MARSHALL HALL LEVY SOLICITORS · SOUTH SHIELDS

Employment Newsletter

October 2026

KEY DATES AT A GLANCE

1st October 2026	30 October 2026	1 January 2027
Electronic & workplace balloting rules for trade unions take effect	Sexual harassment duty tightens; trade unions gain workplace access rights	Unfair dismissal protection begins at 6 months' service, not 2 years

The Employment Rights Act 2025: The Next Phase of Employment Law Reform

OVERVIEW

The Clock Is Ticking on Major Employment Law Reform

The Employment Rights Act 2025 is set to reshape UK employment law. The changes may be phased in, but employers should not wait. Now is the time to tighten policies, train managers and reduce risk before the reforms bite.

Why It Matters Now

The message is clear: fairer, safer and more respectful workplaces are moving from best practice to legal expectation. Employers should review the foundations now — policies, manager accountability, recruitment, probation, harassment prevention, employee communications and industrial relations.

Sexual Harassment

A policy on its own will not be enough. Employers must be ready to prove they have taken all reasonable steps to prevent workplace sexual harassment, including risk assessments, training, clear reporting routes, prompt investigations and regular review.

The duty also reaches beyond employees. Customers, contractors and visitors can all create risk, so practical planning and confident managers will matter.

Trade Union Reforms

Electronic and workplace balloting will arrive from August, followed by new rights for qualifying independent trade unions to request workplace access from 30 October 2026 — on site or via digital channels such as email, video meetings or intranet access. Employers should decide now who responds, what is reasonable and how requests will be managed.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Key Date: 30 October 2026

Circle 30 October 2026. This is when two major pressure points come into focus: harassment prevention and trade union access.

LOOKING AHEAD

Next Up: January 2027

From 1 January 2027, unfair dismissal protection will come much sooner, with the qualifying period dropping from two years to six months. That makes the early employment journey critical — recruitment, induction, probation reviews, performance management and dismissal processes all need to be sharp, fair and well documented.

Still to Come

More change is on the way. Guaranteed hours, zero-hours protections, shift notice rules, compensation for cancelled shifts and Fair Work Agency enforcement powers remain under consultation.

Getting Ready: A Quick Checklist

- ☐ Review and refresh key policies against the new requirements
- ☐ Train managers on accountability and confident decision-making
- ☐ Strengthen harassment risk assessments and reporting routes
- ☐ Sharpen recruitment, probation and dismissal processes
- ☐ Plan your approach to trade union access requests

How MHL Can Help

Whether you need a policy refresh, manager training or a practical roadmap for the Employment Rights Act 2025, our employment team can help you prepare with confidence.

GET IN TOUCH

Talk to our Employment Team

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