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**HR &
EMPLOYMENT LAW**

The Employment Rights Bill – What to Expect and When

A Quick Reference Guide

In what has been described as the most significant overhaul to workers' rights in a generation, the Government's Employment Rights Bill proposes changes aimed at strengthening job security, improving working conditions, and modernising employment protections.

Our team of HR Advisors are actively circulating updates and reviewing relevant policies and procedures to ensure you are fully informed, well-supported, and ready for the changes ahead.

This quick-reference guide highlights the key changes and their expected implementation timelines, giving you a clear view of what to expect and when.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact your dedicated HR Advisor and our HR team — we're here to help.

Paternity Leave Employees will be entitled to paternity leave from their first day of employment, removing the need to complete 26 weeks of service. Employees will be allowed to take paternity leave even after taking a period of Shared Parental Leave and pay.

- An updated paternity leave policy and updated shared parental leave policies, have been circulated to all Stallard Kane HR clients to reflect these changes.

Unpaid Parental Leave Employees will be entitled to unpaid parental leave from their first day of employment, removing the need to complete 1 year of service.

- An updated parental leave policy has been circulated to all Stallard Kane HR clients to reflect this change.

Whistleblowing Workers who speak up about workplace sexual harassment will be protected under whistleblowing laws. These types of reports will be formally recognised as qualifying disclosures.

- Ensure you have a clear sexual harassment policy in place. An up to date policy has been circulated to all Stallard Kane HR clients.
- Train managers on how to respond appropriately to disclosures of sexual harassment.

Redundancy – Collective Consultations The maximum period of the collective redundancy protective award will be doubled from the current 90 days to 180 days.

- Seek HR or legal advice early if you are planning large-scale redundancies, to mitigate the risk of breaching consultation duties.

Trade unions The trade union recognition process will be simplified, with the introduction of electronic and workplace balloting.

- Seek HR or legal advice early if a recognition request is made or anticipated, to ensure full compliance with the updated process.

Gender equality and menopause action plans Employers with 250 or more employees will have the option to produce and publish a voluntary action plan alongside their gender pay gap data. These may become mandatory from spring 2027, subject to secondary legislation.

- Additional guidance for employers on creating an action plan will be published by the Government in April 2026. Please visit www.gov.uk for further information.

Bereaved partner's paternity leave A new right to bereaved partner's paternity leave will be introduced, expected to last up to 52 weeks and conclude on the child's first birthday.

- A new bereaved partner's paternity leave policy has been circulated to all Stallard Kane HR clients.

April 2026

Legislative change	Key details	How you can prepare
Fair Work Agency	The Fair Work Agency will act as a central hub for employment rights enforcement, designed to streamline support for both workers and employers. The agency will have the ability to inspect workplaces and require employers to evidence compliance with employment law and issue penalties if it is found that employers have underpaid workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take proactive steps to ensure you're fully compliant with employment laws by using the latest versions of contracts, handbooks, and policies provided by Stallard Kane. Make sure you have implemented any recommendations from your most recent HR audit. • Review your payroll systems to confirm that all workers are being paid correctly (including holiday pay, minimum wage, overtime, etc.). • Ensure accurate record-keeping for wages, hours worked, holiday entitlements, and contracts, in case evidence is ever requested.
Statutory Sick Pay	<p>Statutory Sick Pay will be available from the first day of sickness, rather than from day four, and from the very start of employment.</p> <p>The Lower Earnings Limit will be removed, meaning all eligible employees, regardless of their earnings, will qualify for SSP.</p> <p>SSP will be paid at 80% of an employee's normal weekly earnings, or the current statutory rate whichever is lower</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check your employment contracts and handbooks (if they reference SSP terms) to ensure they align with the new legislation. Your HR Advisor will also conduct a review at your next HR Audit. • Check payroll systems are configured to calculate SSP at 80% of normal weekly earnings (or the flat rate, whichever is lower). • Consider strengthening your sickness absence policy by introducing return to work meetings after all absences and including absence trigger points to prompt formal reviews or meetings. <p>Note: Stallard Kane will provide a policy for you to consider in due course</p>



JULY 2026

Legislative change	Key details	How you can prepare
Unfair Dismissal	<p>The change to reduce the unfair dismissal qualifying period to six months comes into force on 1 January 2027.</p> <p>Employers should note that any employee with at least six months' service by that date will gain the right to bring an unfair dismissal claim.</p> <p>This means that individuals employed on or before 1 July 2026 will qualify to claim from 1 January 2027, as they will meet the revised six-month threshold.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify employees approaching six months' service by 1 January 2027 to address any potential issues proactively. Actively manage employees in their probationary period with regular reviews and timely decisions before employees gain unfair dismissal rights. Train line managers to handle issues fairly, consistently, and within the shorter timeframe, with a strong focus on documentation and communication.

