

A photograph of a modern office desk with a laptop, a coffee cup, and some decorative items. The desk is in the foreground, and a staircase is visible in the background.

Labour won.. what next?



Leading up to the election, there was huge speculation of what employment changes each party proposed to make.

Here, I summarise the propose changes for ease and offer reassurance that here at NCS HR, and as your HR Consultant, we will keep you up-to-date with any legislation changes and support you through how to navigate and implement when needed.

If you have any questions now or at any point, please don't hesitate to reach out for a chat.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Nicola'.

What are the proposed changes?

Contractual Considerations

- **Day-one rights:** Remove qualifying periods for basic rights like unfair dismissal, sick pay, and parental leave so they become day-one rights.
- **Single status of “worker”:** Remove current distinction between employees and workers so that all workers are afforded same basic rights and protections, eg sick pay, holiday pay, parental leave, protection against unfair dismissal, etc.
- **Self-employment:** Be given a right to a written contract.
- **Zero-hours contracts:** Ban “one-sided” flexibility; anyone working regular hours for 12 weeks or more will gain right to a regular contract to reflect hours worked; and all workers to get reasonable notice of any change in shifts or working time, and recompense for cancelled shifts.

Pay

- **Raise wages for workers:** Remove age bandings used in current system; reform role of the Low Pay Commission, including requiring it to take the cost of living into consideration when recommending rates; ensure travel time in sectors with multiple working sites is paid; act on “sleep over” hours in sectors like social care; create Fair Pay Agreements in adult social care; and ban unpaid internships except as part of education/training course.
- **Sick pay:** Strengthen Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), make it available for all workers and remove the waiting period. Rate to represent fair earnings replacement.

What are the proposed changes?

Employee Rights

- **Family-friendly:** Make parental leave a day-one right; introduce right to bereavement leave; make it unlawful to dismiss pregnant employees for six months after return from maternity leave except in specific circumstances.
- **Tips:** Strengthen the law to ensure hospitality workers receive their tips in full and workers decide how tips are allocated.
- **Strengthen rights:** Strengthen existing rights and protections, including for pregnant workers, whistleblowers, workers made redundant, workers subject to TUPE processes and those making grievances; reinstate School Support Staff Negotiating Body; and encourage employers to sign up to “Dying to Work” charter to support workers with a terminal illness.
- **Tackle harassment:** Require employers to create and maintain workplaces and working conditions free from harassment, including by third parties.
- **Caring responsibilities:** Review implementation of carer’s leave and examine benefits of introducing paid carer’s leave.
- **Wellbeing:** Support wellbeing of workers and their long-term physical and mental health; and assess whether existing regulations and guidance are adequate to support and protect those experiencing the symptoms of Long Covid.
- **Enforcement rights:** Extend time limit for bringing employment tribunal claims to six months; simplify enforcement of equal pay; and establish a single enforcement body to enforce worker rights.

What are the proposed changes?

Flexibility

- **Flexible working:** Make flexible working the default from day one for all workers except where it is not reasonably feasible.
- **Right to switch off:** Introduce a new right to disconnect and protect workers from remote surveillance.

Dismissal Practices

- **Fire and re-hire:** Improve information and consultation procedures by replacing statutory Code of Practice introduced by current Government with a stronger one; and adapt unfair dismissal and redundancy legislation to prevent workers being dismissed for not agreeing to a worse contract.

General

- **Artificial intelligence (AI):** Work with workers, trade unions, employers and experts to examine what AI and new technologies mean for work, jobs and skills.
- **Update trade union laws:** Strengthen trade union right of entry to workplaces; simplify process of union recognition; strengthen protections for trade union reps; and new duty on employers to inform workforce of right to join a union in their written contract.

Please note - this list is not exhaustive and some proposals have been removed that apply to organisations over 200 staff.

When will the changes come into force and how can we prepare?

Labour has committed to introducing legislation within the **first 100 days**, so we can expect swift progress. In practice, this means that the changes will be **introduced to Parliament on 25 October**.

At this stage, there are no specific timelines for implementation—some changes will occur quickly, while **others will take longer**.

Detailed consultations will be conducted on certain areas. As these developments unfold, we can begin to proactively plan for their impact on your business.

You are best to look at the list and decide which areas are likely to have the greatest impact on your business and start thinking about whether you'll need to consider changes in practice and training.

Key areas to consider:

- Ensuring processes like **probation**, performance and disciplinary are embedded in the organisation. With rights to unfair dismissal from day one it is key that your managers follow proper process. It will be essential that you have fair and reasonable processes. Your managers should be trained so you can proactively.
- Review the different types of contact you have in place and start workforce planning in preparation of the changes that will come through

Key Actions to complete:

- Create new contracts & update existing contracts
- Create new policies and update existing policies
- Understand the new / amended procedures
- Train your managers

NCS HR can support with any questions, concerns or advise how to prepare or implement these changes.

Please get in touch directly for further advise.