

Employment Rights Bill Special

On 10 October 2024, the Government published its Employment Rights Bill, setting out its plans to deliver on the promises made in its pre-election Plan to Make Work Pay.

- In a major overhaul of workers' rights, the Bill includes 28 proposed changes to employment law and will affect every employer, regardless of size or industry.
- The reforms will affect all aspects of the employment relationship from enhancing existing rights, pay, time off and contracts, to equality laws, family-friendly rights and trade union relations.
- Key proposals include introducing a brand-new right to bereavement leave from day one of employment, making flexible working the default where practical (unless the employer can show it is unreasonable), and making paternity leave and parental leave available from the start of employment.
- Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) will be paid from the first day of absence instead of the fourth day and the Lower Earnings Limit to become eligible for SSP will be removed.
- The proposals in the Bill will need to go through the usual parliamentary process before becoming law so employers should keep a close eye on developments.
- **Our HR Documentation Team will provide all new and updated policies and contracts including a new Bereavement Policy, our Croner Face2Face Team can carry out training for your managers and our 24/7 HR Advisory Team are on hand to help you to navigate these changes. You can also get answers to questions like [What is contained in the new Employment Rights Bill?](#) from [Croner BrAlnbox](#).**

Right to claim unfair dismissal from day one of employment

One of the proposed reforms in the Employment Rights Bill is to remove the two-year qualifying period for employees to claim unfair dismissal, giving employees the right to claim unfair dismissal from day one of employment. The Government will consult on introducing a statutory probationary period, which is likely to be 9 months. It is thought that this will give employers a simpler route to dismissal during the probationary period before full protection from unfair dismissal takes effect, but this is yet to be confirmed. If this change does become law, employers will need to review and update their disciplinary procedures as well as their employees' contracts to ensure compliance with the new rules.

Did you know?

Our HR Documentation Team will provide all updated contracts and an updated disciplinary procedure for your business.

Changes to employment contracts

The Government's proposals put forward in the Employment Rights Bill include a new statutory right for workers to be given a statement of their trade union rights. The statement must be in writing setting out the worker's right to join a trade union. The precise details of this new right are yet to be confirmed, including the information that must be included in the statement, the form that the statement must take and the manner in which it must be given to the worker. However, if this change is implemented, it is likely that employers will need to ensure that this is included in their statement of main terms of employment or provided as a separate statement alongside the contract at the start of the employment.

Did you know?

Our HR Documentation Team will provide the relevant documents to ensure that you comply with this new right.

Harassment laws to be strengthened

On 26 October 2024, a new preventative duty for employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of their workers will come into force, implementing provisions passed by the previous Conservative Government. However, in the Employment Rights Bill the current Government sets out its plans to take these reforms further by requiring employers to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment. Further detail on the reasonable steps required to be taken will be set out in regulations. It is hoped that this will bring some certainty for employers on the action they need to take to comply with the legislation. The Bill will also re-introduce liability for third-party harassment.

Did you know?

Our HR Documentation Team will update your anti-harassment policies if these changes are implemented.

Fire Detection and Warning Systems

Most businesses in the UK are required to have fire detection and warning systems to alert occupants in case of a fire. The type of system needed depends on the size and layout of the premises. For smaller businesses, simple smoke alarms may suffice, while larger, more complex buildings may need more sophisticated systems with heat detectors, smoke detectors, and manual alarm points. The alarm system must be loud and clear enough to warn everyone in the building. It's essential to ensure that the system is regularly maintained and tested, as faulty alarms can lead to serious risks. Fire alarms should be tested weekly, and all employees should be trained on how to respond when an alarm is triggered.

Did you know?

Business owners must ensure that their fire detection systems are accessible to everyone, including those with disabilities.

Please contact the 24 hour advice service for advice on your specific situation before acting on the information in this publication.