

April is a busy month on the legislative front, as a number of the changes contained in the Employment Rights Act 2025 will come into force, as well as the usual annual uplifts, etc.

Below is a quick reminder of the key employment law changes coming into effect this month.

<b>1 April 2026</b>	<b>National Minimum Wage/ National Living Wage</b>	<p>The National Living Wage (NLW) for workers aged 21 and over will increase to £12.71 per hour.</p> <p>The revised hourly National Minimum Wage (NMW) rates that also take effect on 1 April 2026 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers aged 18-20 – £10.85</li> <li>Workers aged 16-17 – £8</li> <li>Apprentices – £8</li> </ul>
<b>4 April 2026</b>	<b>Gender pay gap reporting</b>	<p>Private sector employers in Great Britain with 250 or more employees must publish their gender pay gap reports for the 2025/26 reporting year on or before 4 April.</p> <p>Remember, affected employers will have the option on the gender pay gap reporting service to publish a voluntary action plan alongside their gender pay gap data for the next reporting year (2026/27). These action plans will become mandatory for the 2027/28 reporting year.</p>
<b>5 April 2026</b>	<b>Increased Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) rate for 2026/27</b>	<p>From 5 April, SMP will increase from £187.18 to £194.32 per week.</p>
<b>6 April 2026</b>	<b>Increased benefit rates for 2026/27</b>	<p>From 6 April, Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP), Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP), Statutory Shared Parental Pay (SSPP), Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay (SPBP) and Statutory Neonatal Care Pay (SNCP) will increase from £187.18 to £194.32 per week.</p> <p>The rate of Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) will also increase from £118.75 to £123.25 per week.</p> <p>Remember, the changes to SSP entitlement (namely, no three-day waiting period and no Lower Earnings Limit) will also come into force from 6 April, subject to transitional provisions. HMRC has issued <a href="#">guidance</a> for employers on how to deal with sickness absences that start before and end on or after 6 April 2026.</p> <p>The amount of SSP payable will be the lower of the statutory rate set out above and 80% of the employee's normal weekly earnings. See our previous <a href="#">checklist</a> for details of the changes that will be required to your sickness absence policies.</p> <p>From 6 April, statutory paternity leave and parental leave will also both become "day one" rights, and the prohibition on taking paternity leave after a period of shared parental leave will also be removed. See our previous <a href="#">checklist</a> for details of the changes that will be required to your policies.</p>

<b>6 April 2026</b>	<b>Bereaved partner's paternity leave</b>	As per our recent <a href="#">alert</a> , a new statutory right to bereaved partner's paternity leave will come into force from 6 April.
<b>6 April 2026</b>	<b>Tribunal compensation limits</b>	<p>New limits on certain Employment Tribunal awards will come into force on 6 April. The two key changes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The limit on the compensatory award for "ordinary" unfair dismissal will increase from £118,223 to £123,543</li> <li>• The maximum amount of a week's pay for calculating statutory redundancy payments and the unfair dismissal basic award increases from £719 to £751</li> </ul> <p>These new limits will apply to dismissals that take effect on or after 6 April.</p> <p>Note that the cap on the compensatory award for "ordinary" unfair dismissal is currently the lower of the statutory limit set out above and 52 weeks' pay of the individual concerned. As previously highlighted, this statutory cap will be removed with effect from 1 January 2027.</p>
<b>6 April 2026</b>	<b>Protected disclosures – sexual harassment</b>	The whistleblowing provisions in the Employment Rights Act 1996 will be amended to provide that a report that sexual harassment has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur will amount to a protected disclosure for whistleblowing purposes. See our previous <a href="#">checklist</a> for details of the changes that will be required to your whistleblowing policy.
<b>6 April 2026</b>	<b>Collective redundancies – increase in protective award</b>	The current maximum penalty that can be awarded by an Employment Tribunal for a breach of the collective redundancy consultation obligations is 90 days' actual pay per affected employee. In relation to dismissals taking effect on or after 6 April, this will be doubled, i.e. 180 days' actual pay per affected employee.
<b>6 April 2026</b>	<b>Duty to keep annual leave records</b>	The Working Time Regulations (WTR) 1998 will be amended from 6 April to place a new obligation on employers to keep "adequate" records to show they have complied with their obligations to provide statutory holiday and holiday pay to their workers. The Employment Rights Act 2025 states that such records "may be created, maintained and kept in such manner and format as the employer reasonably thinks fit", thus on the face of it giving employers a degree of flexibility concerning the records they keep. Such records must be kept for six years from the date on which they are made. It will be an offence, punishable by a fine, to fail to comply with this duty, as is the case for certain other breaches of the WTR. The government only announced recently that this change was coming into force from 6 April, so employers need to review their current recordkeeping obligations promptly to ensure they are compliant.
<b>6 April 2026</b>	<b>Trade union recognition</b>	The changes to statutory trade union recognition set out in the Employment Rights Act 2025 will come into force, including the removal of the 40% support threshold for recognition ballots so that trade unions only require a simple majority of the workers voting to win.
<b>7 April 2026</b>	<b>Fair Work Agency</b>	The Fair Work Agency will be established.

The above update covers England and Wales.