



UK Government

# Implementing the Employment Rights Bill

## Our roadmap for delivering change

July 2025



[gov.uk/makeworkpay](http://gov.uk/makeworkpay)

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## Ministerial foreword

**Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Rt Hon Jonathan Reynolds MP, Secretary of State for Business and Trade**

This Government was elected on a pledge to rebuild our economy so that it serves working people once again. That means delivering on our Plan for Change.

We promised that we would introduce legislation to Make Work Pay within our first 100 days in office. We kept that promise. And thanks to our Employment Rights Bill, millions of workers will benefit from greater fairness and security at work. Our reforms will also strengthen the voices of people in the workplace.

Measures such as a ban on exploitative zero hours contracts, the end of unscrupulous fire and rehire practices, parental leave and protections from unfair dismissal from day one will be truly transformative for many.

Up to 1.3 million working people – some of the country's lowest-paid employees – will get access to Statutory Sick Pay for the very first time.

This is on top of the large pay rise that over three million people received in April through increases in the National Living Wage, worth an extra £1,400 per year for an eligible full-time worker, and the National Minimum Wage.

As a result, businesses of all sizes who are already doing the right thing will no longer be undercut by those who don't, raising the bar all round. All of which adds up to not just a new deal for working people, but also for business.

We are proud of these reforms. We are proud of the opportunities they will afford working people and working families. We are proud to strengthen workers' voices in the workplace. That is why we are so determined to implement these reforms as swiftly as possible: we are working with, not against, business to make them a success.

Taken together, these measures will deliver tangible benefits to working people across the country, and our timeline demonstrates our determination to go further and faster to raise living standards and put more money in people's pockets.

We are grateful to the businesses, trade unions, civil society groups and Parliamentarians who have got us this far and worked to make our reforms as strong and effective as possible.

We always said that this Bill must work in practice, not just on paper. This is why we are consulting on key aspects of our Plan to Make Work Pay and taking a staggered approach to implementing several of the most significant reforms.

This is the right thing to do for both employers and workers. We are ensuring that there is a proper business readiness period so that businesses and organisations fully understand the details of our reforms and can prepare long before they come into force.

This means that key measures such as reforms to Statutory Sick Pay, simplifying the trade union recognition process, and day one paternity leave and unpaid parental leave will come into effect in April 2026.

It means that banning unscrupulous fire and rehire practices, the strengthening of trade unions' right of access and employment tribunal time limits will take effect in October 2026.

And it means that undertakings for employers such as gender pay gap action plans, banning exploitative zero hours contracts, and changes to unfair dismissal will happen in 2027.

This makes sense for both businesses and workers.

This is how we will deliver a new deal for working people – fixing our broken labour market and tackling poor pay, poor working conditions and poor job security so that people across the country feel the benefits.

# Section 1: Introduction

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## Introduction

1. The Plan to Make Work Pay is the Government's ambitious package of reforms that will upgrade our employment rights framework, ensuring it is fit for a modern economy, empowers working people and contributes to economic growth. Make Work Pay will support the delivery of the Government's Plan for Change by tackling the low pay, poor working conditions and poor job security that have been holding the UK economy back. Our Employment Rights Bill is a crucial step in delivering these reforms.
2. We recognise how keen people are to feel change in their working lives. But in order for these reforms to have the impact we need, it is crucial that they work for workers and businesses of all sizes, and in all sectors.
3. We have always said that we would engage and consult comprehensively on the implementation of the measures in the Employment Rights Bill to make sure these changes work for all. This means that, while the Employment Rights Bill sets out the policy clearly in primary legislation, key details of how many of the individual measures will work in practice will be consulted on, agreed and then set out in secondary legislation and regulations.
4. We are working at pace to deliver on our commitment to Make Work Pay, engaging and consulting early to make sure we get the detail right as part of our Plan for Change.
5. Our *Employment Rights Bill Implementation Roadmap* provides clarity for workers and businesses on how and when Government will engage and consult on those details. It also lays out our anticipated commencement dates for different parts of the Bill – providing clarity on when we expect to see the changes take place on the ground. Employers, workers, trade unions and other stakeholders should, and will, get a proper amount of time to prepare for the Make Work Pay reforms while ensuring we deliver tangible, and much needed, benefits to working people at pace. Our implementation plan will allow employers, workers, trade unions and other stakeholders to plan ahead to ensure that they can prepare for these important reforms.

