

# Employment Rights Bill progress update

The Employment Rights Bill ([ERB](#)) underwent its second reading in October 2024 and has recently passed the committee stage, which means that the bill is currently awaiting the report stage in the House of Commons.

The Bill pertains to key reforms across a large section of employment law including, family leave, [unfair dismissal](#), flexible working, statutory sick pay, [protections against harassment](#) and much more.

These changes will apply across England, Wales and Scotland, with the exception of Northern Ireland, due to the devolution of employment law there.

For more information on the [Employment Rights Bill](#) and how your business can achieve compliance with the proposed changes call Croner today and quote your membership number.

## Committee amendments to the Employment Rights Bill

During the committee stage, there were a total of 149 agreed amendments to the bill including significant developments including:

- An increase in the time limits that an employee can make a claim to an employment tribunal (almost all claims) from 3 months to 6 months.
- New powers allowing the implementation of international maritime conventions and a Seafarer's Charter through regulations.

## Key debates during the committee stage

There was significant debate regarding the following proposals regarding the bill. These included:

- The potential impact of many of the reforms on small businesses and the potential exemption of small businesses from some of the changes outlined in the ERB.
- The level of strictness imposed on zero hours contracts and the potential that this could lead to unemployment levels increasing.
- The level of flexibility struggling businesses have regarding dismissing workers upon refusal to agree to a variation of contract.
- Removal of the qualifying period for unfair dismissal claims and the introduction of statutory probation periods and how this would impact recruitment.
- Trade union access and industrial relations. The potential for increased industrial action and the increased bargaining powers for workers.

## Additional Employment Rights Bill Developments

An enquiry was held into the Employment Rights Bill by The Business and Trade Select Committee from December 17th, 2024, to January 14th, 2025.

The government held consultations to get key stakeholders to offer feedback on the following aspects of the bill:

### Making Work Pay: Strengthening Statutory Sick Pay

Regarding percentage replacement rates on earners below the current rate of SSP.

### Making Work Pay: Collective redundancy and fire and rehire

Regarding stronger remedial actions where rules regarding both collective redundancy and fire and rehire were broken.

### Making Work Pay: Creating a modern framework for industrial relations

Regarding rule changes for trade union ballots, access and notice.

### Making Work Pay: The application of zero hours contracts measures for agency workers

Regarding the balance of responsibility of employment agencies and end hirers if zero hour protections extend to coverage of agency workers.

Currently the Government is working out responses to these consultations, and this could include amendments to the bill itself in some instances, which will likely be implemented during the reporting stage. In other cases, this could be done in the form of the content of future regulations being made under the authority granted by the ERB.

### Statutory Neonatal Pay care and leave

In addition to the above, the Government has also announced that Statutory Neonatal Care Pay and Leave will come into effect from April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025. This means that eligible parents will receive 12 weeks leave and pay when their baby undergoes neonatal care.

Employees who qualify for NCL are also subject to enhanced redundancy protections, provided they take a period of 6 consecutive weeks leave.

### Ensure compliance with the Employment Rights Bill and learn more

To understand more on how the Employment Rights Bill, including the new legislation on Statutory Neonatal Leave and Pay will impact your business, contact the [employment law advisory](#) team at Croner today and quote your membership number.