

## Government launches four consultations on reforms in the Employment Rights Bill

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- The Government has begun four new consultation exercises on key legal updates contained in the Employment Rights Bill. Despite the Bill still not having received Royal Assent, the Government appears to be keen to push on with defining the shape of the new employment rights provided for in it.
- This set of consultations cover the forthcoming rights surrounding:
  - the duty to inform workers of their right to join a trade union
  - leave for bereavement, including pregnancy loss
  - enhanced dismissal protections for pregnant women and new mothers
  - trade union right of access.
- These are among the first of a total of 13 consultation exercises connected to rights within the Employment Rights Bill that are scheduled to take place between now and the early months of 2026. Both consultations on trade union issues close on 18 December 2025, while those on bereavement leave and enhanced protection during pregnancy/new motherhood close on 15 January 2026.

You can ask **Croner BrAlnbox Which are the first laws to change when the Employment Rights Bill is introduced?**

#### Real Living Wage increases by almost 7%

HR

With over 16,000 Living Wage employers, almost half a million people are set for a pay boost as the Real Living Wage rates for 2025–26 have been announced and will be implemented by 1 May 2026 at the latest. The new rates are £14.80 an hour in London (95p or a 6.9% increase from the current rate of £13.85) and £13.45 an hour across the rest of the UK (85p or a 6.7% increase from the current rate of £12.60). The rates apply to all workers over the age of 18. These rates should not be confused with the Government's minimum wage rate, which for those aged 21 and over is called the National Living Wage. The Real Living Wage is a higher, voluntary rate that is independently calculated to cover the actual cost of living.

#### Did you know?

Our 24/7 HR Advisory team are on hand to deal with any queries you have about the minimum and living wage.

#### Preparing for National Stress Awareness Day

H&S

National Stress Awareness Day falls on 5 November 2025 and was established with the purpose of raising awareness about how stress affects individuals and how to effectively manage it. Unmanageable workloads, long hours, and unrealistic deadlines can overwhelm employees, ultimately affecting their performance and well-being. Poor management practices, such as failing to provide clear expectations, offering inadequate guidance, or providing insufficient support, can exacerbate these pressures. Under health and safety legislation, employers have a legal obligation to protect employees from workplace stress. Workplace stress should be included as a hazard when creating risk assessments.

#### Did you know?

Croner offers a 24/7 H&S advice line, where our accredited H&S advisers can support with H&S concerns.

#### Dyslexic chef wins £24,000 in discrimination case

HR

The Claimant, who has dyslexia and struggles to read and write, worked as a chef. His role entailed reading food orders. The Claimant argued that they were put at a disadvantage as a result of their dyslexia and the Respondent should have made reasonable adjustments in the way of auxiliary aids, including a Bluetooth headset, in order to overcome difficulties reading customers' food orders. The tribunal found that the Claimant's dyslexia classed as a disability under the Equality Act and the Respondent failed to comply with their duty to make reasonable adjustments, awarding £24,000 in compensation to the Claimant including £12,000 for injury to feelings. (*Moore v Greene King Retail Services Ltd*).

#### Did you know?

Our Legal Services department can represent your business in Employment Tribunal claims.

#### Return-to-Work is an H&S duty—Not just HR

H&S

Even a single long-term absence in a small business can overload staff, compromise standards, and heighten accident risks. Informal return-to-work processes constitute a legal and safety vulnerability. To mitigate these, establish a sickness absence policy, specifying how staff should report sickness, maintain contact, and submit fit notes. Consistently record absences, fit notes, and contact, as this enables you to trigger H&S reviews and identify working risks due to ill-health. Upon an employee's return, you must determine whether reasonable adjustments are required to ensure the role remains safe and no H&S risks arise from their ill health. HR manages the absence; H&S ensures the return is safe.

#### Did you know?

Workers with serious health conditions may need adjusted equipment or working locations to decrease H&S risks.

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