



UK Employment Law

Update for Parish and Town Councils

The Employment Rights Act 2025 and implementation timeline

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OVERVIEW

- Received Royal Assent: December 2025
- Phased implementation: December 2025-2027
- Common commencement dates: 6th April and 1st October
- Extensive consultations ongoing throughout 2026

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CHANGES ALREADY IN EFFECT

- Took effect at Royal Assent (December 2025)
- Repeal of Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023
- Workers' right to take industrial action restored

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18 FEBRUARY 2026 CHANGES

- Repeal of majority of Trade Union Act 2016
- Removal of 10 year ballot requirement for political funds
- Simplified industrial action notices
- Protection from dismissal for industrial action

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6 APRIL 2026 – FAMILY LEAVE REFORM

- Day 1 Parental Leave (was 26 weeks qualifying)
- Day 1 Unpaid Parental Leave (was 1 year qualifying)
- Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave (up to 52 weeks)
- Paternity leave available after shared parental leave

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6 APRIL 2026 – STATUTORY SICK PAY REFORM

- Removal of Lower Earnings Limit (£125/week)
- Removal of 3-day waiting period
- SSP from Day 1 of illness for all workers
- Significantly expands SSP eligibility

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OTHER KEY CHANGES

- Collective redundancy protective award doubled from 90 to 180 days
- Whistleblowing protections for sexual harassment
- Simplified trades union recognition process

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1 APRIL 2026 – NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE

- National Living Wage (21+) to £12.71
- 18-20 year olds to £10.85
- 16-17 year olds to £8.00
- Apprentices to £8.00

Sterling Pounds per hour!

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7 APRIL 2026 – FAIR WORK AGENCY ESTABLISHED

- New single enforcement body for employment rights
- Consolidates NMW, agency rules, gangmaster licensing
- Enhanced powers: inspections, penalties, tribunal cases

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AUGUST 2026 – ELECTRONIC BALLOTING

- Electronic and workplace balloting permitted
- Modernises industrial action processes
- Limited direct impact on parish councils

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OCTOBER 2026 – SEXUAL HARASSMENT DUTIES

- Duty to take 'all reasonable steps' to prevent harassment
- Obligation to prevent third-party harassment
- Tribunal compensation uplift for non-compliance

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OCTOBER 2026 – TRADE UNION INFORMATION DAY

- Duty to inform workers of right to join a trade union
- Add statement to contracts and handbooks

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OCTOBER 2026 (or later) – TRIBUNAL TIME LIMITS

- Employment Tribunal time limits extended
- Qualifying period to lodge a claim after leaving extended from 3 months to 6 months for most claims
- Keep employment records for longer

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LOOKING AHEAD – JANUARY 2027

- Unfair dismissal qualifying period reduced to 6 months
- Removal of cap on compensatory awards
- Fire and re-hire restrictions commence

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LOOKING AHEAD – THROUGHOUT 2027

- Zero-hours contract reforms (guaranteed hours)
- Enhanced flexible working rights
- Bereavement leave including pregnancy loss

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IMMEDIATE ACTION PLANNING

- Review employment contracts and adopted policies
- Understand your new obligations
- Document everything carefully

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STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

- Budget for increased employment costs
- Build good employee relations
- Know where to get help

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RESOURCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

- Queries, guidance, templates and expert advice through Notts ALC ticketing system
- NALC advice notes and template documents
- ACAS free advice
- Gov.UK official advice

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KEY TAKEAWAYS!

- Largest employment law reform in a generation
- April 2026 changes should have already happened!!!
- Update contracts and payroll systems
- Being a good employer is your best protection

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THANK YOU

Any Questions?

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