April 2026 changes under the *Employment Rights Act 2025*

Charles Russell Speechlys

6 April 2026

Statutory Sick Pay Reforms (ERA 2025)

Two significant changes to Statutory Sick Pay ("SSP") took effect:

- The three-day "waiting period" has been abolished, meaning SSP is now payable from the first day of sickness absence.
- The Lower Earnings Limit ("LEL") threshold has been removed. All employees are now eligible for SSP regardless of earnings level.

Employees whose average weekly earnings fall below the LEL (£129 from 6 April) will receive SSP at 80% of their average weekly earnings, or the SSP flat rate, whichever is lower.
The weekly rate of SSP has also increased from £118.75 to £123.25.

Statutory Family Leave Pay Increases

The standard weekly rate for statutory maternity pay, statutory paternity pay, statutory adoption pay, statutory shared parental pay, statutory parental bereavement pay, statutory neonatal care pay and maternity allowance has increased from £187.18 to £194.32 per week.
The Lower Earnings Limit for qualifying for statutory family leave pay has risen from £125 to £129 per week.

Day-One Right to Paternity Leave and Unpaid Parental Leave (ERA 2025)

Paternity leave and unpaid parental leave have become day-one rights.
Previously, paternity leave required 26 weeks' continuous service and unpaid parental leave required one year's service.
The restriction on taking paternity leave after shared parental leave has also been removed.

Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave

A new standalone entitlement to bereaved partner's paternity leave has been introduced under the Bereaved Partners Paternity Leave Regulations 2026.
Eligible partners are entitled to take up to 52 weeks of unpaid leave if the mother or primary adopter dies within the first year of the child's life.
This right is available from the first day of employment.

Collective Redundancy Protective Award Doubled (ERA 2025)

The maximum "protective award" for an employer's failure to comply with collective redundancy information and consultation obligations has increased from 90 days' pay to 180 days' pay per affected employee.
This significantly raises the financial risk of non-compliance with collective consultation requirements.

Whistleblowing Protections for Sexual Harassment (ERA 2025)

Sexual harassment is now a "qualifying disclosure" for the purposes of whistleblowing legislation. Workers who report sexual harassment in the reasonable belief that it is in the public interest are entitled to protection from detriment and unfair dismissal.

Holiday Pay Record-Keeping (ERA 2025)

Employers are now required to keep records that are "adequate to show" compliance with statutory holiday entitlement and holiday pay obligations.
Records must cover annual leave taken, leave carried forward, holiday pay (including elements included or excluded), and payments in lieu of holiday on termination.
Records must be retained for a minimum of six years.
Failure to comply is a criminal offence, punishable by a potentially unlimited fine.

Voluntary Gender Pay Gap and Menopause Action Plans (ERA 2025)

Employers with 250 or more employees are encouraged to publish action plans setting out the steps they are taking to address their gender pay gap and to support employees experiencing the menopause.
Publication is voluntary in 2026 but is expected to become mandatory in 2027.

Simplified Trade Union Recognition Process (ERA 2025)

The statutory trade union recognition procedure has been simplified. Unions applying for recognition need only show 10% membership of the proposed bargaining unit (this threshold may be reduced to as low as 2% by regulations), and the previous requirement for 40% workforce support in a recognition ballot has been replaced by a simple majority.

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