

## Ping pong continues over Employment Rights Bill

The ping pong over the Employment Rights Bill continues as the House of Lords has refused to give way over its proposed amendments.

- Crucially, the Lords has stood by its amendment to reduce the qualifying service for unfair dismissal to six months, refusing to agree to the Government's plans to remove the qualifying period entirely which would make the right to claim unfair dismissal a day one right.
- It emerged from the debate that the Government has engaged in proper direct consultation with only 75 SMEs (there are more than 5 million SMEs in the UK).
- The House of Lords also voted to stand by its further amendments to zero-hours contract reforms (including giving workers a right to 'opt out' of guaranteed hours contract offers), defining seasonal workers, trade union political funds, and the requirement for a 50% turnout on industrial action ballots.
- The Bill will now go back to the House of Commons to reconsider the Lords' amendments. For now, this means more uncertainty for employers looking to prepare their businesses for these changes.

Croner has you covered: our HR Documentation team will provide all new and updated contracts and policies. You can also ask [Croner BrAlnbox Which Employment Rights Bill Laws are changing in April 2026?](#)

### Early conciliation period to be extended

HR

Regulations have been laid before Parliament that will extend the time for an employer and employee to attempt to settle a dispute through the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) before proceeding to the employment tribunal. The early conciliation period will be extended from the current 6 weeks to 12 weeks, doubling the amount of time available for ACAS to try to help the parties negotiate a settlement before a claim is made to the employment tribunal. The regulations come into force on 1 December 2025 and will apply when a prospective claimant has presented an early conciliation form to ACAS or notified ACAS by telephone of their intention to make a claim on or after 1 December 2025.

Did you know?

Our Legal Services team can represent your business throughout the early conciliation process.

### Fatal pallet collapse exposes critical safety failures

H&S

A manufacturing company has been fined £600,000 after a fatal incident in which a heavy pallet that weighed 592 kg collapsed and trapped an employee. The investigation confirmed the pallet had been stored unsafely, creating a foreseeable risk of collapse. Regulators found the organisation had failed to complete a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and had not established safe systems of work, such as pallet stacking. It was also identified that staff lacked adequate training and supervision in safe storage practices. The company admitted to breaching section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and relevant duties under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

Did you know?

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

### Agreement to extend contract led to dismissal

HR

The Claimant resigned from their position with the Respondent. They were invited to attend a disciplinary hearing on their last working day but were unable to attend. The Claimant agreed to attend a rescheduled hearing one week later in which they were dismissed. They claimed unfair dismissal, but the Tribunal ruled that they could not have been dismissed as their employment had already ended; therefore, they couldn't make the claim. However, the Employment Appeal Tribunal overturned this, ruling that the Claimant's agreement to attend the rescheduled hearing constituted an extension of the employment contract and they were therefore dismissed allowing the claim to proceed. (*Amajane v Metroline Travel Ltd*).

Did you know?

Our HR Advisory team are here to guide your business on how to correctly handle employee resignations.

### Employers' responsibilities under COSHH

H&S

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) protects workers from ill health caused by exposure to chemicals and harmful substances at work. Substances covered under COSHH include cleaning products and solvents, dusts, fumes and vapours, biological agents and nanomaterials. Under COSHH employers should identify hazardous substances in the workplace and assess the risks posed by them. Once assessed employers should prevent or control exposure (e.g. ventilation, PPE, substitution). Training should be provided alongside risk assessments and safety data sheets being made available to staff. Exposure should be monitored and health surveillance carried out.

Did you know?

A COSHH assessment must evaluate the specific substances, their use, and what control measures are in place.

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