

Employment Rights Act:

Timeline for implementation and actions you should take now

The Employment Rights Act has been passed into law after months of back and forth. The Act is bringing about the biggest employment law reforms seen in generations. **With 28 key reforms bringing in 173 new pieces of law throughout 2026 and 2027**, there are plenty of changes for small business owners to get their heads around.

Here's a timeline of the biggest changes with actions you should take before changes come into place.

April 2026

- Duty to keep records on annual leave and holiday pay for **six years**
- Removal of lower earnings limit and three-day waiting period for **sick pay**
- The service requirement for **paternity and parental leave** will be removed
- It will be automatically unfair to dismiss someone for making a **sexual harassment disclosure**
- The **Fair Work Agency** will be established, which will be able to request proof and evidence of compliance with employment law – so record keeping is going to be more important than ever
- The **maximum collective redundancy protective award** will be doubled
- The **Trade Union recognition process** will be simplified, alongside electronic and workplace balloting reforms



**April 2026
checklist**

TAME YOUR ADMIN BEAST EARLY

- Update sickness absence, paternity leave, and parental leave policies
- Make sure your absence management processes and records are robust and consistent
- Review company sick pay eligibility

Make sure you've actioned these things now. If you haven't, you're already behind. And you don't want compliance admin becoming an uncontrollable monster

October 2026

- Framework for a **Fair Pay Agreement in the adult social care sector** to negotiate remuneration and conditions
- Employers must take **all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment**, and all third-party harassment must not be permitted
- **Tip laws** will be tightened, and employers will have to consult with workers when developing or revising their tipping policies
- Employees should be given a statement informing them of their right to join a Trade Union. There are also enhanced Trade Union rights of access, extra rights and protections for **Trade Union** reps, and additional protections from detriment for those taking industrial action
- The **tribunal claim time limit** will be extended, so resolving issues internally will be a priority, as well as post-employment grievance handling and exit interviews

In 2027

- As of **1st January**, employees will be able to claim **unfair dismissal** from six months of employment. While this is an improvement from the original proposal for day-one rights, employers will need to consider their probation periods more carefully
- **Fire and rehire** will be automatically unfair dismissal (in certain circumstances – this is still being debated)
- **Zero hours contract reforms** bring the right to a guaranteed hours contract reflecting usual working hours. Employers will have to give reasonable notice of shifts and compensation for late changes or cancellations
- All employees will have the right to unpaid bereavement leave
- **New collective consultation thresholds** for redundancies
- Extra **dismissal rights and protections for pregnant workers and those on maternity leave**
- Mandatory **gender pay gap and menopause action plans** (for larger employers only, although smaller employers can use such action plans to show commitment to diversity, equality and inclusion)
- The use of **confidentiality clauses** relating to harassment or discrimination in NDAs is going to be restricted



October 2026

checklist

KEEP THE RED TAPE UNDER CONTROL

- Get a Trade Union statement to add to your contract
- Update your harassment and sexual harassment policies
- Review risk assessments and consider additional training

Your admin burden is growing, get ahead of it before it becomes overwhelming



2027

checklist

DON'T LET COMPLIANCE CONSUME YOU

- Conclude any fire and re-hire processes before 2027 or risk unfair dismissal claims
- Review contractual probation periods, policies and processes
- Assess usage of zero/low hour workers in your business, documentation and policies
- Create/update bereavement leave policies

By now, your compliance workload could feel monstrous, but with the right prep, it's manageable.

What you need to do now

Careful planning is key to preparing your business for big changes and stopping compliance admin becoming a monster that devours your time.

You will need to review and update handbooks, policies and contracts, before the red tape starts piling up.

Increased protections for employees bring a higher chance of an unfair dismissal case. There is also more support and time for people who want to make a claim. You can protect your business from litigation or tribunal by having the correct procedures and documentation in place.



How BrightHR can support you

As it comes in, we'll be providing our clients with the new and updated documentation that they need to be compliant with the changing law. As well as that, our integrated HR systems will make all the difference when it comes to updating policies, record keeping, training and more.

Integrated payroll software from BrightHR can help businesses seamlessly adapt to changes to the minimum wage and sick pay, where compliance is crucial to avoiding fines and action from HMRC.

Through BrightBase, you can access more than 300 policies, documents, and templates, including an induction checklist, probation review form, employee contracts, and much more.

And if you have any concerns about your obligations, there's BrightAdvice, our 24/7 employment law service and advice line.

READY TO SLAY YOUR ADMIN MONSTER?

The Employment Rights Act doesn't have to turn your HR admin into an uncontrollable beast. With BrightHR's integrated HR systems, comprehensive documentation, and 24/7 expert advice, you can tame even the most complex compliance challenges.

Our platform doesn't just help you manage the changes, it devours admin headaches for breakfast, leaving you free to focus on growing your business.

Book a FREE demo and discover how BrightHR helps you slay your admin monster, one compliance challenge at a time.



Start your FREE demo