

Date (or expected date) measure comes into force	Detail of the measure	Action points
18 Feb 2026	<p>Trade union/industrial action changes take effect, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger protection from dismissal for taking part in industrial action Shorter 10-day notice for industrial action to start 12-month mandate Simplified notices Changes to political funds and picketing <p>Backed by Commencement No.1 Regulations 2026 and DBT guidance on transitional/saving provisions</p>	<p>Brief senior team/line managers on the new thresholds and notice rules.</p> <p>Update staff handbooks and union-relations procedures</p> <p>Train HR on dismissal risk—participation in industrial action now an “automatically unfair” category</p>
6 Apr 2026	<p>First major commencement window:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory Sick Pay (SSP): removes Lower Earnings Limit and waiting days (SSP payable from day one). Day-one rights to Paternity Leave and Unpaid Parental Leave. Removal of prohibition on taking paternity leave after a period of shared parental leave Whistleblowing enhancements (incl. links to harassment disclosures). Increase to protective award (doubled to 180 days) Trade union recognition process simplified; electronic/workplace balloting enabled. Fair Work Agency (FWA) launches as single enforcement body (7 April) 	<p>Payroll/HR: configure SSP rules (eligibility & waiting days).</p> <p>Policies: update Paternity & Parental Leave, Whistleblowing, Sexual harassment, TU consultation/relations processes.</p> <p>Manager training: handling day-one rights and updated timeframes.</p> <p>Compliance: prepare for FWA investigations/record-keeping expectations.</p>

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1 Oct 2026 (expected)	<p>Second tranche:</p> <p>Sexual harassment: new duty to take all reasonable steps to prevent harassment and a duty not to permit third-party harassment.</p> <p>Union rights: duty to inform workers of their right to join a union; strengthened union access; new rights for reps, including facilities for TU officials and learning reps, time off and facilities for TU equality reps</p> <p>ET time limits extended to 6 months.</p> <p>Tightening of tipping consultative duties.</p>	<p>Harassment prevention: run a “reasonable steps” analysis (risk assessments, bystander training, supplier/venue controls for third-party risk), and document your steps—key for tribunal defence.</p> <p>Union relations: add right-to-join notices to onboarding, intranet and payslips; update site-access protocols.</p> <p>Record keeping: review and update privacy notices and retention periods to ensure dismissal/interview/other relevant data retained for at least 10 months</p> <p>Update: tipping consultation processes</p>
1 Jan 2027 (expected)	<p>Fire and re-hire: dismissals for refusing “restricted” contractual changes treated as automatically unfair (subject to narrow financial-distress exception).</p> <p>Unfair dismissal: qualifying period reduces from two years to six months; statutory compensation cap removed</p>	<p>Contracts/Change control: adopt a structured consultation and alternatives analysis before any contractual change; refresh redundancy/variation processes.</p> <p>Probation/early performance: align probation lengths with 6-month threshold; tighten early-service performance, conduct and documentation practices.</p> <p>Managing disputes: train managers on fair process from week one.</p>
2027 (dates TBC by regulations)	<p>Restrictions on dismissal during/after pregnancy or statutory family leave</p> <p>Power to make regulations on steps to be regarded as reasonable to prevent sexual harassment</p> <p>Zero & low hours work: duty to offer guaranteed hours reflecting a reference period; reasonable notice of shifts; compensation for short-notice</p>	<p>Workforce planning & scheduling: map all variable-hours roles; build rota notice standards; configure cancellation pay rules in payroll.</p> <p>Contracts: introduce guaranteed hours offer process post-reference period; update casual/agency terms.</p> <p>Policies: add Bereavement Leave (incl. pregnancy loss), update Flexible Working processes, and if applicable publish Equality Action Plans</p>

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	<p>cancellations; measures apply to agency workers too.</p> <p>Flexible working: further changes expected to procedures.</p> <p>Collective redundancies: new organisation-wide threshold alongside the “at one establishment” test.</p> <p>Bereavement leave: new day-one right.</p> <p>Equality action plans: mandatory plans (gender pay gap/menopause) expected to move from voluntary in 2026 to required in 2027 subject to employer size threshold.</p> <p>Holiday pay record-keeping: enhanced duties (six-year retention). (Government indicates 2027 phasing; final dates depend on secondary legislation.)</p>	<p>(Scotland: align with existing gender pay duties where applicable).</p> <p>Records: ensure holiday pay records can be retained/reported for six years.</p>
Sector-specific—Social Care in Scotland (2026–27, TBC)	<p>Fair Pay Agreements (FPAs) process provided for social care sectors in Scotland and Wales (England has a parallel route). Dates and details to follow via regulations/Scottish Ministers.</p>	<p>If you operate in or supply to social care in Scotland, track Scottish Government consultations; plan for minimum terms emerging from FPA processes (pay, hours, training).</p>