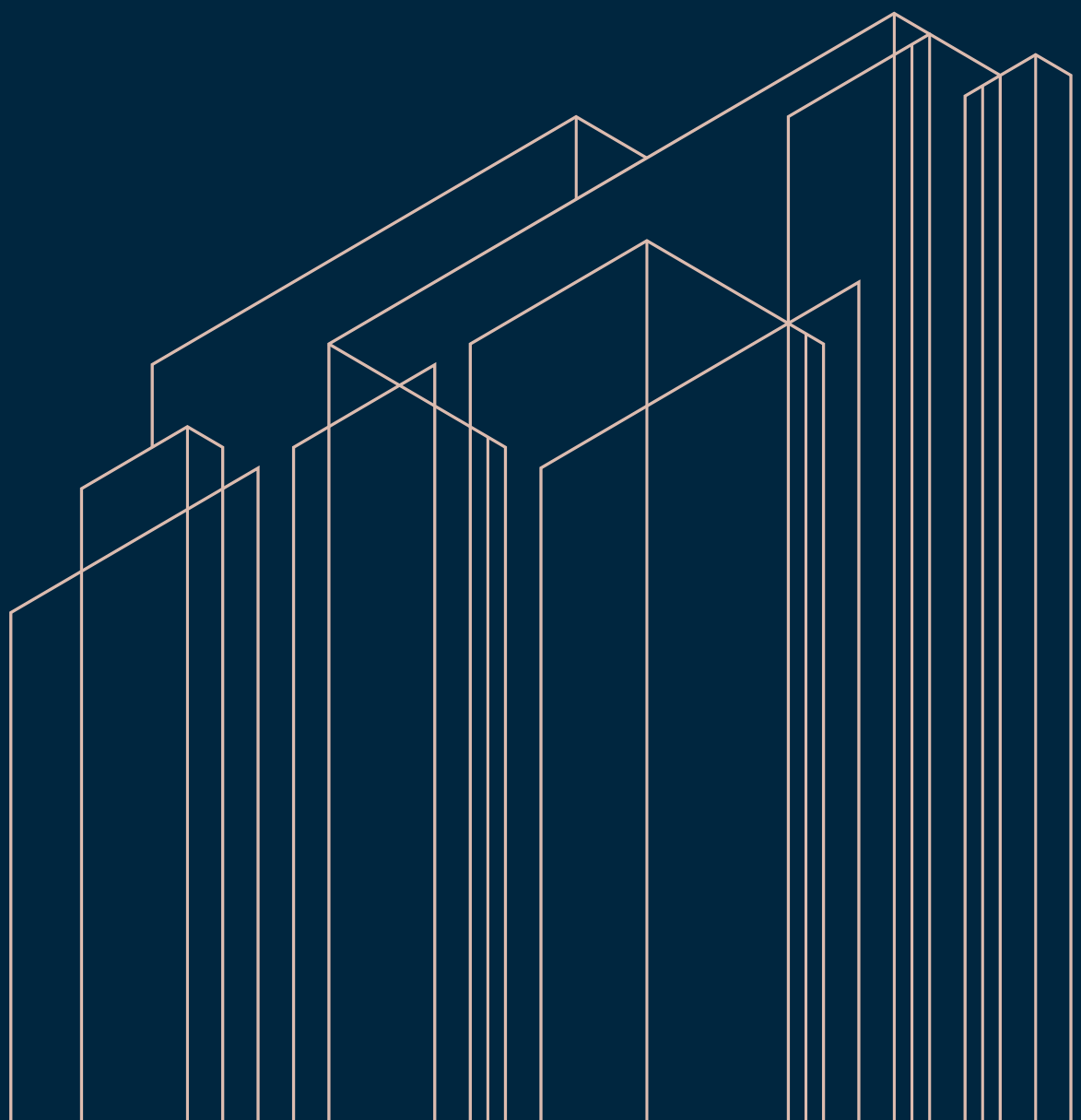
Knights

Employment Rights Act

Everything you need to know



What's in the Employment Rights Act?

The changes set to come in under the Employment Rights Act 2025 are some of the biggest the employment landscape has seen in a generation.

The Act will affect all employers in some way – but 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 come into force over the next couple of years. These will include:

- The introduction of 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.
- Enhanced flexible working rights.
- Stronger anti-harassment requirements.
- Additional rights for trade unions.
- Unfair dismissal protections for employees after six 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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The Act has arisen as a result of several 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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It is ultimately about ensuring that the individual is being reviewed on a regular basis, ensuring management oversight, and making decisions earlier.

Julie Temple on plans to bolster protections from unfair dismissal.

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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 will come into effect from April 2026.

Key aims of the legislation

The Employment Rights Act 2025 aims to address the following core areas:

- Employee wellbeing.
- Enforcement of employment rights.
- Family rights.
- Flexible working practices.
- Pay conditions.
- Trade union legislation.
- Workplace equality.

Below is the government's proposed timetable for bringing the various provisions into force.

December 2025

Once the Bill received Royal Assent on 18 December, the Strikes (Minimum Services Levels) Act 2023 was repealed in full.

February 2026

Major aspects of the Trade Union Act 2016 were repealed, paving the way for changes to union recognition and access.

April 2026

Central enforcement: The Fair Work Agency will be established as a central point of enforcement for a range of employment rights.

