

Top 10 Potential Employment Law Changes 2024

In the King's Speech, held this week, our new Labour government set out its commitment to introducing enhanced employment rights and introducing a 'new deal for working people'.

Here is a concise overview of the proposed top 10 changes:

1. Living Wage

Labour commit to introducing a genuine living wage that accounts for the cost of living (introduced under the Employment Rights Bill).

2. Day One Employment Rights

Parental leave, sick pay and protection from unfair dismissal to be available from day one, as well as strengthen SSP. Employers will still be able to operate probationary periods.

3. Zero Hour Contracts

Labour intends to ban zero hours contracts and introduce legislation to ensure workers have the right to a contract that reflects their regular number of hours worked. Legislation has the potential for workers to have all the same basic levels of protection as employees (including sick pay, holiday pay, parental leave & protection against unfair dismissal).

4. Fire and Rehire

New legislation will place restrictions on 'fire and rehire' policies and the Statutory Code of Conduct will be replaced to enhance this amendment.

5. Flexible Working

Flexible Working will be made a default for all workers and should be accommodated *as far as is reasonable* by employers.

6. Race Equality Bill

A Race Equality Bill will extend the right to make equal pay claims under the Equality Act to ethnic minority workers and disabled people (and bring in new pay reporting requirements for bigger organisations).

7. Apprenticeship Levy

The government will reform the apprenticeship levy, alongside introducing a body called *Skills England* which ‘will have a new partnership with employment at its heart’.

8. Protection for New Mothers

Labour intends to increase the protection for new mothers by making it unlawful to dismiss a woman who has had a baby for six months after her return to work (exceptions will apply).

9. Pension

Through the introduction of the Pension Schemes Bill the government aims to strengthen pension investment. This is expected to help the average earner save more than £11,000 more for their pension pots.

10. Protection from Harassment

The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, effective October 2024, introduces a duty on employers to prevent sexual harassment, with potential compensation uplifts for breaches.