



Ready for 1 January 2027?

The Employment Rights Act 2025 brings some of its biggest changes in the new year. Work through this checklist now so nothing catches you out.

1 Unfair dismissal after six months

FROM 1 JANUARY 2027

Employees will be able to claim unfair dismissal after **6 months** in the job, instead of 2 years. The limit on unfair dismissal compensation is also being removed.

- ☐ List everyone who has 6 months' service by 1 January, and anyone who reaches 6 months early in the year.
- ☐ Review your probation period so the final decision is made well before the six-month point.
- ☐ Hold every probation review on time and keep short written notes.
- ☐ Deal with performance or conduct concerns early. Don't let them drift.
- ☐ Check your disciplinary and capability procedures are up to date and follow the Acas Code of Practice.
- ☐ Brief managers on fair process: investigate, invite to a meeting, allow a companion, give a right of appeal.
- ☐ Get advice before dismissing anyone with 6 months' service. With no cap, mistakes cost more.

2 Telling workers about their right to join a union

FROM 1 JANUARY 2027

Employers must give workers a written statement about their right to join a trade union. The government will provide the standard wording. It applies to workers, not only employees.

- ☐ **New workers** from 1 January 2027: give the statement with their written statement of employment particulars.
- ☐ **Existing workers:** give it by **5 April 2027**.
- ☐ **Every year after**, by 5 April: give it again directly (email, post or in person), or keep it available (for example in the handbook or on the intranet), tell workers where it is and send a yearly reminder.
- ☐ Watch for the government's standard statement and add it to your new starter pack.

3 Tips and tipping policies

FROM 1 JANUARY 2027

If your business has a tipping policy, you'll need to consult workers on it.

- ☐ Consult before creating or reviewing your tipping policy: with a recognised union or worker reps, or directly with workers if you have neither.
- ☐ Share an anonymised summary of the feedback with affected workers.
- ☐ Diary a review of the policy at least every 3 years.

4 Check you've covered the 2026 changes

ALREADY IN FORCE

- ☐ **Tribunal time limits** are now 6 months for most claims, for problems arising from 1 October 2026. Keep good records of complaints and decisions.
- ☐ **Sexual harassment:** since 30 October 2026 you must take **all reasonable steps** to prevent it, including harassment by customers, clients and other third parties. Check your policy, training and risk assessment.
- ☐ **Statutory Sick Pay** has been paid from the first day of sickness, with no lower earnings limit, since 6 April 2026.
- ☐ **Paternity leave and unpaid parental leave** have been day-one rights since 6 April 2026.
- ☐ **Holiday records** must be kept for 6 years (from 6 April 2026).

5 Coming later in 2027

PLAN AHEAD

- **March:** dismissing and re-engaging staff on worse terms ("fire and rehire") becomes automatically unfair in most cases.
- **April:** new unpaid bereavement leave, including for pregnancy loss. Collective redundancy numbers are counted across the whole organisation, not just one site.
- **October:** refusing a flexible working request must be based on a listed business reason and be reasonable. Stronger dismissal protection for pregnant women and new mothers.
- **Date not yet announced:** guaranteed hours, shift notice and pay for cancelled shifts for zero-hours and low-hours workers.

Sources

Acas, Employment Rights Act 2025: acas.org.uk/employment-rights-act-2025
GOV.UK, Plan to Make Work Pay and Employment Rights Act: timeline update
business.gov.uk, Employment Rights Changes: Trade union reform



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