Collective consultation: The protective award for failure to meet collective redundancy consultation obligations will double from 90 to 180 days' salary.

Equality: Employers with more than 250 employees can choose to put gender pay gap and menopause action plans in place ahead of them becoming mandatory in 2027.

Family rights: Day-one rights to paternity leave and unpaid parental leave will be introduced.

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP): Eligibility for SSP will be expanded through the removal of the Lower Earnings Limit; employees will also be eligible to receive SSP from day one of sickness.

Continued...

Key dates

October 2026

Preventing harassment: New obligations for employers to take 'all reasonable steps' to prevent workplace harassment will come into force, alongside liability for third-party harassment.

Trade unions: A right of access to trade union officials will be implemented, alongside a requirement for employers to make their employees aware of their right to join a trade union.

1 January 2027

Fire and rehire: Fire and rehire practices will be heavily restricted.

Unfair dismissal: Enhanced unfair dismissal protections will take effect after six months of employment.

Zero-hours contracts: Employers will be required to offer more stable working patterns to low and zero-hours workers.

October 2027

Collective consultation: Changes to the collective consultation threshold, and when it applies, will come into force.

Also in 2027

Bereavement leave: Employees will be entitled to unpaid bereavement leave.

Equality: It will become mandatory for employers with more than 250 employees to produce gender pay gap and menopause action plans if they did not do so voluntarily after April 2026.

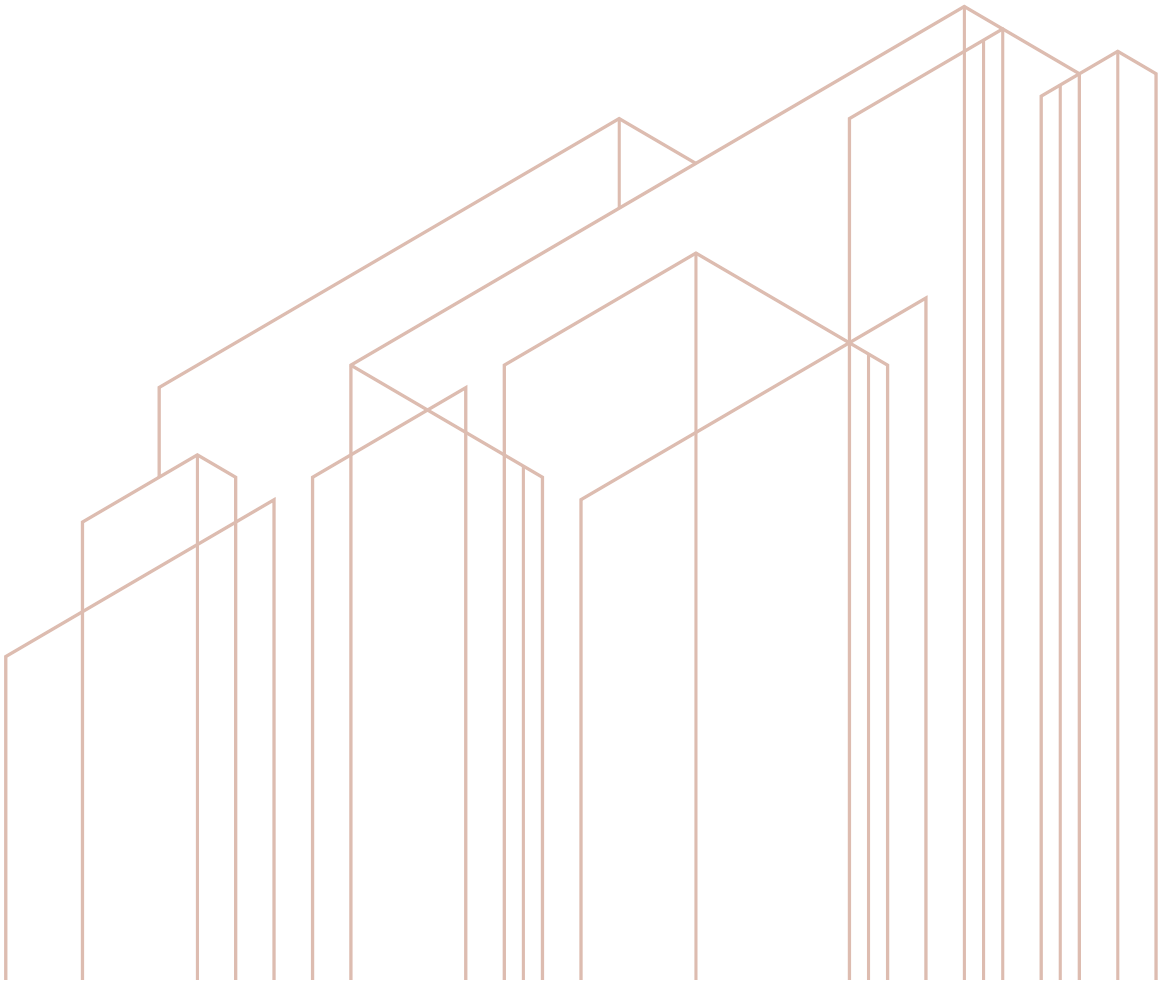
Flexibility: The existing right for employees to request flexible working from day one will be strengthened.

Preparing for the changes

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

Now is the time to review your processes, policies, procedures and contract terms. We're here to help with that. Get in touch so we can smooth the transition.

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.



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