# Section 2: Preparing for the implementation of the Employment Rights Bill

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# Preparing for the implementation of the Employment Rights Bill

6. The Employment Rights Bill is a critical step towards delivering our Plan to Make Work Pay.
7. Some measures will take effect shortly following Royal Assent of the Bill. These include:
  - Repealing most of the Trade Union Act 2016 and the Strikes (Minimum Services Levels) Act 2023
  - Protections against dismissal for taking industrial action
8. As is typical with changes to employment legislation, the Bill will give the Government a series of powers in primary legislation which can then be used to define the detailed policy in secondary legislation or regulations, supported by Codes of Practice and guidance. To develop this policy, we may need to consult and, in some cases, amend, revoke or draft new Codes of Practice. Others, such as Acas, will also need to consult on Codes of Practice, where amendments or new Codes, may be required.
9. Our implementation roadmap sets out many of the most important steps before our measures can take effect. In developing our roadmap we have considered:
10. **Consultation** – We will make sure implementation works for employers, workers, trade unions, and other stakeholders: Government will need to ensure that employers (including public sector employers) and trade unions are able to carry out the changes that the new legislation will require. To make sure our legislation achieves these aims, we may need to consult to determine the most effective way we can bring about our intended changes in the workplace. These policy interventions must work for all in order to deliver these changes across the country. In addition, Government wants to continue to hear employer perspectives on how these changes will affect existing systems and processes, and the steps employers will need to take to adapt to these reforms. We greatly value the expertise and insights already shared through our ongoing engagement on our Plan. The same is true for trade unions, workers and other stakeholders. Much of the Plan to Make Work Pay will affect the way that trade unions operate within and alongside the workplace. By

engaging closely with our stakeholders, we will ensure our changes work for all.

11. **Guidance** – We will produce guidance to support employers, workers, trade unions and other stakeholders, and make sure people have time to familiarise themselves with it: Government is committed to supporting employers, workers, and unions to adapt to the Make Work Pay reforms. In many instances, alongside legislation, we will ensure there is guidance available to clarify new requirements and help users to support compliance. Guidance and Statutory Codes of Practice may be developed by Government, by delivery partners like Acas, or in collaboration with other organisations. Guidance takes time to prepare and may be accompanied by further consultation. Employment tribunals may have regard to guidance when making decisions and so it is important to get it right. Having developed guidance and/or Codes of Practice, Government will allow time for employers, workers, trade unions and other stakeholders to familiarise themselves with the changes. We will ensure this time is built into our implementation plans.
12. **Support** – We will make sure Acas and other delivery partners have time to prepare: Acas, the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, is a public body that works with millions of employers and employees every year to improve employment relations. We are closely engaging Acas, and others, on the support they provide to employers and workers. Acas provides extensive supportive functions beyond the production of guidance and statutory codes, such as their helpline for employers and workers to understand their rights at work, an early conciliation service which is offered to all parties with potential employment tribunal claims, a collective conciliation service in disputes between employers and trade unions, and training for employers and managers. We will build time and resource into our planning to ensure they are able to continue with this support once our measures are implemented.
13. **Time to prepare** – We will ensure employers, workers, trade unions and other stakeholders have the time and space needed for systems change; preparation goes beyond ‘familiarisation’. We know that some employers, particularly small and micro businesses/enterprises, may need additional, tailored support in order to adapt to changes. Many employers will need to amend their existing systems, including IT and payroll, to accommodate the new reforms. Before reforms come into effect, we will

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provide sufficient time to allow stakeholders to familiarise themselves with the new requirements and expectations, and then take forward the relevant changes within their organisations. Government will consider options and timings in advance, to allow employers and trade unions time to plan.

14. **Enforcement** – We are committed to ensuring the enforcement landscape has the necessary capacity and capability to uphold the new requirements. This will include support for Acas, the employment tribunal system and the new Fair Work Agency.
15. The expert and detailed insights and feedback gained from employers, trade unions, representative organisations, civil society, and other stakeholders to-date have been invaluable in developing proportionate and effective policy, helping us get this critical piece of legislation right. Government is greatly appreciative of the constructive way in which stakeholders have engaged so far, and look forward to ongoing collaboration as we implement this groundbreaking package of measures.

# Section 3: Taking a phased approach

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## Taking a phased approach

16. The Employment Rights Bill contains a significant number of policy measures, affecting different parts of the employment law framework and beyond. We want employers, workers, trade unions and other stakeholders to have the time and space to work through the detail of each key measure with us. As we set out in our *Next Steps to Make Work Pay*, Government will take a phased approach to engagement and consultation on these policy measures, as well as phasing commencement.
  17. Phasing consultation will allow employers from all sectors, workers, trade unions and other stakeholders to fully engage with the complex policy issues at hand and will ensure Government is appropriately considering the most effective way forward.
  18. Phasing commencement will mean stakeholders will be able to plan their time and resources to make sure they are ready when the changes come in.
  19. By engaging and consulting on the key measures from Summer 2025, Government will maintain the pace of delivery. This will mean stakeholders have earlier clarity around reforms, and Government will be able to deliver on the benefits of the Plan to Make Work Pay for employees and employers across the country.
22. **Autumn 2025** – the measures we will consult on include:
    - A package of trade union measures including electronic balloting and workplace balloting; simplifying trade union recognition processes; duty to inform workers of their right to join a trade union; and, right of access. New rights and protections for trade union representatives will be covered by an Acas Code of Practice consultation.
    - Fire and rehire
    - Regulation of umbrella companies
    - Bereavement leave
    - Rights for pregnant workers
    - Ending the exploitative use of Zero Hours Contracts (ZHCs)
  23. **Winter/ early 2026** – the measures we will consult on include:
    - A package of trade union measures including protection against detriments for taking industrial action and, blacklisting.
    - Tightening tipping law
    - Collective redundancy
    - Flexible working
  24. **Finalising policy** – Engagement and consultation will inform policy development. Following consultation, Government will develop final policy positions to deliver our measures. In some instances, this will be regulations, in others it will be guidance or Codes of Practice by the Government or others such as Acas. Some measures may require more than one round of consultation, especially if there is a need to update or develop a Code of Practice. Commencement timings will be informed by the insights from consultation and engagement. Government will ensure employers, workers, trade unions and other stakeholders are given time to prepare for change.

