



SOLVE IT HR MATTERS

Employment Rights Act: what's now enforced and what's to come

The first wave of Employment Rights Act laws have come into effect this month, with more to follow throughout the rest of 2026 and 2027.

To help you to know where you stand, let's look at what's already come into force and what's to follow:

What's being enforced in April:

- New paternity leave rules
- Strengthened whistleblowing protections
- Updated Statutory Sick Pay
- Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave
- Menopause and gender equality guidance

Plus, the Fair Work Agency is being established.

Unfair dismissal qualifying period reducing to six months:

This law is being enforced in January 2027, which means that anyone you employ from 1st July 2026 has the right to claim unfair dismissal after just 6 months of service. This law has the potential to hit you the hardest and you'll need to reconsider your onboarding, probationary and performance strategies.

What else is happening in 2026:

In October, new duties arrive around:

- Preventing 3rd party harassment
- Informing employees of their right to join a union
- Supporting union access
- Revised tipping rules
- Changes to recognition processes and protections

These dates will require updates to policies, onboarding and manager guidance.

What to prepare for in 2027

The most significant shifts take effect next year:

- Unfair dismissal qualifying period reducing to six months (we've already discussed this)
- Uncapped compensatory awards

- Enhanced protections for pregnant women and new parents
- Flexible working changes
- Bereavement leave including pregnancy loss
- Ending exploitative zero hours practices
- Regulation of umbrella companies

These will reshape how you manage probation, early performance issues and different working arrangements.

How we can help you

As an independent HR consultant, I can help you to understand what these new laws mean for you and help you to prepare.

Please get in touch for a confidential chat.

LATEST NEWS

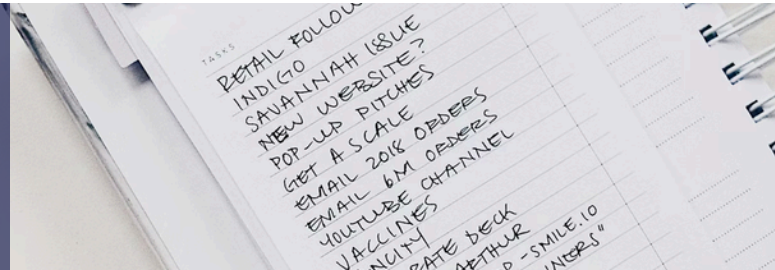
Do your first aid plans match how work really happens?

This is a question often asked after something has gone wrong, particularly in trades, warehouses and teams working remotely or across sites or shifts.

On paper, first aid is covered. In reality, the trained person is off, working elsewhere or not on that shift. An incident happens and it isn't clear who is responsible or what to do next.

Your duty of care doesn't change just because your team is spread out or not office based.

If your business relies on certain individuals being present for first aid cover or this hasn't been reviewed since your team expanded or working patterns shifted, it is usually worth a simple review before an issue forces the question.





When to stop DIY-ing HR and get the support you need

What HR tasks are distracting you from growing the business?

Most owners start by muddling through HR to save costs. You answer questions as they pop up, deal with issues on the fly and hope that nothing becomes too complicated. It feels efficient in the moment.

But it quietly eats your time.

A simple absence chat turns into a longer pattern you need to manage. A performance concern drags into weeks of back-and-forth. A tricky behaviour issue pulls you into conversations you didn't plan for.

Each task chips away at focus and, before you realise it, HR is taking more out of your week than sales, operations or strategy.

That's usually the point where DIY HR stops working. Not because you're doing anything wrong, but because the business has grown to a stage where winging it becomes a bottleneck.

The smart move is knowing when to hand it over.

Outsourcing to an independent HR consultancy is often the most affordable and effective route.

A consultant will sit down with you, look at what HR tasks are landing on your plate and take on the parts that shouldn't be draining your time. They'll also build the right HR foundations so that the business can grow without chaos, surprises or constant distractions.

You get your time back. The business gets stability. HR becomes proactive instead of reactive.

If HR is starting to pull you off the work that actually moves the business forward, get in touch for a confidential chat and I'll talk you through how I can help.



