
- Ensuring fair pay for a fair day's work
- Modernising trade union legislation
- Prioritising fairness, equality and wellbeing
- Streamlining the enforcement of employment rights
- Supporting family rights

Below is the Government's outline timetable for bringing the various provisions into force.

December 2025

Now the Bill has received Royal Assent, the Strikes (Minimum Services Levels) Act 2023 will be repealed in full, alongside major aspects of the Trade Union Act 2016 (with further provisions of the Act to be repealed via a commencement order at a later date).

April 2026

Ensuring fair pay for a fair day's work: Removing the lower earnings limit and waiting period for Statutory Sick Pay.

Modernising trade union legislation: Simplifying the trade union recognition process and digital/workplace balloting systems.

Prioritising fairness, equality and wellbeing: Implementing enhanced whistleblower protections.

Streamlining enforcement of employment rights: Establishing new a single employment law regulator: the Fair Work Agency.

Supporting family rights: Bringing in day-one paternity leave and unpaid parental leave.

Later dates...

Key dates

Continued

October 2026

Balancing out one-sided flexibility: Heavily restricting fire-and-rehire practices.

Ensuring fair pay for a fair day's work: Bringing forward regulations to establish the Fair Pay Agreement Adult Social Care Negotiating Body; strengthening tipping laws.

Modernising trade union legislation: Introducing new rights and protections for trade union representatives; strengthening trade unions' right of access; and extending protections against detriments for taking industrial action.

Prioritising fairness, equality and wellbeing: Bringing in an 'All reasonable steps' requirement for employers to prevent sexual harassment; introducing an obligation on employers not to permit the harassment of their employees by third parties; and allowing relevant employers to voluntarily produce gender pay gap and menopause action plans (ahead of this becoming mandatory in 2027).

Streamlining enforcement of employment rights: Bringing into effect extended employment tribunal time limits.

2027

Balancing out one-sided flexibility: Introducing protection from unfair dismissal from after six months; setting a new collective consultation threshold for redundancies; and requiring employers to offer more stable working patterns to low/zero-hours workers in some cases.

Prioritising fairness, equality and wellbeing: Requiring relevant employers to produce gender pay gap and menopause action plans (if not done so voluntarily after April 2026); introducing a power to enable regulations to specify steps that determine whether an employer has taken all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment; and bringing in changes to unfair dismissal.

Streamlining enforcement of employment rights: Regulating umbrella companies.

Supporting family rights: Introducing new rights for pregnant workers; strengthening the existing 'day-one' right to request flexible working; and implementing a new right to unpaid bereavement leave.

Preparing for the changes

What can you do now to prepare?

The key message from our experts is:
audit, audit, audit.

Now is the time to review your processes, policies, procedures and contract terms.

Our expert team are here to help with that. Get in touch if you need our help to prepare.

We'll also be running a series of events for HR and People professionals nationwide ahead of the key milestones, so make sure to keep an eye out for the details of these sessions, coming soon.

