



Factsheet: Employment Rights Bill overview

This is a comprehensive bill which, once implemented, will represent the biggest upgrade in employment rights for a generation. It will raise the minimum floor of employment rights, giving the British public the prosperity, security and dignity that everyone in Britain needs and deserves at work.

The bill will support the government's mission to increase productivity and create the right conditions for long-term sustainable, inclusive, and secure economic growth. It will help raise living standards across the country and provide better support for those businesses who are engaged in good practices.

What does the bill do?

Address **one-sided flexibility** ensuring that jobs provide a baseline of security for workers:

- ban exploitative zero hours contracts by introducing rights to guaranteed hours, reasonable notice of shifts, and compensation for short-notice cancellation of shifts
- end unscrupulous 'fire and rehire' and 'fire and replace' practices by considering any dismissals for failing to agree to a change in contract as automatically unfair, except where businesses genuinely have no alternative
- provide a day one right to protection from unfair dismissal (while allowing statutory probation periods in which a lighter-touch dismissal process applies)
- strengthen collective redundancy rights by ensuring the employer obligations to consult on and notify 20 or more redundancies applies across a workforce, not just at a single establishment
- close the maritime redundancy notification loophole, ensuring that operators providing regular services from the UK cannot avoid the collective redundancy notification requirement

Support **family friendly rights** by improving flexibility and security:

- make existing entitlements to Paternity Leave and Unpaid Parental leave available from 'Day 1' of employment
- enabling parents to take their Paternity Leave and pay after their Shared Parental Leave and pay
- introduce a new right to unpaid Bereavement Leave, allowing employees to take leave from work to grieve the loss of a loved one
- introduce new protections from dismissal for a woman who is pregnant and for six months after her return to work
- strengthen the existing 'Day 1' right to request flexible working, by requiring employers to explain the grounds on which they've denied a request

Prioritise **fairness, equality and wellbeing of workers**:

- strengthen employers' duty to prevent sexual harassment of their employees by requiring them to take all reasonable preventative steps
- introduce an obligation on employers to not permit harassment of their employees by third parties

- specify steps which are to be regarded as ‘reasonable’ for an employer to take in order to prevent sexual harassment
- add sexual harassment to the list of issues that workers can make protected disclosures on
- strengthen gender pay gap reporting to reflect outsourced workers
- introduce Equality Action Plans, setting out how to address gender pay gap issues and support employees going through the menopause

Ensure **workers get fair pay** for a fair day’s work:

- improve access to Statutory Sick Pay by removing the Lower Earnings Limit and removing the waiting period
- re-instate the School Support Staff Negotiating Body to improve terms and conditions for school support staff
- establish a Fair Pay Agreements process in the adult social care sector
- strengthen existing tipping law, ensuring workers receive their tips in full, by requiring employers to consult with workers when developing or revising their tipping policies
- re-introduce the two-tier code on procurement ensuring that employees working on outsourced contracts will be offered terms and conditions broadly equivalent to those transferred from the public sector

Modernise **trade union** legislation giving trade unions greater freedom to organise, represent and negotiate on behalf of their workers:

- repeal the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023
- repeal the Trade Union Act 2016
- strengthen trade unions’ right of access
- simplify trade union recognition process
- introduce new rights and protections for trade unions representatives
- introduce a duty for employers to inform workers of their right to join a trade union
- introduce additional protections from blacklisting

Improve **enforcement** of employment rights:

Establish the Fair Work Agency to bring together existing state enforcement functions including:

- regulations for employment agencies and employment businesses
- the unpaid employment tribunal award penalty scheme
- enforcement of the National Minimum Wage
- Statutory Sick Pay
- the licensing regime for businesses operating as ‘gangmasters’ in certain sectors

The Fair Work Agency will also incorporate a wider range of employment rights, such as holiday pay.

How are we going to do it?

The bill was introduced into the House of Commons on 10 October 2024. As is typical for employment legislation, further detail on many policies in the bill will be provided through regulations after Royal Assent. We **expect to begin consulting on the majority of these reforms in 2025**, seeking significant input from all stakeholders. For some areas, we will be consulting before the end of the year, including on applying the zero hours measures to agency workers; modernising trade union legislation; and Statutory Sick Pay.

We will ensure business have time to prepare for the implementation of these reforms and **expect that most reforms in the bill will take effect no earlier than 2026**. Where more time is needed for businesses to prepare for change, this will be taken into consideration. We will also publish guidance where this is appropriate.