

Employment Rights Bill - likely timelines

10th October 2024:

Bill introduced to Parliament

The day 1 right to protection from unfair dismissal is planned to come into force in Autumn 2026 at the earliest.

This being the case, the qualifying period starts reducing from 10th October 2024. So an employee hired in March 2025 will earn the right after 18 months, an employee hired in August 2026 will earn the right after 1 month and so on.

2024

Early December 2024:

Targeted consultations closed. These included:

- removing lower threshold for Stat' Sick Pay
- guaranteed hours for agency workers
- use of fire and rehire only in extremis to avoid insolvency
- reducing thresholds for collective consultation in redundancies
- increasing penalties for failing to consult collectively in redundancies and fire and rehire
- TU Law reform, repealing much of the Trade Union Act (TUA) 2016 to make it easier for Unions to:
gain recognition with less worker support, strike on less voting turnout, access workplaces to recruit, meet, organise and ballot members.

Expect amendments to be made to the Bill as it makes its way through parliament.

By mid 2025:

Bill expected to pass

Immediate repeal of Minimum Service Levels Act. On TU Law reform, repeal of some laws takes effect after 2 months, others not immediately put into effect but wait for supporting regulations.

2025

During 2025:

Consultations on supporting regulations including:

- the length of statutory probation period, known as initial period of employment for a 'light touch' dismissal procedure
- steps required in the light touch dismissal procedure
- review of reference periods for Zero Hours Contracts, definition of 'low hours' in ZHCs, reasonable notice of any changes in shifts and compensation for shifts cancelled at late notice
- full liability for all forms of third party harassment "all reasonable steps" requirement to prevent it, and more

2025 - 2026

Supporting regulations finalised

2026

April 2026:

Earliest date when most reforms will take effect

Autumn 2026:

Earliest date when day 1 unfair dismissal rights will come into force