## Phasing consultation

20. For many measures, Government will consult on the detail of policy and implementation. Our aim is to sequence consultations in a way that enables partners to engage meaningfully. Consultations will be accompanied by opportunities for direct engagement with Government.
21. **Summer/ Autumn 2025** – the measures we will consult on include:
  - Reinstating the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB)
  - Fair Pay Agreement for the Adult Social Care sector
  - Giving employees protection from unfair dismissal from 'day 1', including on the dismissal process in the statutory probation period

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## Phasing when measures take effect

25. Policy measures will take effect in phases. Common commencement dates will be used to commence the majority of regulations laid using the powers provided for in the Bill (6th April and 1st October).

26. In our consultations we will seek to further understand impacts related to commencement.

27. This package represents the biggest upgrade to workers' rights in a generation. This timeline is our pathway to putting fairness back in the workplace, delivering tangible benefits to working people at pace.

28. We have set out below our initial view of the point at which some of the key policy areas will take effect:

29. Measures that will take effect **at Royal Assent or soon afterwards** include:

- Repeal of the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023
- Repeal of the great majority of the Trade Union Act 2016 (some provisions will be repealed via commencement order at a later date)
- Removing the 10 year ballot requirement for trade union political funds
- Simplifying industrial action notices and industrial action ballot notices
- Protections against dismissal for taking industrial action

30. Measures that will take effect **in April 2026** include:

- Collective redundancy protective award – doubling the maximum period of the protective award
- 'Day 1' Paternity Leave and Unpaid Parental Leave
- Whistleblowing protections
- Fair Work Agency body established
- Statutory Sick Pay – remove the Lower Earnings Limit and waiting period
- Simplifying trade union recognition process

- Electronic and workplace balloting

31. Measures that will take effect **in October 2026** include:

- Fire and rehire
- Bringing forward regulations to establish the Fair Pay Agreement Adult Social Care Negotiating Body
- Procurement - two-tier code
- Tightening tipping law
- Duty to inform workers of their right to join a trade union
- Strengthen trade unions' right of access
- Requiring employers to take "all reasonable steps" to prevent sexual harassment of their employees
- Introducing an obligation on employers not to permit the harassment of their employees by third parties
- New rights and protections for trade union reps
- Employment tribunal time limits
- Extending protections against detriments for taking industrial action

32. Commencement of the Mandatory Seafarers Charter is expected to be in December 2026.

33. Measures that will take effect **in 2027** include:

- Gender pay gap and menopause action plans (introduced on a voluntary basis in April 2026)
- Rights for pregnant workers
- Introducing a power to enable regulations to specify steps that are to be regarded as "reasonable", to determine whether an employer has taken all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment
- Blacklisting
- Industrial relations framework
- Regulation of umbrella companies

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- Collective redundancy – collective consultation threshold
  - Flexible working
  - Bereavement leave
  - Ending the exploitative use of ZHCs and applying ZHC measures to agency workers
  - ‘Day 1’ right – protection from unfair dismissal

34. Implementation of the gender pay gap outsourcing measure will be dependent on timelines for broader changes to pay gap reporting, including related measures in the draft Equality (Race & Disability) Bill.
35. We will provide more detail on these policies and our timelines for implementation following consultation, with a clear commitment that we aim to work at pace to deliver these tangible benefits to millions of working people.
36. Delivery of the Plan to Make Work Pay is a manifesto commitment and whilst the Employment Rights Bill will play a vital role in delivering our Make Work Pay commitments, others will be delivered through alternative routes as set out in our *Next Steps to Make Work Pay*. Again, the Government will continue to work with trade unions and business, consulting fully on how best to implement these measures.
37. Government will deliver on our Plan for Change by ensuring employment rights are fit for a modern economy, empowering working people and contributing to economic growth.

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**Department for Business and Trade**

The UK's Department for Business and Trade is an economic growth department. We ensure fair, competitive markets at home, secure access to new markets abroad and support businesses to invest, export and grow. Our priorities are the Industrial Strategy, Make Work Pay, the Trade Strategy and the Plan for Small Business.

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