

Provision	Current law	Planned reform	Settled?	Expected implementation
Unfair dismissal	Employees with over two years' service are protected from unfair dismissal	- Removal of the two-year qualifying period, making protection from unfair dismissal a day one right - Introduction of a new "light touch" procedure during an "initial period of employment"	No - debate continues on whether the two-year period should be replaced with a 6-month qualifying period, or a statutory probation period (an "initial period of employment"), subject to "lighter-touch" dismissal rules. The length of the initial period of employment would be specified in subsequent regulations. See our recent article	2027
Collective redundancies	Employers must collectively consult if they plan to make 20+ redundancies within 90-days at one establishment.	- Collective consultation is required if (i) there are more than 20 redundancies at one establishment, or (ii) at least the "threshold number of employees" is met across the whole organisation. This company-wide threshold will be defined in subsequent legislation but it is likely to be 20 to 100 employees - The maximum protective award for failure to inform and consult will also double, from 90 to 180 days' pay per employee.	Yes	2027
Sexual harassment	- Employers must take "reasonable steps" to prevent sexual harassment, but they are not directly liable if a third party harasses their employees. - Sexual harassment may already be a qualifying whistleblowing disclosure as breaches of health and safety requirements, or of other breaches of law.	- Employers will be required to take "all reasonable steps" to prevent sexual harassment of employees, as well as introducing a new duty to take "all reasonable steps" to prevent third-party harassment. - Subsequent regulations to specify reasonable steps - Whistleblowing protection extended so as to expressly cover sexual harassment disclosures.	Yes	April 2026
Fire and re-hire	An employer can potentially terminate an employee's contract and subsequently re-engage them on new less favourable terms.	- Automatically unfair to dismiss for refusal to accept a "restricted variation" (which will broadly cover attempted changes relating to pay, hours and holidays) - An exception is made if an employer can provide circumstances of financial difficulty - Automatically unfair to replace employees with non-employees (for example, a contractor)	Yes	October 2026

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Dismissal during or after pregnancy or statutory family leave	Employees in the protected period of pregnancy (from when the employer is notified of the pregnancy to 18-months post-birth) must be offered any suitable alternative vacancy in a redundancy situation. Failure to do so constitutes automatically unfair dismissal.	- Strengthening protection from dismissals for reasons other than redundancy taking place during or after a protected period of pregnancy. - Subsequent regulations for protection from dismissal for reasons other than redundancy for other forms of statutory leave	Yes	2027
Parental & paternity leave	- Employees with one year of service or more are entitled to up to 18 weeks' unpaid parental leave - Employees with at least 26 weeks' service at the 15th week before expected childbirth are entitled to be entitled to paternity leave - Entitlement to paternity leave is lost if shared parental leave is taken first.	- Paternity and unpaid parental leave will both become day one rights - As will the right to take paternity leave after shared parental leave	Yes	April 2026
Bereavement leave	No statutory right to bereavement leave, except for two-weeks' paid parental bereavement leave following the death of a child under 18 or stillbirth after 24-weeks.	A new day one right to one weeks' unpaid bereavement leave, including pre-24 week pregnancy loss	Yes	2027
Gender and menopause action plans	Employers with 250 or more employees are obliged to publish annual gender pay gap reports. There is no requirement for any action plan.	Action plans must be published on matters relating to gender equality for employers with 250 or more employees. Such matters will concern the gender pay gap and how employers support employees going through menopause	Yes	2027
Statutory sick pay	- SSP only available from day four of sickness - Employees must have weekly earnings above £123 to qualify	- Removal of the waiting period, making SSP available from the first day of sickness - Removal of the lower earnings limit	Yes	April 2026

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Flexible working	Employees can make a flexible working request twice a year, but employers can refuse on one or more of the eight business grounds.	- A day one right to make a flexible working request - Employers can only refuse a request where it is “reasonable” to do so in addition to having one or more business grounds	Yes	2027
Zero-hours and low guaranteed hours contracts	Employers may engage employees and agency workers on zero-hours contracts, which do not guarantee working hours or reasonable notice of work schedules.	- Employers under new duties to: offer guaranteed hours at the end of every reference period and provide reasonable notice of shift changes or cancellations - Workers and agency workers will also be entitled to compensation if their shift is cancelled, moved or curtailed at short notice - It will be automatically unfair to dismiss an employee, or unlawful to subject a worker to detriment, if the reason is connected to accepting or rejecting a guaranteed hours offer	No. The Government is being pushed to take account of seasonal work as part of the guaranteed hours reforms. Debate also continues on whether workers should have the right to opt-out of offers of guaranteed hours.	2027