LATEST NEWS

How clear expectations protected the employer in this tribunal case

A recent tribunal decision shows why clear expectations matter when a dismissal is challenged.

In this case, a bus driver chased a thief and used force to stop him. Many people felt that he did the right thing.

The employer dismissed him because his actions went beyond what staff were trained and authorised to do. He left the bus unattended and pursued the thief, creating risk for passengers and the business.

The driver disagreed and challenged the decision.

The tribunal did not judge whether the action felt justified. It looked at whether the employer had set clear expectations and followed them consistently. Because it had, the dismissal was upheld.

You might not employ bus drivers, but similar situations come up in shops, warehouses and public-facing roles. This case reinforces that clear expectations are not about control. They give you the confidence that, if a decision is questioned later, you are not relying on opinion or hindsight.

What everyday working habits quietly say about your business

Recent research has highlighted that nearly half of workers only step away from where they are working to use the toilet. Not because they don't value breaks, but because they feel pressure to stay put, keep going and be seen as working.

It also shows that informal breaks and simple conversations support people's wellbeing more than formal initiatives or perks. That matters, because it's something most businesses already have control over.

This isn't about forcing breaks or adding wellbeing schemes. One practical step is to actively encourage people to step away from what they are doing during the day and to visibly do the same yourself.

Your top HR questions

Are policies really that important?

Yes. Clear, up-to-date policies set expectations, reduce risk and give you something to rely on if decisions are challenged.

Tribunals look closely at whether policies exist, are reasonable and are applied consistently. Without them, even sensible decisions are harder to defend.

What's the best way to keep my employees happy?

From a legal perspective, consistency and fairness matter more than perks.

Clear communication, predictable processes and managers who handle issues early and reasonably, do more to reduce disputes, grievances and absence than any formal benefit scheme.

What training do my employees need with the ERA stuff?

The priority is manager training. Line managers need to understand new rights, processes and risk points so that they don't inadvertently create liability.

Training should focus on day-to-day decisions, not legal theory, and be refreshed as changes are phased in.

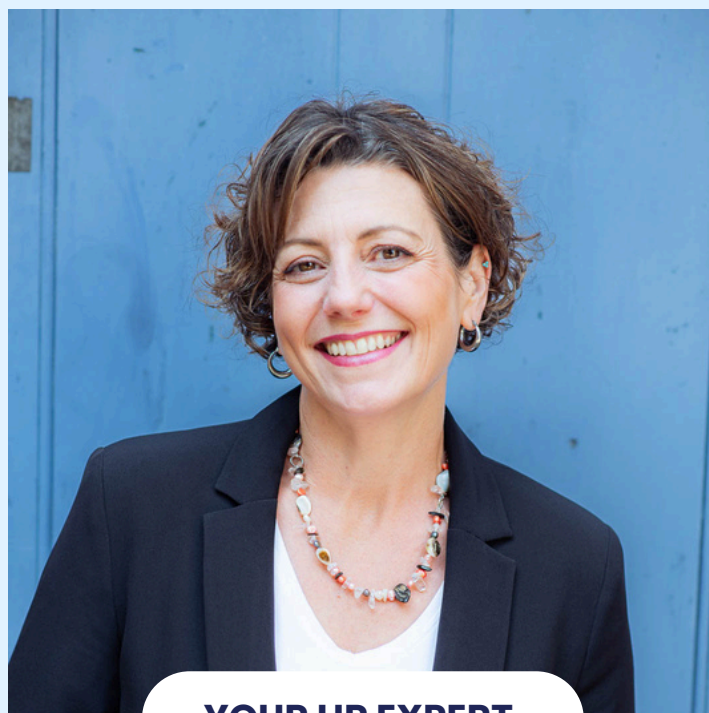
Need a confidential chat?

If you have a problem brewing in your business, you're worried about something or you simply need some expert HR support then please get in touch with us for a confidential chat.

A quick conversation could save you from a very costly mistake and we could give you the clarity you need to decide your next steps with confidence.

I offer a free 30 min chat (without any obligation to buy from us in the future).

Contact us here: [DIARY LINK](#)



YOUR HR EXPERT