OCTOBER 2026

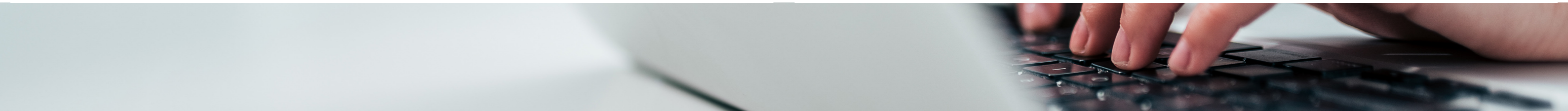
Legislative change	Key details	How you can prepare
Tribunals	<p>Employees will have six months, rather than three, to submit a claim to an employment tribunal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek HR or legal advice early regarding any disputes or employee relations issues to help reduce the risk of potential claims. Ensure documentation related to dismissals or employee relations issues is kept for at least six months or longer.
Sexual harassment	<p>Employers will be required to take "all" reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace alongside a new responsibility to protect staff from harassment by third parties (such as customers, clients, service users) whilst at work.</p> <p>Note: this is an additional obligation beyond the existing duty introduced on 26th October 2024, requiring employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review your policies to ensure they reflect the strengthened duty and include reference to harassment by third parties. Update your risk assessments to identify areas of the business where sexual harassment risks may arise, especially in customer-facing roles or isolated working environments. Provide training for all staff on recognising, preventing, and reporting sexual harassment in the workplace. Introduce or review your third-party conduct policies, including customer behaviour standards and the right to withdraw services or contact if harassment occurs. Consider including anti-harassment clauses in contracts with clients, suppliers, and partners.
Trade unions	<p>Trade union representatives and members will receive stronger legal protection, including new rights that prevent them from being treated unfairly for taking part in industrial action. Employers would also need to make all employees aware that they have the right to join a trade union.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek HR or legal advice if you are considering disciplinary or performance action involving an employee who has recently taken part in industrial action. Ensure fair treatment in recruitment, promotion, and training opportunities for union members and representatives.
Tipping	<p>It will be mandatory for employers to consult with employees when developing policies around the distribution of tips. Employers will also be required to review their tipping policy at least once every three years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit your current tipping practices considering how tips are currently collected, distributed, and communicated. Put in place a clear, fair method for engaging employees when developing or updating tipping policies, ensuring feedback is properly considered and recorded. Build a process to review the policy at least every three years.

JANUARY 2027

Legislative change	Key details	How you can prepare
Fire and rehire	<p>Dismissals arising from an employee's refusal to accept changes to their contract of employment will be deemed automatically unfair.</p> <p>The only exception will be where an employer can provide strong evidence of serious financial difficulty, specifically, that the business would be unable to continue operating without making contractual changes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek HR or legal advice before implementing any changes to employee's terms and conditions of employment.
Unfair dismissal	<p>The existing two-year qualifying period for unfair dismissal claims will be removed.</p> <p>For dismissals from 1 January 2027 the unfair dismissal qualifying period will be reduced to just 6 months.</p> <p>The compensation cap for unfair dismissal reward will also be removed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharpen your recruitment process, being more rigorous during application screenings and interviews. Make job offers subject to satisfactory references and any other pre-employment checks. This approach gives potential for the offer to be lawfully withdrawn if any concerns arise. Introduce structured and documented probation review meetings (e.g. at 1, 3, and 6 months), alongside monthly documented 121 meetings. Keep records of any concerns, feedback, or issues during probation, in case decisions are later challenged. Update relevant policies to reflect the new legal framework, ensuring the correct timelines are used. Communicate changes to your managers, so they understand the tighter window for managing underperformance or suitability concerns.

2027

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Zero-hour contracts	<p>Zero-hour workers will have the right to request a contract that reflects the hours they regularly work, based on a reference period (expected to be 12 weeks).</p> <p>They will also be entitled to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasonable notice of changes to shifts or working hours Compensation for cancelled or shortened shifts, based on the notice given <p>These rights will also apply to agency workers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure zero-hour contracts are used only when a worker's hours are genuinely unpredictable and subject to fluctuation. Review zero-hour contracts to identify any individuals who consistently work regular hours. Rather than waiting to receive a request in 2027, consider offering these workers a more stable, hourly-paid contract now, that accurately reflects their typical working patterns and actual hours worked. Review shift notification practices to ensure employees receive reasonable notice of their shifts and of any changes to working hours.
Rights for pregnant workers	<p>It will become unlawful to dismiss a woman during pregnancy, while on maternity leave, or within six months of returning to work, except in very specific circumstances.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid initiating dismissal procedures involving pregnant employees, those on maternity leave, or those recently returned — unless you have strong, lawful grounds and have sought expert HR or legal advice.



Legislative change	Key details	How you can prepare
Collective consultation during redundancy	A new rule will require collective consultation if 20 or more redundancies are proposed at one site, or if a certain number of employees across the organisation are affected. The specific threshold is still to be decided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek HR advice early if you are planning large-scale redundancies, to mitigate the risk of breaching consultation duties.
Sexual Harassment	Regulations will define what actions are considered "reasonable steps" for employers to take to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay alert for further updates regarding your legal obligations ahead of this change coming into effect in 2027. <p>Note: Once specific details are confirmed, Stallard Kane will be reviewing policies and providing updates.</p>
Gender pay gap and menopause action plans	Employers with 250 or more employees will be legally required to publish action plans addressing both gender pay gaps and menopause in the workplace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your organisation employs more than 250 people, stay alert for further updates regarding your legal obligations ahead of this change coming into effect in 2027
Bereavement Leave Entitlement	A new day-one entitlement will be introduced, granting employees at least one week of bereavement leave. This leave will also be extended to parents who experience a miscarriage before 24 weeks of pregnancy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update your bereavement leave policies closer to 2027, once the details of the changes have been confirmed.

Our extensive experience, coupled with our friendly and personal service, has helped keep thousands of companies across the UK safe and compliant for over 20 years.

Stallard Kane helps you and your clients easily navigate the ever-changing risk management landscape. We build relationships through clear communication, trust and collaboration and aim to impact every client we connect with positively. Our team offers you the peace of mind that comes with knowing your clients' concerns are solved, allowing you to focus on supporting your clients and both reducing the likelihood of and successfully defending claims against your clients' businesses.

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Contact us today to learn more about how we can assist you!

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