

# Quick guide to the April 2026 employment law changes

Various employment law changes are coming into force in April 2026. Our at-a-glance guide rounds them up and also links to BDBF briefings where you can find out more details about all of the changes.

**DateReform1** April 2026

- **Increase to the National Minimum Wage rates:** Annual increase to the National Minimum Wage rate, with the National Living Wage rate for those aged 21 and over increasing from £12.21 per hour to £12.71 per hour. You can view a table with all the updated rates [here](#).

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- **Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave Regulations 2026:** Regulations come into force, extending the period of available leave for bereaved partners to 52 weeks rather than the usual two weeks. You can read more about this reform [here](#).
- **Increase to compensation limits, statutory payment rates and National Minimum Wage rates:** Annual increases will be made to Employment Tribunal compensation limits and to the statutory rates of maternity pay, adoption pay, paternity pay, shared parental leave pay, neonatal leave pay, parental bereavement pay and Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). You can view a table of the updated rates and limits [here](#).
- **Employment Rights Act 2025 reforms:** The first wave of reforms will come into force as follows:
  - **SSP:** SSP will be payable from the first day of sickness (rather than the fourth) and the requirement for the employee to earn at least the lower earnings limit will be removed.

- **Holiday pay records:** There will be a new requirement for employers to keep records demonstrating compliance with worker annual leave and pay entitlements for six years. Failure to comply will be a criminal offence punishable by a fine.
- **Collective consultation – protective award:** The maximum protective award for failure to collectively consult will rise from 90 to 180 days for dismissals taking place on or after 6 April 2026.
- **Whistleblowing:** Sexual harassment will become a standalone category of whistleblowing malpractice.
- **Paternity Leave:** Paternity leave will become a Day 1 employment right and may be taken after a period Shared Parental Leave without being lost.
- **Parental Leave:** Parental Leave will become a Day 1 employment right.
- **Equality action plans:** Voluntary publication for employers with 250+ employees. You can read more about the Government's guidance on this [here](#).

You can read more about each of these reforms in our Guide to the Employment Rights Act 2025 [here](#).

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- **Fair Work Agency:** The Fair Work Agency will be established and have responsibility for enforcement of the following areas:
  - National Minimum Wage;
  - SSP;
  - holiday pay;
  - regulation of employment agencies and businesses;
  - the unpaid Employment Tribunal financial penalties scheme;
  - the licensing of gangmasters;
  - section 1 of the Fraud Act 2006; and

- parts 1 and 2 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

It is currently unclear when the Agency's enforcement powers will come into force. You can read more about the Fair Work Agency in our Guide to the Employment Rights Act 2025 [here](#).

**BDBF is a leading employment law firm based at Bank in the City of London. If you would like to discuss any issues relating to the content of this article, please contact Amanda Steadman ([AmandaSteadman@bdbf.co.uk](mailto:AmandaSteadman@bdbf.co.uk)), Rose Lim ([RoseLim@bdbf.co.uk](mailto:RoseLim@bdbf.co.uk)) or your usual BDBF contact.**